

**Remarks by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
at the 237th Independence Day Reception of the United States of America
Executive Pavilion
Wednesday, July 3, 2013**

Ambassador Malac, U.S. Embassy Staff & Citizens;
Honorable Members of the Legislature and of the Judiciary;
The Doyen and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
The Dean, Members of the Cabinet and Other Officials of Government;
Traditional Leaders;
Political, Religious, Business, Youth and Civil Society Leaders;
Media Representatives;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

We celebrate, this eve, the 237th Independence Anniversary of the United States of America, a nation that remains a beacon of freedom, democracy and prosperity.

On behalf of the Government and people of Liberia, and through you, Madam Ambassador, we extend warmest greetings, and congratulations, to the Government and people of your great country as you mark this significant milestone.

The relationship between our two countries is warmer than at any period in a century-and-a-half of bilateral relations, exemplified, most recently, by the inaugural meeting of the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue; by Liberia being declared eligible for Compact Status under the Millennium Challenge Corporation Account.

During a visit to the United States in May, I had the opportunity to brief congressional and Administration officials on the Statement of Intent that launched the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue. At that first working session, held on May 7 in Washington, D.C, we agreed to deepen our bilateral cooperation in Agriculture and Food Security, Energy and Power Infrastructure. We look forward to the next meeting of the Dialogue, in Monrovia, where we will hold the first working group session on Human Development, which is critical to our drive to advance human security through greater access to education and increased employment, especially for our young people.

At a Pentagon meeting, the talks centered on the security sector, Liberia's request for the AFRICOM Mentoring program to continue beyond 2014, and the need for institutionalizing training programs. We also sought U.S. support, in logistics and protective gear, to enable the deployment of the Liberian Platoon to the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) – an event which occurred some two weeks ago. That support, along with U.S. mentorship and sponsorship of our small contingent, demonstrates America's partnership with Liberia in ensuring peace and stability in sub-Saharan Africa.

We were delighted to be selected, last year, for Compact Status – passing 10 of the 20 indicators required under the MCC Initiative – and we look forward to expanding our partnership under the new Compact agreement in the coming months. The Compact being developed by our teams collaboratively will provide needed support in the areas identified as the primary constraints to economic growth, most especially energy.

We join the many others in welcoming President Obama back to our continent, and believe that his trip has energized cooperation and manifested itself in greater U.S.-Africa public and private ties, particularly as it relates to foreign direct investment. We are extremely pleased that Liberia was one of six countries selected for President Barack Obama's new "Power Africa" Initiative, which he unveiled during his visit to South Africa, and which, with funding from the U.S. Government and private companies, will invest in providing power to millions of Africans crippled by a lack of electricity.

Our government appreciates the policy of the Obama Administration toward Africa. Post-war Liberia continues to witness a marked increase in the level of U.S. cooperation and assistance in areas of security, accountable governance, health and human capacity development. We applaud the contribution of the Peace Corps and their support of the Twinning Program which will provide young Liberian graduates the opportunity to work with volunteers in teaching assignments across the country.

As a natural resource country, we appreciate President Obama's call to all African countries for better management of these resources. We are also mindful of the Africa Progress Report and of Liberia's progress and challenges which are identified therein. We believe that the commitment of world leaders, through the G8, to support African countries in getting a better deal from their natural resources, by stemming illicit financial flows and encouraging accelerated industrialization that will address common challenges of youth unemployment.

Liberia is today enjoying ten years of uninterrupted peace, which has enabled us to intensify the processes of economic reconstruction and national renewal. The progress is evident by the policies and strategies we have formulated and implemented, including our *Vision 2030 Agenda for Transformation* which emphasizes creating jobs for our people, improving our energy and other physical infrastructure, and empowering our citizens, especially the youth. This period has also enabled us to regain our national creditworthiness, dignity and international recognition. In the achievement of these and many other goals, the United States has stood by Liberia.

Once again, we congratulate the American Government and people on your 237th Anniversary. Thank you for supporting Liberia in our recovery and rebuilding efforts. Needless to say, our two nations are bound by a kinship which transcends contemporary diplomatic relationships. We were born of the same dream and the same ideals of freedom, liberty, justice and prosperity for all. We are not only friends, we are family!

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I invite you to raise your glasses, and let us drink to the good health, long life and happiness of President Barack and Michelle Obama; to the prosperity and well-being of the American people; and to the bonds of friendship and cooperation which exist between the Republic of Liberia and the United States of America.

Happy Independence Day, on the Fourth of July!