

REMARKS
BY H.E. MADAM ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 20th ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAY
OF GERMAN UNITY OCTOBER 2, 2009

Ambassador Mrs. Ilse Lindemann-Macha;

Members of the Legislature;

Official of Government;

Doyen & Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am happy to join you, Madam Ambassador, on this very momentous occasion of the observance of the 20th Anniversary of the Day of German Unity. We recall two decades ago the shouts that went forth in celebration when the Berlin Wall came down. The burst of energy was intense and the German people's feeling of exhilaration infectious as images flashed across television screens around the

world of a shattered barrier separating a people yearning for freedom and unity.

Many still burdened under the yoke of dictatorship and tyranny shared vicariously the invigorating air of liberation being savored by the German people. For decades the Berlin Wall stood as an impregnable fortress against the forces of free expression, free choice and free association. An artificial fortress cannot endure forever against the tide of freedom and the collective will of a determined people. Images of the crumbling wall sparked an unstoppable movement that swept across Eastern Europe and dismantled the Iron Curtain. Millions of people regained their national identities, leading to a fundamental restructuring of the world political and economic order.

This smooth and orderly transition to unification of the two Germanys who had been under two opposing political systems with millions of citizens has won for the German people the world's admiration. Today Germany remains Europe's largest economy and the world's second largest. Much can be learned from a united Germany's experience for countries engaged in national reconstruction and rebuilding.

Madam Ambassador, we are appreciative of Germany's contribution to Liberia's post conflict reconstruction. We view your involvement against the background and foundation of more than a century of friendship and cordiality between German and Liberian peoples. We were not surprised therefore when Germany became the first European country to re-open its Embassy near Monrovia, and assigned a resident ambassador.

Liberia has benefitted and continues to benefit from very substantial German assistance in its post conflict reconstruction. The Liberia National Police has received significant German contribution in vehicles and equipment. Our Government has successfully concluded negotiations with the German Government for the cancellation of our debt and we have entered into new financial cooperation agreements.

The German Organizations KFW and GTZ are assisting with rehabilitation and construction of roads and bridges as well as promoting women empowerment programs. We are deeply thankful of Germany's generous assistance.

Madam Ambassador, we once again salute the German people on this Day of German Unity and express the ardent

hope that relations between our two people and countries will continue to grow from strength to strength.

TOAST!

Ladies and Gentlemen, I ask you to join me and let us raise our glasses and drink heartily to the health and wellbeing of President Horst Kohler of Germany and to the everlasting friendship between the German and Liberian peoples.