THE LIBERIAN EMBASSY, U S A

Newsletter | Volume III No. 2 | April-May, 2015

Liberia Back in Business

Thanking U.S. and Partners For Their Help Against Ebola

President Sirleaf with President Obama at the White House on February 27, 2015

With Liberia on the verge of being declared free of the deadly Ebola virus, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says Liberia has now seized back its future that was once threatened by the dreadful disease that plagued the country.

President Sirleaf declared Liberia back in business when she paid a visit to the United States February 24-March 1, 2015, to thank the American Government and people for the massive response to Liberia's appeal for assistance to combat the deadly pandemic. During various meetings and functions from Capitol Hill to the White House, among others, President Sirleaf thanked President Barack Obama, Members of Congress, the U.S. Military, non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, and the American people for the depth of friendship, remarkable partnership and exemplary leadership

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The Monrovia Redlight-Gbarnga-Guinea border Highway under construction

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At Capitol Hill Event, Pres. Sirleaf Expresses Gratitude to U.S. and International Community

On February 25, 2015, the second day of her visit to the United States, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf delivered an address at a special event on Capitol Hill, during which she expressed thanks and appreciation to the United States Government and people on behalf of the Liberian Government and people.

The jam-packed event, jointly hosted by Senator Chris Coons and the U.S. Institute of Peace, was held at the U.S. Capitol.

In her address, President Sirleaf also applauded the international community in general, which stepped up strongly in partnership with the United States, in helping Liberia to make enormous strides in containing the deadly Ebola virus disease.

She also expressed thanks on behalf of brothers and sisters of neighboring Guinea and Sierra Leone, two other countries worst affected by the Ebola Virus disease.

President Sirleaf reflected on the history of the Ebola crisis and its impact on the Liberian nation and people and the West African sub-region, particularly the three worst-affected countries.

"Over-stretched and over-tasked, our health system collapsed and our doctors and nurses, without proper protective gear, died treating the sick and needy for what they believed to be known and common diseases, such as malaria and yellow fever. With each painful death, the hopes of the nation, only recently generated after years of war and destruction, faded, to be replaced by understandable doubt and fear," she told the passionate and attentive audience.

She recalled that the international predictions were grim and terrifying with a particular prediction suggesting that before the end of January, 2015, at least 20,000 West African citizens would die every month in the three worst affected countries.

Liberia's economy, according to President Sirleaf, froze and nose-dived into recession, threatening to reverse the progress Liberia worked hard to achieve; with airlines stopping commercial flights; trade and travel routes suspended; contractors folded and left; and Liberians experiencing the chilling effects of stigmatization. "It was at this precarious moment, early in August, that I reached out to the Government and people of the United States of America. I wrote President Obama asking for America's support and called my friends in Congress," President Sirleaf reflected.

Pres. Sirleaf Addresses Capitol Hill Audience

Front row L-R U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, Deborah Malac, and Liberia's Ambassador to the U.S., Jeremiah C. Sulunteh

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U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry Receives President Sirleaf

Less than an hour before her meeting with President Barack Obama at the White House on February 27, 2015, the presidential motorcade stopped at the U.S. Department of State, where President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was warmly received by Secretary of State John Kerry. During a brief media ceremony following their meeting, Secretary Kerry described President Sirleaf as a "very distinguished world leader." He lauded the strong leadership President Sirleaf demonstrated during the Ebola crisis.

"In combating the Ebola epidemic," Secretary Kerry noted, "the United States took a very vigorous, every-hand-on-deck approach with the leadership of President Obama, in order to immediately respond as strongly as possible, combined with the leadership that President Sirleaf provided in order to maximize Liberia's own efforts with those of our partners."

The U.S. Secretary of State said President Obama made a courageous decision early on to deploy 3,000 American troops at a time when there were questions about what would specifically be needed and how much could be done, in order to build treatment centers and assist in training health workers. He added that the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Centers for Disease Control, the Department of Health and Human Services, among others, came together to play official roles.

He disclosed that since the Ebola outbreak, U.S. assistance, including food aid, totaled more than U.S. $1 billion. He added that since the end of Liberia's civil war in 2003, the United States had invested more than U.S. $2 billion to help Liberia rebuild and go forward.

Secretary Kerry also noted that in responding to the Ebola crisis, the global community was indispensable, considering that this was not something any one country could do by itself.

Secretary Kerry reaffirmed U.S. commitment to assisting Liberia continue on the path of reconstruction.

Responding, President Sirleaf noted that the partnership that came from the United States galvanized and crystallized an international partnership that joined the United States in the fight to contain the deadly Ebola virus disease. She added that it was a bold action for the Obama Administration to send military personnel. The landing of the American soldiers "sent a big message to the Liberian people that the United States was really with us, and they provided the kind of service that have advanced the capacity of our own military because they worked together to building those (Ebola) centers," she further indicated.

