

**REMARKS BY
H.E. MRS. ELLEN JOHNSO SIRLEAF
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
FAREWELL RECEPTION TENDERED
IN HONOR OF
HIS EXCELLENCY ATTILIO PACIFICI
AMBASSADOR AND HEAD OF EU DELEGATION TO LIBERIA**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2014

(As Delivered)

Ambassador PACIFICI
Vice President Boakai,
Dean and Members of the Cabinet
The Doyen and Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Members of the Fourth Estate
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr. Ambassador:

Your tenure comes to an end when we should have been celebrating the tremendous achievements made over the last five years of collaboration between Liberia and the European Union since your arrival here. The unwelcomed intrusion of the deadly Ebola virus

outbreak has however muted the national mood for celebrations. We would have preferred therefore were you to stay on a little longer with us.

Since your arrival five years ago, we have accomplished much in our partnership with the European Union. Your assignment in 2009 which coincided with the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty saw the EU Office transformed into a fully-fledged Delegation of the European Union (EU) to Liberia. Our partnership went from humanitarian assistance to development cooperation.

With passion and drive, you helped to bring about the realization of the Liberia-EU Dialogue under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement; the entry into force in 2013 of the Liberia-EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement on governance and trade in forestry products, and the framework for discussion leading to the conclusion of a Liberia-EU International Fisheries Agreement. Liberia has joined others in the region in concluding the Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU which will help to bolster the Liberian economy.

We however do have some unfinished businesses. Among these is the issue of visas for Liberians and the hardship they endure when they have to travel to neighboring countries to obtain visas before embarking on their journeys to EU countries or in transit there. It is our ardent wish, that building upon your efforts, your successor, will prioritize this and other concern.

As you depart at this time when we are still confronting the onslaught of the Ebola Virus, we wish to express with deepest gratitude the European Union's response to the crisis from the onset of the epidemic. Excellency, as you leave us to join your beloved consort, family and professional colleagues, I am pleased on behalf of the Government and People of Liberia, and in my own name, to bid you farewell and implore the blessings of long life and prosperity upon you, and for success in your future endeavors.

At this juncture, let me grant your wish. By the authority vested in me, as President of the Republic of Liberia, you are hereby permitted without restriction to go fishing in any waters within the territorial confines of the Republic of Liberia. I know by granting said wish, Liberians are going to see you once again on our shores.

Kindly convey our best wishes to His Excellency Herman Van Rompuy, outgoing President of the European Council and my heartfelt congratulations to His Excellency Donald Tusk, President-elect of the Council.

I Thank You!

TOAST

Drink with me to a successful end of tour of duty and a safe departure of Ambassador Attilio Pacifici. Long live, Liberia, Long live the EU and Long live EU-Liberia relations.