

**H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
President of the Republic of Liberia
Remarks
At the Opening of the
3rd India – Africa Forum Summit
New Delhi, India**

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Excellency Mr. Prime Minister,
Excellency Chairperson of the African Union Authority;
Excellency Chairperson of the African Union Commission;
Distinguished Colleagues and Delegates:

On behalf of the people of Liberia, I want to thank you for organizing this 3rd India Africa Forum Summit. We wish to express profound gratitude to you, Mr. Prime Minister and to the Government and people of India, for the very warm welcome and hospitality we have received since our arrival in New Delhi.

This Summit forms part of a series of historic processes and events scheduled this year that will determine the state of our world in the next several years, the world that will be bequeathed to future generations.

This year, the call for Africa's transformation under Agenda 2063 can be seen as a continental commitment to a bold departure from the past, a call for ownership and self-dependence, for value addition, for regional integration, and continental interconnectivity through infrastructure development. For women, this year of empowerment gives impetus to action for higher levels of participation and elevation.

This year, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, building upon the success of the Millennium Development Goals is a call for global commitment to ending poverty, inequalities and injustices, a commitment of governments to people, nation to nation, old to young, rich to poor, a commitment that recognizes the interdependence of nations, big and small.

This year, at the Financing Conference for Development resulting in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, we registered a faith in the promises of a global partnership with financing mechanism and monitoring systems that ensures equitable sharing of benefits and returns from national endowment.

This year, we look forward to the closing chapter of our Global Vision 2030 at the Paris Climate Change Conference that will, through resource allocation, right historical wrongs in accepting the principle of common, but differentiated responsibility for the destruction of our planet.

Mr. Prime Minister, we are told that this Forum Summit brings together in India, the largest number of foreign leaders since the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Delhi in 1983 and the Commonwealth Summit the same year. It builds upon the first India-Africa Forum Summit in 2008 and the second in Addis Ababa in 2011.

We believe firmly that the implementation of the Global Goals will only take place in a changed administrative architecture of the United Nations as called for in the Ezulwini Consensus.

We take note that these Summits have led to a deepening of the relationship between India and Africa with significant expansion in trade, in private sector investment, and in bilateral programs and financing arrangements, aimed at supporting development across all sectors, as well as capacity building and institutional development. We welcome the formation of the India-Africa Business Council which will promote business partnerships and joint ventures, thereby expanding investment and trade between Africa and India.

Mr. Prime Minister, Liberia - India relations span over six decades of strong bonds of friendship and economic cooperation. Our countries have benefitted from bilateral assistance in the area of public transport, education, and agriculture. The level of trade continues to expand as large numbers of Indian owned companies are now moving into manufacturing enterprises. Our access to India's Duty Free Tariff Preferred Status enhances the partnership even further. The Indian Female Police Unit, included in our security sector reform, is the first ever women contingent in the history of UN peacekeeping. This has transformed the thinking of Liberian women in the role they can play in the security sector.

Mr. Prime Minister, we were pleased to welcome in 2009 the first visit of an Indian Foreign Minister in 38 years along with a confederation of industry and business delegation, which was followed by another Ministerial delegation in 2015. Several of our Ministers have had the pleasure to visit India between 2009 and 2013. I was pleased to have visited in 2013, where several agreements and bilateral instruments were concluded; and I was deeply honored to visit the site of Mahindra Gandhi and to have been conferred, during the visit, the 2012 Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development.

Finally, Mr. Prime Minister, I wish to thank you and the Government and People of India for the sympathy and support which Liberia received as we successfully combatted the Ebola Virus. We look forward to concluding ongoing bilateral programs aimed at supporting Liberia and the other affected countries in building a resilient health system and meeting the challenges of post-Ebola economic recovery.

As we prepare for the 10th World Trade Organization Conference in Nairobi, the first in Africa, Liberia wishes to thank all our sister African countries and India as well as other partners who helped to put us on the fast track to accession. We expect to expand on the outcome of the Trade Ministers meeting in Delhi last week to build on economic and commercial cooperation at the WTO.

Mr. Prime Minister, Excellencies, I thank you for your kind attention.