

Goodwill Message by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
To National Convention of the Kru Community in Sinoe County
Kabada, Kpanyan Statutory District

December 9, 2010

(Delivered, on the President's behalf, by Sinoe County Superintendent, J. Milton Teahjay)

Hon. Joseph Nimely, President of the forty-eight sections of the Krus in Sinoe;
Executive Officers of the Krus in Sinoe;
Mr. President Pro-Temp of the Liberian Senate, Senator Cletus Wotorson;
Senator Joseph N. Nagbe and Representative Jefferson Karmo of Sinoe;
Mr. Superintendent of Sinoe County, J. Milton Teahjay;
Honorable Delegates of the forty-eight sections of the Krus in Sinoe;
Leaders of Civil Society Organizations present;
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;
Fellow Citizens:

As you gather for the National Convention of the Kru Community in Sinoe County, let me convey to you heartfelt congratulations and best wishes, on behalf of the Government and your fellow peace-loving Liberians.

We trust that your deliberations, over the next four days in Kabada, Kpanyan Statutory District, will serve the common interest of your membership – constituting the forty-eight sections of the Krus in Sinoe County – and that the outcome will be a united and fruitful one that will benefit your community and our nation.

Let us first give thanks to Almighty God that our country is at peace, well nigh seven years, and that because of the resilience of our people, Liberia is on an irreversible path to national recovery and development.

I feel a special kinship with Sinoe, and with the Krus of your beautiful and verdant county, because my maternal grandmother, Juah Sarwee, was a farmer and market woman from Greenville. I had a memorable visit when I celebrated my birthday in Sinoe a year ago. And so, as we say, Kru and Sapo blood courses through my veins, and I'm proud to be Kru.

I see the holding of this Convention as a major step forward in your collective effort to foster peace and reconciliation in the various localities both within Sinoe and wherever the Krus live, including the large community of New Kru Town, in Montserrado County, which I enjoy visiting every chance I get.

This Convention is a further signal that peace is taking hold, and that our country is on an irreversible path to recovery and development. Let us all pledge to join forces in seeing that our country never again experiences the horrors which devastated lives and wrecked our nation not so very long ago. Let us commit to nation building and individual growth, in order to improve the living standards of our people. For my part, our Government will leave no stone unturned in our search for lasting peace and reconciliation.

We believe that a nation that enjoys peace is a nation of progress and prosperity, and we are determined to support the constructive efforts of the Krus in Sinoe and in the Diaspora for a bright and prosperous Liberia. Our goal, as Liberians, must be to unify our nation and put it on the path of sustained peace and development.

Mr. President;

Officers and Members of the forty-eight sections of the Krus in Sinoe;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The themes of your Convention complement our national reconciliation strategy, and I commend your efforts in this regard.

Concerning economic empowerment of the Krus, allow me to point out that Sinoe is blessed with natural resources, most notably marine, mining and forest resources, all of which are essential for economic growth, investment and job creation in this region.

Sinoe is Liberia's third largest county in terms of area, but is the second least populated, with a population of 104,932 citizens as of the 2008 Census. There is, therefore, abundant land for agriculture. This county is rich enough and can amply sustain its people. Additionally, the economic potential of the Port of Greenville for logging, and of the Sapo National Forest for eco-tourism, is vast. The economic empowerment and viability of the Krus of Sinoe is therefore assured.

The Krus dominate Sinoe's population, constituting 84 percent. Because of that dominance, it is critical to improve inter-tribal relations between yourselves and the remaining 16 percent of other tribal groups in the county – the second theme of your Convention. We, as Government, are committed to work with the Krus in your determination to foster reconciliation both amongst yourselves and with Liberia's other tribes.

Concerning the Convention's third sub-theme, speaking with one voice politically on issues in the county, we all understand and appreciate the power of numbers, the strength of the many versus the one – a clear example being your own assembly. On this point, our National Anthem is our guide when it declares: "In union strong, success is sure, we cannot fail." United we stand, divided we fall. Unity denotes a coalescence of all parts, elements and individuals into an effective whole. Unity is also acceptance and respect amidst diversity. This is solid advice in whatever we undertake.

Honorable Delegates:

As you deliberate upon these agenda items, let me acknowledge the constructive partnership which you and others have nurtured in Sinoe over the years. I encourage you to continue the good work so that through peaceful coexistence, mutually beneficial development can be assured in your county.

Good People of Sinoe:

Regardless of our respective ethnic affinities, Liberia must always remain paramount in everything we do. I therefore expect that you and your County Superintendent, who is my direct representative, will continue to work hard and consolidate the peace in Sinoe. I need your support so that the national growth and economic development which we have achieved can remain on course. Political reversals may harm our march toward prosperity. We must protect our political and economic gains as a way of guaranteeing a productive future for ourselves and for future generations.

Let us do our part, individually and collectively, towards our national renewal, reconstruction and development. Focus on helping your community, your government and your country find ways to make Liberia better for us all. Also consider returning to your home county to help build Sinoe into a vibrant and dynamic community. Let us, in that connection, recognize the many contributions of all segments of Sinoe society, and show respect for one another.

Liberia has come a long way, Ladies and Gentlemen. In five years, we have restored hope, credibility, reputation and image. Today, we are respected all over the world, and can look towards a brighter and more prosperous future for all our citizens. And you, Dear Friends, had a role in that success.

Let me, in closing, wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a prosperous New Year.

God Bless you, and God Bless Liberia!