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Plans Underway to Revitalize Liberia's Healthcare System

The Jackson F. Doe Memorial Hospital in Tappita, Nimba County

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says plans are underway to revitalize Liberia's healthcare delivery system to provide quality healthcare for the Liberian people.

Speaking February 25, 2015 at a special event jointly hosted by Senator Chris Coons and the U.S. Institute of Peace on Capitol Hill, President Sirleaf said the cost for containing the deadly Ebola virus disease has been extremely high – and too high for many grieving families and the recovering Liberian nation to bear.

Ebola struck after ten years of sustained peace, "during which the country saw an average annual growth of 7 percent, experienced a reduction in the infant mortality rate, increased life expectancy by 17 additional years and the relieving of the country's external debts. We must now return to rebuilding Liberia's peace and prosperity, even as we eliminate the treat of Ebola," she stressed.

She said it would require updating the healthcare system, including early warning system that integrates the public and private sectors and revising the existing 10-year Health Plan with a focus on training to build and strengthen capacities that were lost when many of the country's frontline healthcare workers died during the epidemic.

"We are transitioning now from treatment to prevention with the support of over 100 partners from 26 countries and are determined to fill the gaps in the healthcare system. There is an inherent link between healthcare systems revitalization, economic recovery and peace building, which is stronger now than ever before.

"Therefore, Liberia's post-Ebola economic recovery, while continuing to accelerate improvements in infrastructure – roads, electricity and WATSAN operations, will prioritize healthcare delivery revitalization," President Sirleaf emphasized.

She committed to investment in the agriculture sector for food security and job creation, and announced that Liberia will work closely with USAID partners to address the immediate issues of food security and longer term program to develop a robust agriculture sector capable of feeding the nation.

She concluded by promising to tap into Liberian entrepreneurship in accelerating a private-sector led revival of the formal and informal sectors of the economy and commended the Ebola Private Sector Mobilization Group (EPSMG) for their role in the Ebola response and now encourage them to maintain their critical place at the table in the Ebola recovery.

Fact

Sapo National Park is a national park in Sinoe County, Liberia. It is the country's largest protected area of rainforest and its only national park, and contains the second-largest area of primary tropical rainfoest in West Africa after Taï National Park in neighboring Côte d'Ivoire.

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Liberia Seeks U.S. Leadership Role in its National Development Plan

Pres. Sirleaf (left middle) meeting with Acting USAID Administrator Lenhardt, right middle, and other U.S. officials

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has attributed the success in the fight against the deadly Ebola virus disease first to the resilience of the Liberian people who took ownership of the fight at the community level and the national efforts supported by the international intervention led by the United States of America.

President Sirleaf made the remarks when she met with the Acting Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ambassador Alfonso Lenhardt, and senior officials of the U.S. Government Inter-Agencies on February 25, 2015, as part of her on-going visit to the U.S.

"Your role was also very crucial providing the much needed support that enabled our people in the towns, villages and communities who were the victims to take ownership of the fight. The U.S. has been a great partner," she indicated.

"Today our kids are back in school, the curfew has been lifted, the borders are reopened, the markets are full again - what more can we say, but thank you," she pointed out, earning thunderous round of applause from the USAID staffers.

The Liberian leader said the challenge now for Liberia having turned the corner against Ebola, was to see how the U.S. Government could continue to remain engaged not just in helping to eradicate the disease, but also to play a lead role in the Liberian Government's efforts to get back on track with its national development plan - the Agenda for Transformation – post-Ebola.

Earlier in a meeting with the USAID Administrator and other senior officials of U.S. Inter-Agencies, President Sirleaf welcomed news of the new approved U.S. Government funding towards the final push against Ebola.

She said the Liberian Government's road to health program, upgrading the health sector to withstand future disease outbreaks, improving the agriculture sector with a focus on storing, preserving and processing, as well as support to the provision of basic social services were all vital areas such funding could go towards.

The USAID Administrator and other senior officials of Inter-Agencies lauded President Sirleaf for her brilliant leadership role and cooperation with the U.S. in the fight against Ebola.

They committed to work with the Liberian Government to, first ensure that Liberia reaches the zero case benchmark and to also remain engaged with Liberia so that the country not only get back on track with its national development programs upset by Ebola, but also explore new areas of cooperation.

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President Sirleaf Expresses the Need for U.S. Private Investments in Liberia

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia | OPIC President Elizabeth L. Littlefield

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf began her visit to the United States stressing the need for direct U.S. private investments in Liberia especially the post-Ebola era.

During a meeting February 25, 2015 with officials of the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) - an independent U.S. Government Agency that helps U.S. investments get a foothold in emerging markets like Liberia – President Sirleaf said private investments were needed to buttress Liberia's economic recovery efforts given the challenges associated with post-Ebola Liberia.

"We would like to have more U.S. private investments in Liberia," she said, adding, "It will help our job creation strategy while improving our economy and bettering the lives of our people."

