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Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the United States , Fri, Mar 29, 2013

Washington, D.C. - 3/28/13: West African Ambassadors accredited to the United States, including Liberia, have honored outgoing United States Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Ambassador Johnnie Carson, for his invaluable services in promoting stronger ties between Africa and the U.S. The impressive event, attended by officials and staff of the U.S. State Department and other agencies, private sector executives, and African diplomats, among others, was held March 22, 2013 at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria near Washington, D.C.

Speaking on behalf of his colleagues, the Dean of the ECOWAS Ambassadors Group (EAG), Ambassador Cyrille S. Oguin of Benin, said during the course of his tenure at the State Department in charge of African affairs, Ambassador Carson was a true champion of the African cause. "He went

beyond the call of duty to further concretize the relationship between Africa and the United States," Ambassador Oguin added. Ambassador Oguin noted that as a result of the tireless efforts of Assistant Secretary Carson over the past four years, the administration of U.S. President Barak Obama has been able to establish and expand numerous areas of partnership between the U.S. and most African countries, including trade and commerce, security, governance and the rule of law, and the environment.

"It is in recognition of your invaluable services to the United States, Africa and the world at large that the ECOWAS Ambassadors Group has decided to herewith extend our profound thanks and appreciation to you. We want you, Ambassador Carson, to know that you will always be remembered and cherished for your services to foster better U.S. Africa ties," the Dean of the EAG stated.

In response, Ambassador Carson described ECOWAS as one of the vibrant regional organizations, as reflected by its role in seeking the collective interests of West Africa and the African Continent in general. He said he looks forward to a closer U.S. –ECOWAS partnership in the future.

Amid applause, Ambassador Carson said, "Africa is rising; Africa is on the move; Africa is the continent of the 21st Century." He added that the United States appreciates its friendship and partnership with Africa, and that Africa is among the top priority of the U.S. Government.

Ambassador Carson also made reference to progress in West Africa in the areas of democratic governance and economic prosperity, among others. He also made specific reference to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and President Ernest Bai Koromah of Sierra Leone, who are transforming their respective countries.

In a close chat with Liberia's Ambassador Jeremiah Sulunteh, the outgoing U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Africa showered praises on President Sirleaf for her exemplary leadership.

Ambassador Carson was earlier presented gifts by the ECOWAS Ambassadors Group. The presentation was



made by the EAG Deputy Dean, Ambassador Maria de Fatima Lima da Veiga of the Republic of Cape Verde. Because ECOWAS does not have a diplomatic mission or a permanent secretariat in Washington as in the case of the African Union and other regional bodies, the EAG seeks the collective interest of ECOWAS through engagement with the United States Government and various multinational agencies based in Washington. Meanwhile, Hon. Gabriel I.H. Williams, Minister Counselor for Press and Public Affairs at the Embassy of Liberia in the United States, was recently selected to serve as the Coordinator of the EAG Experts Committee. The EAG Experts Committee is charged with the responsibilities to formulate plans of action and execute programs for the EAG, such as the reception in honor of Ambassador Carson. The EAG Experts Committee comprises diplomats from various ECOWAS embassies in Washington, while the Coordinator, as head of the Experts Committee, works closely with the Dean on various activities related to ECOWAS. More Photographs
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