



Published on *Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the United States* (<https://www.liberianembassyus.org>)

[Home](#) > President Sirleaf Implores Babson College Graduates to Represent the Future, Embrace Higher Education

President Sirleaf Implores Babson College Graduates to Represent the Future, Embrace Higher Education

Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the United States , Wed, May 24, 2017

Wellesley, Massachusetts: President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has implored graduates of Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, the United States of America - who represent the future to embrace higher education, build upon it to innovate with it and never settle for the ordinary when the extraordinary is in their line of sight. According to a dispatch from the U.S., the Liberian leader was speaking when she delivered the commencement address at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts – U.S.A. She described commencement as a time to look ahead, to embark on the next chapter in your life, adding - your personal story is set to unfold. President Sirleaf told mainly young graduates that: "Change is everywhere. In October of this year, 1.9 million Liberians will go to the polls to elect a new legislature and a new president, and for the first time since 1944, we will be transferring democratic power from one government to another through free and fair elections." She said for the first time since the establishment of peace in 2003: "I will be just an ordinary voter, and not on the ballot. After 12 years as President, and making history as the first woman to be democratically elected to lead an African nation, I am looking forward to retiring, and working on my farm in Bomi." She told her electrified audience that throughout Africa, young people like the graduates, empowered through better education and technology, will push the continent forward, as they demand their right to be heard and their opportunity to contribute. "From the developed world, to emerging markets, job-creation consistently stands out as the paramount demand of the population; the Liberian leader told her all ears audience. President Sirleaf noted that: "Today, for a young Africa, where over 65% of the population is under the age of 35, creating jobs is not only an economic development priority, but a matter of national security and a humanitarian imperative. Without economic opportunity, without clear dividends from peace and democracy, a desperate youth population can become a destabilizing force, she intimated. She termed entrepreneurship not just a nice talent to have; but it is a key to unlocking a global system in need of innovation to accommodate an increasingly youthful population. She said wherever you look across Africa, hundreds of entrepreneurs of all ages are striving to make a living, whether they are farmers selling peppers in the local markets, software developers building platforms for e-commerce, or designers like Paris-based Liberian-born Abraham Pelham blending local textiles and modern styles, as I am wearing today – they are impacting the entrepreneurial landscape not only on the continent, but across the globe. President Sirleaf acknowledged many Babson graduates who have positively impacted the landscape in Liberia; notable amongst is Liberian-born Richelieu Dennis, who is transforming the natural hair industry with the Shea Moisture brand, and, through his work, is impacting the lives of young people both in Africa and in the inner cities of America. She then said the vital role that women play in the economy cannot be overemphasized. She cited the former Prime Minister of Israel Golda Meir why speaking truth to power said: "We women are not better than our men, but we are too good for our own countries and the world to do without our active participation in the struggle for peace and development." Observed that "It is really about empowerment, collaboration, and partnership; It is about fortitude, a level of conscientiousness, and the commitment to see things through." "Today you are a privileged group of young women and men with a bright future ahead of you. Over the years, you have worked hard, you have learned, you have heard countless stories from your professors, you have bonded with new friends from all over the world. You have been given the building blocks to go out and build a life for yourselves, the Liberian leader stressed. Meanwhile, during her visit to the United States, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf also attended as special guest the graduation of her Ms. Jenelle Elsa Sirleaf, a granddaughter from the prestigious University of Virginia. She graduated with Masters of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Virginia - Darden School of Business in Charlottesville, Virginia. Ms. Sirleaf was among 400 graduates from Darden School of Business, which is recognized to be among the world's ten best graduate business schools. A dispatch from the U.S. quoted President Sirleaf as thanking Jenelle Sirleaf for her inspiration and spirit of perseverance.



Mr. Jerolinmek Matthew Piah

Presidential Press Secretary/Office of the President

Department of Public Affairs

Republic of Liberia

email: jpiah@emansion.gov.lr/jeromapiah@yahoo.com

web: www.emansion.gov.lr

© Embassy of the Republic of Liberia

5201 16th Street, NW • Washington, DC 20011 • USA • (202) 723-0437

Source URL (modified on May 24 2017 - 1:35pm):<https://www.liberianembassyus.org/in-the-news/president-sirleaf-implores-babson-college-graduates-to-represent-the-future-embrace>