The Liberia leader told the OPIC high-level delegation that there was a need to attract investments in key sectors such as agriculture, with emphasis on the fishing industry and upgrading support to small scale farmers from the level of subsistence farming. She said investments in transportation were also a key area of concentration with a focus on privatizing the Roberts International Airport and domestic airports in Liberia.

For the energy sector, President Sirleaf said private partnership investments would help Liberia make the much needed advancement to support other investments in health, education and security. "Energy has an interconnectivity to all these and we believe major investments in this sector would also enable us to improve these vital areas of our development," she stressed.

Responding, the OPIC President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Elizabeth Littlefield, first praised what she termed as the "extraordinary leadership role" of President Sirleaf in Liberia's fight to eradicate the Ebola virus disease from the country. "I recognize the resilience of you and the Liberian people in battling the Ebola epidemic. It's extraordinary," Madam Littlefield indicated. The U.S. OPIC CEO pledged to work with the Liberian Government in attracting U.S. private investment, saying, "We will work with our friends and private companies to look at Liberia favorably."

Earlier in the day, President Sirleaf met with Exon Mobil exploration officials headed by Mr. Walter Kansteiner. The meeting was aimed at persuading the company to do more regarding its investment in Liberia.

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Pres. Sirleaf Visits Pentagon to Thank U.S. Military for Ebola Aid

Pres. Sirleaf with U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter at the Pentagon

The Liberian leader received by the Military Honor Guard at the Pentagon

As part of her series of engagements in Washington, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf paid a visit to the Pentagon on February 27, 2015, to thank the U.S. Military for its critical role in the fight to contain the deadly Ebola virus disease, particularly in Liberia.

The Liberian leader was greeted upon arrival by a military guard of honor mounted outside despite the frigid winter weather in Washington at the time. The President and her delegation were received by Defense Secretary Ashton Carter.

During their meeting the President and Defense Secretary Carter discussed the unprecedented collaboration between the U.S. Department of Defense and the Armed Forces of Liberia in responding to the Ebola spread.

Secretary Carter reiterated his department's support to Liberia during the next phase of Operation United Assistance, which is the code name for the U.S. military operation to combat the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

The Pentagon is headquarters of the U.S. Department of Defense

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President Sirleaf Meets President Obama at the White House

U.S. President Barrack Obama has described President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as a friend and ally of the United States of America and committed his government to supporting Liberia with its post-Ebola Recovery Plan.

President Obama made the disclosure during a media stakeout with the Liberian leader at the White House before a private bilateral meeting at the Oval Office on Friday, February 27, 2015.

After warmly receiving the President and her delegation, President Obama noted that Liberia and the United States have an extraordinary bond of friendship.

President Obama recalled Liberia's brutal civil war that killed thousands of people and how the Sirleaf Administration has worked to revive the once destroyed and ravished nation to an unprecedented level of progress, and that Madam President came into office under some of the most challenging of circumstances. He added that 2014 was a difficult year for Liberia, but that President Sirleaf's extraordinary leadership proved a difference in making the situation what it is now.

"I want to express my deepest condolences to the thousands who died from this deadly disease," said President Obama. "Their families obviously continue to grieve."

"But what is extraordinary is because of President Sirleaf's leadership, because of the heroism of so many people in Liberia, and because of the actions of the United States and ultimately the international community, we have made extraordinary strides in driving back Ebola," President Obama said. He, however, indicated that the job is not done yet because Guinea and Sierra Leone are somewhat behind the progress that has been made in Liberia.

In the meantime, he indicated, "normal life is beginning to return to Liberia. Children are beginning to go back to school. People are beginning to go back to soccer matches. Businesses have reopened. And the flow and rhythm of normal life has begun to return." President Obama assured the Liberian leader that he will work with her government to restart and strengthen Liberia's economy, build infrastructure and help implement previous development goals already set by the Sirleaf Administration.

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Members of U.S. Congress Express Strong Commitment to Assist Liberia's Post-Ebola Recovery

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, accompanied by Ambassador Jeremiah C. Sulunteh, with Members of the U. S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Capitol Hill

During her visit to the United States to show appreciation to the U.S. Government and people for standing with Liberia during the Ebola crisis, President Ellen Johnson met with key Congressional leaders and ranking members of both Houses of the U.S. Congress in Washington D.C. on February 26, 2015.

President Sirleaf and delegation held discussions with House Democratic and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senators Lindsey Graham and Patrick Leahy of the Senate Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs; Senator Jeffery Flake and members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Senator Chris Coons of the Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations; Representative Ed Royce, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, along with Ranking Members, including Representatives Elliott Engel, Chris Smith, and Karen Baas.

In separate remarks at the different meetings, the U.S. Senators and Representatives welcomed President Sirleaf and delegation on Capitol Hill and held discussions on many critical issues.

