

Remarks by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
At Handover Ceremony of the Tappita Hospital
Tappita City, Nimba County
Friday, July 23, 2010

Kaa Buwaa!

As we accept these modern facilities this evening, we give recognition to patriotism, as exemplified by our dear Paramount Chief Strother, who gave up his land freely to the Government for public service; exemplified by the people of Tappita District, who worked here diligently; without any stealing or pilfering, they took care of it.

We give recognition to persistence and commitment, exemplified by Representative Gaye, and by Senator Dolo who kept after us, and who, all the time, would call us to ask, "Eh, Madam President, what about the hospital?" He would call the Chinese Ambassador and ask, "What about the hospital?" He would say to me, "When I come down, I'll bring you one goat." I told him, 'No more goat; we'll build the hospital.' His persistence to see this hospital for his people is just such an example of commitment.

We give recognition to professionalism, professionalism in duty, exemplified by all the Chinese workers who spent days and nights and who labored to get this work done in time so that it could form part of the "26 Day Celebration."

To all the officials of Nimba – the Superintendent, the Legislative Caucus, and all those who gave support – the Mayor of Tappita District, all the District Commissioners – and who were able to join hands behind those who worked, so that we could make this thing possible.

Most importantly, we give recognition tonight to partnership, the strong partnership between Liberia and the People's Republic of China. We might even say that this "26 Celebration" is China's celebration, because we started off dedicating the Fendall Campus of the University of Liberia, a \$21.8 million facility; we went from there to CARI, where we dedicated the Agricultural Technology Demonstration Center, another big edifice; and now here, where we see this \$10-million-plus modern referral hospital which will serve Nimba County as well

as the other counties in the Southeast, and even our neighboring country, Côte d'Ivoire, across the border.

We cannot say enough for this friendship and what Ambassador Zhou himself has brought to it, in moving all of those things forward, under the bilateral program. We want to say to him how much we appreciate him and all that he has done to support this friendship.

We do want to recognize, because we would not have gotten here were it not for them, our Public Works team – the Minister of Public Works and his team – who worked on this road all night to enable us to ride to Sanniquellie and to drive here, although they've still got small work to do on this side.

We want to thank all of you who have come; all of you who have stood by the Chinese team and worked with them so well, as we now move to the next phase, to take this over, by Minister Gwengale and his group.

We are very sorry that the Egyptian Ambassador did not make it, or was not told, because they have already committed so many Egyptian doctors under the tripartite arrangement in which China will do some things, the Liberian Government will do some things, and so will the Egyptian Government. And Nigeria too; Nigeria has already committed fifty doctors who are already in-country, and some of them will be coming up here to work.

Thank you all for our Birthday; thank you for all the contributions to our Government. Forward, Ever! Backward, Never!