Democratic Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi recalled President Sirleaf's visit in 2006 when she addressed the Joint Session of both Houses of the U.S. Congress, and congratulated her for her impressive leadership particularly during the Ebola crisis. You are a true friend to the American people and we appreciate the special recognition accorded the late Congressman Donald Payne. Let me express our admiration for you and say how grateful we are for the progress made by Liberia in containing the Ebola virus disease," the Democratic leader Pelosi emphasized. **Cont'd on page 10**

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Members of U.S. Congress Express Strong Commitment...cont'd from page 9

Pres. Sirleaf Face –to-Face with Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi

Congresswoman Pelosi assured President Sirleaf that the U.S. will stand by Liberia as the country works toward reaching the zero new case level and the post-Ebola recovery plan. "We can achieve this because members of the U.S. Congress are your fans at the bi-partisan level. We are very impressed with your courageous leadership, Madam President," Madam Pelosi indicated.

For his part, Senator Chris Coons noted that Liberia deserves the support of the United States of America. The influential Delaware Senator, who is a ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, assured President Sirleaf that Congress will ensure that Liberia's situation gets better.

The Senators and Representatives who met the Liberian President pledged to use their respective offices, influence and power to give Liberia the needed support to move from the fringes of Ebola to a plain of sustained recovery and development.

The need for sustainable electrical power for Liberia under the Power Africa Program was echoed by Senator Coons, Representative Royce, and other Congressional leaders who met President Sirleaf.

"Power is of critical importance to Liberia's recovery process. All the developmental processes in Liberia are hinged on the provision of sustainable energy supply and we are committed to helping Liberia meet this important goal", Congressman Royce emphasized. He said rebuilding the healthcare system and health infrastructure are also critical to efforts aimed at helping Liberia recover from the impact of the Ebola virus disease.

For her part, President Sirleaf told the U.S. Congressional leaders and members that Liberia is back in business. "We have only come to say thank you on behalf of the people and in my own name for all that you have done for us, especially when we cried out for help and you responded in no small measure," President Sirleaf stressed at the various meetings with leaders of both sides of the U.S. Congress. She pointed out that the Government and people of Liberia are glad that kids were now back in school, **Cont'd on page 11**

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Members of U.S. Congress Express Strong Commitment...cont'd from page 10

Pres. Sirleaf Confers with Senator Chris Coons

Congressman Ed Royce converses with President Sirleaf

markets are buzzing again, the borders have reopened and the restriction on people's movement lifted. She also indicated that most importantly, the spirits of Liberians are lifted and reignited in hope, and that the country was now back to the business of development.

President Sirleaf Meets President Obama at the White House Cont'd from page 8

We are looking at the return of the Peace Corps, ensure the process to reduce corruption, deliver basic services, etc. This is the kind of partnership we are concerned about," President Obama stressed.

For her part, President Sirleaf noted that she was in the U.S. to say thanks to President Obama, the U.S. Congress and the American people and institutions on behalf of the Liberian people.

"We recall when the U.N. Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, called a global meeting to discuss this disease, one which we said was the most threatening to global peace, you were there," she told President Obama. "And you gave the clarion call to the global community to see the threat this disease represented. As a result of that, the support that came from U.S. entities was then supplanted by so many others around the world."

The Liberian President said she understood the fear in the American society at the time regarding the Ebola virus disease because the Liberian people were fearful themselves as they were confronted with an unknown enemy.

She acknowledged the timely intervention of the U.S. military. "Thanks Mr. President for the role of the U.S. military. Their deployment raised the motivation and confidence of the Liberian people and strengthened the capacity of our own national army that can now build new infrastructure and impact the development process," the Liberian leader said.

President Sirleaf also praised the Liberian people and communities who, she said, took charge of the situation and vowed that they will not allow themselves to die from the disease. "They took responsibility and confronted the virus. Going forward, we must strengthen this asset and apply their experience in the post-Ebola era," she said.

She told U.S. President that she wants to see the partnership with the U.S. continue as Liberia rebuilds its economy and infrastructure during the post-Ebola period and stressed the need to look toward a regional approach to the crisis as well. "The partnership with the U.S. and President Obama has worked and is now a success story. Thanks for your leadership. We are proud of what has been accomplished with you and the American people," President Sirleaf noted.

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Pres. Sirleaf Applauds World Bank for Ebola Support

President Sirleaf poses with World Bank President, Dr. Jim Yong Kim, at a meeting in Washington, D.C.

During her recent trip to the U.S., President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf also visited the Headquarters of the World Bank Group in Washington on February 27, 2015, to thank the WBG for supporting Liberia in the fight to contain the Ebola virus disease.

The Liberian leader and her delegation were received by Dr. Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank Group, and other senior officials of the WBG. Dr. Kim lauded President Sirleaf for her strong leadership that has enabled Liberia to turn the tide in the fight against the Ebola virus disease.

Since the outbreak of the Ebola crisis, the WBG has supported Liberia and the other countries worst affected by the deadly disease. For example, on September 17, 2014, an agreement for a $105 million grant by the WBG to finance Ebola containment efforts underway in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone was signed at the WBG Headquarters by officials representing the three countries. Liberia's Ambassador to the U.S., H.E. Jeremiah C. Sulunteh, signed on behalf of Liberia.

Under the WBG's new Ebola Response Project, U.S. $52 million was earmarked for Liberia, which had the highest number of Ebola infection; while $28 million was earmarked for Sierra Leone, and $25 million for Guinea.

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MCC Signs $2.8 Million Compact with Liberia

Signing L-R: MCC CEO Dana J. Hyde, and Liberian Finance Minister Amara Konneh. Standing L-R: Liberian Ambassador to the U.S., Jeremiah C. Sulunteh, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Linda Thomas Greenfield, and U.S. Deputy Secretary of State for Resources and Management, Heather Higginbottom

On February 24, 2015, Deputy U.S. Secretary of State for Management and Resources, Heather Higginbottom, and Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Chief Executive Officer, Dana J. Hyde, welcomed Finance and Development Planning Minster of Liberia, Hon. Amara Konneh, in the Treaty Room of the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C. for a $2.8 million MCC compact development agreement signing. The signing ceremony formalized $2.8 million in compact development funds for Liberia, as the country begins its post-Ebola recovery.

A Thank- you letter to Madame Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia

Dear Madam President

Over the last few months our beloved country was plunged into an abyss of untold sufferings, uncertainties and unparalleled fear. The Ebola epidemic claimed the lives of many of our compatriots and sickened thousands more. Hopelessness and pandemonium masked the faces of every Liberian the world over. The end to Ebola seemed illusive and Liberia seemed a vanquished nation. When it looked as if whatever hopes to win the fight against Ebola had dissipated, you summoned the courage, and garnered the wisdom to highlight to the world that the essence of global community is that, we aren't defined by imaginary lines called borders, but rather by our common humanity. And that the problem associated with the Ebola epidemic isn't only Liberia's and the region; it's also the world's problem. As a result, a robust international response to aid the government and people of Liberia win the fight against Ebola was mustered. **cont'd on page 15**

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Liberia Gets US $36.5 Million from IMF's New Trust for Disaster Recovery

IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde (5th from left) receives President Sirleaf in Washington

While President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was on her visit to the United States February 24-March 1, 2015, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a U.S. $36.5 million in debt relief to Liberia in the form of grant from a newly established trust set up to help low-income countries recover from natural disasters.

The IMF said the move aimed to enhance Liberia's international reserves and meet urgent balance of payments and fiscal needs resulting from the Ebola crisis.

The IMF Board also approved a $45.6 million for Liberia under the Rapid Credit Facility, a lending arrangement that provides rapid financial support for low-income countries facing urgent financial needs.

According to the IMF, the package of financing for Liberia draws on $100 million in debt relief funded by IMF grants, announced earlier in February 2015. The debt relief follows $130 million in emergency assistance the IMF disbursed in September 2014 to African countries worst hit by the Ebola outbreak – Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

During her trip to the United States, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf visited the Headquarters of the IMF Headquarters in Washington on February 27, 2015, to thank the global financial entity for supporting Liberia, especially during the Ebola crisis.

President Sirleaf and her delegation were received by IMF Managing Director, Christine Lagarde and other senior officials of the IMF. Madam Lagarde lauded the President for her leadership, which has enabled Liberia to make significant progress in the fight to contain the Ebola virus disease, and affirmed the IMF's continued partnership with Liberia.

The President was accompanied by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Hon. Amara Konneh; Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Hon. Lewis Brown; Hon. Seward Cooper, Legal Advisor to the President; and Liberia's Ambassador to the U.S., H.E. Jeremiah Sulunteh.

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Liberians in the Diaspora Commend Pres. Sirleaf's Support for Dual Citizenship

Liberians in the Diaspora have lauded the continued effort of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in the quest to achieve Dual Citizenship rights for Liberian born nationals. The commendation to the Liberian leader was contained in a statement delivered by the President of the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA), Mr. Gaye D. Sleh, Jr., on February 27, 2015, during the President's visit to the United States.

In his statement delivered at a reception held in honor of the President at the Ambassador's Residence in Washington, D.C., the ULAA leader expressed gratitude to President Sirleaf for her expressed commitment to the cause of citizenship rights for all Liberians, which he described as a key ingredient in the postwar reconstruction process. He challenged her administration to work diligently for the passage of a legislation to ratify the citizenship laws of Liberia so as to include dual citizenship. Mr. Sleh commended the government and people of Liberia for their resilience in the dark chapter of Ebola and expressed pride over the tremendous show of support by Liberians in the Diaspora in the fight against the deadly pandemic. The ULAA leader also urged the Liberian Government to intensify effort in the fight against corruption. During the occasion, Mr. Sleh presented a crystal award to the President for her leadership in the fight against Ebola and for her support for Dual Citizenship **(cont'd on page 16)**

A Thank- you letter to Madame Sirleaf,

(cont'd from page 13)

Owing to that appeal by your Excellency, significant progress has been made on the Ebola front. Hope and serenity have briskly returned to the shores of Liberia. Nowadays laughter and joy permeates the faces of the people of Liberia. Normalcy as we know it in Liberia is rapidly returning. And the glorious land of Liberty still is. Thank you Madame President for keeping raised our burnished shield of golden fame, when fears and doubts assailed.

While it is true that we have not always agreed on policy or politics, I am cognizant of the fact that politics ends at the water's edge. And that our strength as a nation resides in our unity as a people. Moreover, it is only prudent and expedient to render praise where praise is due. And, Madam President, your pristine leadership in the fight against Ebola is worthy of praise **(cont'd on page 18)**

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Liberians in the Diaspora Commend Pres. Sirleaf's Support for Dual Citizenship

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The Award was presented on behalf of the "The All Liberian Conference on Dual Citizenship," which includes ULAA, the European Federation of Liberian Associations (EFLA), the Coalition of Concerned Liberians (CCL), the Federation of Liberian Communities in Australia (FOLICA), the Conference of Liberians Organizations in South Western United States (COLOSUS), and the Union of Liberians in Ghana (ULAG).

Another crystal award was presented to Ambassador Jeremiah C. Sulunteh for his active role in the fight against Ebola.

For her part, President Sirleaf praised the relentless support given by Liberians in the Diaspora in the critical moments of the country, and encouraged Liberians abroad to contribute to the development of their nation, adding, "You don't have to be home to give back to your country."

She pledged her government's commitment to work towards a better Liberia in spite of major setbacks the country has encountered, including the Ebola outbreak.

Among those at the jam-packed reception were members of the Presidential Delegation, which included Hon. Amara Konneh, Minister of Finance and Development Planning; Hon. Lewis Brown, Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism; and Hon. Seward Cooper, Legal Advisor to the President.

Also in attendance were former Liberian Foreign Minister Olubanke King Akerele, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield; and U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, Ambassador Deborah R. Malac.

Others at the impressive event included Emmanuel Wettee, Chairman of the All Liberian Conference on Dual Citizenship; John F. Lloyd, National Chairman of the Coalition of Concerned Liberians; members of the Embassy's Ebola Relief Steering Committee; leaders and representatives of various Liberian community organizations and Liberian-related charity groups; and friends of Liberia.

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Liberia and the European Union (EU) sign €279 million development package

Finance & Dev. Planning Minister Konneh and the EU Commissioner Mimica sign the EURO 279 million development package under the European Union National Indicative Program (NIP)

President Sirleaf (c) poses with Minister Konneh and EU Commissioner Mimica following the signing ceremony

The EU cooperation program with Liberia, which covers 2014 to 2020, will seek to address priority areas that are essential to growth and recovery from the medium and long-term.

According to a dispatch from Brussels, Belgium, the ceremony occurred on March 3, 2015, and was witnessed by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Liberia's National Authorizing Officer, and Finance and Development Planning Minister, Hon. Amara Konneh, signed on behalf of the Liberian government, while the European Union Commissioner for International Development, Neven Mimica, signed on behalf of the EU. The event took place on the sidelines of the high-level international conference on Ebola. EU Commissioner Mimica, in brief remarks, said the signing signifies the EU's strong commitment to promoting stability and reconciliation as well as equitable and inclusive development in Liberia. He said the EU's support targets important areas for sustainable development and growth, and stressed the continuation of EU and Liberia's long-term partnership. Under the Governance Pillar, the EU cooperation will support the overall improvement of the management of the public sector and also address the ability to deliver services as well as focus on the consolidation of peace, democracy, the rule of law and security. In the area of Energy, the program aims to improve access to sustainable and affordable electricity for the general population and for productive activities.The program also seeks to improve the quality of education, equity and accessibility of basic education and technical and vocational education and training; agriculture sustainability; increased agriculture productivity and added value, including improved access to domestic and international markets, as well as developing nutrition-sensitive production systems.

Fact

Liberia is home to the Pygmy Hippos (*Hippopotamus guldbergi*) – conservation of this critically endangered species, and their forest habitat – are little known, underfunded and needs support.

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Regional Approach and Collaboration Key to Zero Ebola Cases

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says strong and concerted regional support with help from international partners is needed to achieve a robust recovery program, similar to what she called a "Marshall Plan" that will demand huge resource allocation. According to a dispatch from Brussels, Belgium, the Liberian leader spoke on behalf of the three most Ebola affected countries (Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone) at the European Union high-level Ebola Conference on March 3, 2015. She said, over the past decade, the three affected Mano River Union (MRU) countries made significant gains in the process of reconstruction after years of conflict. President Sirleaf stressed that as a result of the Ebola outbreak, families and communities were torn apart, doctors, teachers, mothers, religious leaders and other opinion leaders were greatly affected and the disease robbed the communities of its ability to care for its own people. The Liberian leader indicated that the countries' health systems collapsed when health care workers, nurses and doctors died trying to treat the sick, not knowing the nature of disease they were treating. She said that airlines stopped operating, borders were closed, public gatherings restricted, farms and markets ceased activities, schools closed, investors fled and commercial activities plummeted, fiscal balances weakened as revenue fell, and expenditure increased largely on health operations. **Cont'd on Page 19**

A Thank- you letter to President Sirleaf

(cont'd from page 15)

Quite recently Liberia tended to its last Ebola patient. Thank you, Madam President! And long live the glorious land of Liberty. All hail Liberia hail, all hail!

If anything, Madam President, the Ebola crisis has once again shown the collective resilience of the Liberian people. It has shown that we aren't defined by our fears but rather our hopes. It has shown that we are a people whose destiny is guided by the Almighty as is loudly proclaimed in our National Anthem, wherein it says: "With God above our rights to prove, we'll o'er prevail". It is my ardent hope that God will endow you with the wisdom to inspire us all to come with hearts and hands, and unpretending valor to our country cause defending, as you lead us to the "finish line" against the backdrop that if we all do a little, we can do a lot in meeting the challenges of post-Ebola Liberia.

I also do fervently hope that at the "finish line" we can find ourselves a reconciled people, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. . Again, owing to that leadership, Liberians can now face the post-Ebola era with certainty, renewed hope and unmatched vigor. **Respectfully, Joel Eric Williamson, I. Parkville, MD, USA jericwmson@yahoo.com**

Fact

The U. S. recognized Liberia's independence during the Lincoln Presidency in 1862

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MRU Chairman and Guinean President, Alpha Conde (left), Liberian President Sirleaf (c) and Sierra Leonean President Ernest Bai Koroma at the EU-sponsored Brussels meeting on March 3, 2015

. She added that the forecast may deteriorate even further this year. President Sirleaf said despite the situation, the region has made significant progress in containing the virus. She added that economic activities are gradually returning, cross border markets are once again working, farmers are back on their farms preparing for the planting season, and schools are again opening. The overall economic activities in the region declined as a result of the Ebola outbreak. GDP projection for 2014 across the region, which was at 7.3 percent, reduced to 2.5 percent. She added that the forecast may deteriorate even further this year. President Sirleaf recalled that at an Extraordinary Summit of the MRU in Conakry, Guinea on February 15, 2015, the three countries agreed on a common strategy to get to a zero Ebola infection within the period of 60 days by April 15, 2015.She said achieving this is a major challenge but it focuses on infection prevention and control, social mobilization, community engagement, cross border surveillance, collaboration and coordination.

The Liberian leader urged members of the international community and partners to support common but differentiated country strategies for the reopening and strengthening of healthcare systems that will minimize the risk of recurrence of the virus. She said a long term response to Ebola rests in the region's economic recovery plans which focuses on private sector-led growth, expanding and attracting investment with the highest potential to create large number of sustainable jobs and support the expansion of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises.The Liberian leader noted that the overall economic activities in the region declined as a result of the Ebola outbreak. GDP projection for 2014 across the region, which was at 7.3 percent, reduced to 2.5 percent

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Reid Temple Academy Students Attend Field Trip at Liberian Embassy

As part of their school's academic program, students of the 7th Grade Class of Reid Temple Christian Academy in Glenn Dale, MD attended a field trip at the Embassy of Liberia on Monday, March 23, 2015.

The field-trip was conducted under what is called the Global Embassy Mentors (GEM) Program, under which each of the various classes at the school adopt a country, and learn about the country's history, social and cultural practices, among others. The school's Global Embassy Mentors Program include visitation of students to the embassy of the country that is adopted for a class, visitation of the embassy representatives to the school's activities, establish relationship with a school in the adopted country, encourage students in both schools to establish personal contacts through Skype or e-mail, and also create opportunities for student exchange.

During their visit to the Embassy, the students, beautifully attired in their uniforms, were received in audience by the Acting Chief of Mission, Honorable Jeff Dowana, who acted on behalf of Ambassador Jeremiah Sulunteh, who is away.

Hon. Dowana welcomed the students and hoped that the field trip would broaden their understanding about Liberia, founded in the early 1800s by freed men and women of color from the United States.

The Minister Counselor for Press and Public Affairs, Honorable Gabriel I.H. Williams, lectured the students on the history, culture or tradition of Liberia. Mr. Williams, who coordinated the field trip, told the students that 10 of Liberia's past presidents were American born, and three of them were born in Maryland, U.S.A.

The impressive event was more interactive, as the students asked questions and shared information based on their study of the history and current state of affairs of Liberia.

Mrs. Donna Edwards, Reid Temple Christian Academy's Assistant Principal, thanked the Embassy for the very warm reception accorded the students, and looked forward to deepening the relationship between the Embassy and the school.

The field trip is the third of its kind since the Embassy of Liberia became a part of Reid Temple Academy's Global Embassy Mentors Program, the first of which was held October 4, 2012.

A private institution, Reid Temple Academy has classes from pre-K-2 to 8th grade.

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Reception Tendered in Honor of President Sirleaf at the Ambassador's Residence - A Pictorial

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Reception Tendered in Honor of President Sirleaf at the Ambassador's Residence - A Pictorial

R-L , 1st Sec. C. Nippy, Deputy Chief of Mission , Jeff Dowana and Guests

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Liberia Back In Business

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which they showed in joining Liberia on the frontlines of the battle against the deadly Ebola virus disease.

The Liberian leader also applauded the international community in general for responding massively to Liberia's appeal for assistance to combat the deadly pandemic.

The visit, the first President Sirleaf made to the United States in nearly a year because she had to stay in Liberia to lead the fight against deadly mysterious disease, was regarded to be very successful.

The highlight of President Sirleaf's week-long visit was her meeting with President Obama at the White House on February 27, 2015. During a media stakeout with the Liberian leader before a bilateral meeting at the Oval Office, President Obama described President Sirleaf as a friend and ally of the United States and committed his government to supporting Liberia with its post-Ebola recovery plan.

For her part, President Sirleaf said she was in the U.S. to say thanks to President Obama, the U.S. Congress and the American people and institutions on behalf of the Liberian people for the massive support given to Liberia in the fight to contain the deadly Ebola virus.

Details on President Sirleaf's White House visit are found on page 8. This publication is an overview of the President's visit to Washington, D.C. It also features the President's successful visit to Brussels, Belgium, where she flew from the U.S. to participate in a High-level Ebola Conference held under the auspices of the European Union. From Europe, the President returned on March 6 to the U.S., where she participated in a number of major international events in New York. Among them, President Sirleaf addressed the UN High-level Thematic Debate on "Advancing Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls..."; and she also served as Guest Speaker at the launch of "No Ceiling Full Participation Report on Women's Progress," hosted by former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and philanthropist Melinda Gates, wife of Bill Gates and co-founder of the Bill & Malinda Gates Foundation.

Fact Liberia was established in 1816 by freed men and woman of color from the United States

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do I apply for a new Liberian Passport? A: Apply online @ www.Liberiapassports.com and follow instructions; apply in person at the Embassy in Washington, D.C. or the Liberian Consulate in New York. Q: : Why do I have to fly all the way to Washington, D.C. to complete my passport application process? A: Because the equipment to collect the required biometric data is available only at the Embassy in Washington, D.C. and the Consulate in New York. Q: ***What documents must accompany my application for a new passport?*** A: An old Liberian passport, a Liberian birth certificate, or a certificate of citizenship/naturalization. Q: ***Why is the Embassy of Liberia not renewing old Liberian passports?*** A: Because the Government of Liberia has officially changed its passport to the new ECOWAS BIOMETRIC passport. Old passports are no longer renewable. Q: **How long does it take to receive the passport after application** A: 30 Business days after the interview. Q: **How do I apply for a Visa to travel to *Liberia?*** A: Go to the Embassy's website at www.liberianembassyus.org. Q: **What are the Requirements for Visa?** A: When you access the Embassy's website and click on Visa, you will find the requirements. Q: **How long does it take for visa processing?** A: Seven (7) business days. Q: **Who is required to obtain Visa to travel to Liberia?** A: Passport holders of all foreign countries that are not members of ECOWAS are required to *obtain Visa to enter Liberia.*

The Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the United States is located at 5201 16th Street N.W. , Washington, D.C. 20011. Open to serve the Public, Monday thru Friday, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

WEBSITE: www.Liberianembassyus.org; Phone : (202)723-0437 Fax: (202)723-0436

Jan 1	New Year Day
Feb. 11	Armed Forces Day
March (2nd Wednesday)	Decoration Day
March 15	JJ Roberts Birthday
April (2nd Friday)	Fast and Prayer Day
April** Good Friday	
May 14	National Unification Day
July 26	Independence Day
August 24 Flag Day	
October 24	United Nations Day
November (1st Thursday) Thanksgiving Day	
November 29	President Tubman's Birthday
December 25	Christmas Day

Note

In Addition to these holidays, the Liberian Embassy and other Consulates in the U.S. Follow the Federal Government closing schedule

Editorial Staff

Gabriel I.H. Williams Minister Counselor for Press and Public Affairs, Editor
Gabriel.Williams@liberianembassyus.org

Graphics/tech. co-Editor: Edmund Kai Neblett Sr.

Business Manager : Doliakeh Quoimie

Telephone : (202)723-0437 Fax: (202)723-0436
Email newsletter@liberianembassyus.org