

"The Global Development Agenda"
Acceptance Speech by H. E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf,
President of the Republic of Liberia
At the Award Ceremony of the 2014 Global Economy Prize
Of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy
Christian-Albrecht University of Kiel
Chamber of Commerce Building
Kiel, Germany
Sunday June 22, 2014

The Representative of Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel, Federal Minister for Economy and Energy;

President Dennis Snower, the Prize Committee, and Research Fellows of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy;

Minister President and Officials of the State of Schleswig Holstein;

Members of the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Kiel;

Distinguished Guests from the world of politics, academia, civil society and business;

Fellow Honorees;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am delighted to be here as you celebrate some important milestones during the Kiel Week -- the centenary of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, the tenth year of the awarding of the Global Economy Prize, and the very important sailing events taking place in the Kiel Fjord, one of Germany's major maritime centers.

I am also deeply honored to receive the Institute's 2014 Global Economy Prize in the category of Politics, becoming, I believe, the first African politician so recognized since the prize was established in 2005. In so doing, you acknowledge the democratic transformation that is taking hold in Africa. In doing so, you also honor my country Liberia, and I accept and dedicate this prize award to the Liberian people who have entrusted me with their leadership.

In accepting this prize, permit me to thank President Dennis Snower, the Prize Committee and the Institute's Research Fellows for my selection, as well as the people and City of Kiel, and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kiel for the honor bestowed upon me and my country. Thank you, also, for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded our delegation since arriving in your wonderful country and state.

Today, I join the many outstanding political personalities who have been honored, such as Jacques Delors, Wim Kok, Helmut Schmidt, Mary Robinson, Martti Ahtisaari, and

Gro Harlem Brundtland – leaders with whom I have had the opportunity to engage through the years – also the many Nobel Laureates in the category of Economics and, in Business, the CEOs of multinational companies who have made their indelible imprint on the international scene.

Thank you for recognizing my efforts as a politician to tackle the economic challenges confronting my country, thereby endeavoring to bring about transformational change, while also contributing to regional and global transformation. This prize will serve as a motivation for me to continue to seek creative ways to promote global environment that is peaceful and secure, that matches economic efficiency with social responsibility.

In the role as a gateway to global economic research, economic development and economic advocate policy, the Kiel Institute for the World Economy has carried out numerous research and analysis on the progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) -- the guiding roadmap for addressing constraints of global development. Despite the slow start in formulating the national mechanisms aimed at achieving the Goals, tremendous progress has been made worldwide -- significant of which is reaching the goal in the reduction of poverty. Several African countries are likely to achieve several of the Goals, although none are likely to achieve all of them, and a few have lagged so far behind that they may miss them all.

With the renewed sense of commitment and competition, I am convinced that Africa will achieve at least half of the Goals by the target date of 2015.

Liberia, which was at war when the Goals were launched in the year 2000, is also far behind although, through concerted effort by our government since 2006, Liberia is poised to achieve three of the Goals, including women's empowerment and a reduction in child mortality.

I was honored to co-Chair the United Nations High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Global Development Agenda, the successor to the MDGs.

The Panel is pleased that our report has been so well received, in the call for aggressive action in completing the MDGs and in setting forth new challenges for a changing world. The report concluded that the world is today a global village -- through interconnectivity in communication, infrastructure, institutions, business and financial transactions -- that requires that global challenges be addressed with a sense of universality; that a new paradigm shift is required in defining what constitutes human development. The report also calls for world transformation by pursuing an agenda that will eradicate poverty while sustaining nature and securing natural resources for future generations.

I was equally honored to Chair the African Union High-Level Committee which recently launched a continental consensus of a Common African Position (CAP) to feed into the United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda. Our vision is to achieve an integrated, prosperous, stable and peaceful Africa that is effectively engaged in the global arena.

The CAP stands on six pillars, reflecting overarching concerns of all nations, that are indispensable to shared growth and development. The shared consensus is for peace and security, education and employment, capital flight and poverty. Specifically, the pillars cover: Structural Economic Transformation and Inclusive Growth; Science, Technology, and Innovation; People-Centered Development; Environmental Sustainability, Natural Resource and Natural Disaster Management; Peace and Security; and Financing and Partnership.

A third group which I had the honor to Chair is the High-Level Panel on Fragile States, under the aegis of the African Development Bank. Of the estimated 7 billion people in the world, 1.5 billion live in situations of conflict and fragility. This places fragile states at the center of the new Post-2015 Agenda. Sustained economic growth and development is critical in reducing the vulnerability to new political and economic shocks, fueled in many cases by high expectation gaps that need to be mitigated. The New Deal (the development agenda) on Fragile States calls for stronger ownership, harmonization, results and mutual accountability.

I cannot conclude without speaking about the excellent relationship between Liberia and Germany, which dates back to 1855, when the Treaty of Cooperation was signed between the two countries. One of the Hanseatic States, Lübeck, which is now part of the State of Schleswig-Holstein, was one of the first States, along with Bremen and Hamburg, to recognize Liberia's independence.

German investment in the private sector, the Bong Mining Company, provided economic stimuli and hundreds of jobs for our people before the civil war. The German Embassy was opened immediately after I became President. Chancellor Angela Merkel hosted Liberia's first Reconstruction Forum in Berlin in 2007.

Liberia also received support from Germany and its European partners who were instrumental in relieving Liberia of its US\$4.9 billion debt.

Germany's role in Liberia's post-war recovery process, in terms of the support to the ongoing Mount Coffee Hydro Project, and the West Africa Power Pool, will not only

benefit rural towns and villages in Liberia, but will also promote private sector development by lowering the cost of electricity.

Germany's support to agricultural projects in Liberia, through the German NGO, Welt Hungerhilfe, is helping to increase production and productivity of small farmers.

Germany's support to the ongoing reform of the security sector, amidst the drawdown of the United Nations International Mission in Liberia (UNIMIL) troops, aims at enhancing the capacity of the Liberia National Police.

Germany continues its support through the work of the European Commission and the Reconstruction Trust Fund, which is managed by the World Bank in the road-building programs in Liberia. Also, Germany has also contributed to the African Development Bank for projects the Bank is undertaking in Liberia.

To strengthen the relationship, Liberia welcomes German trade and investment in the private sector to assist Government of Liberia efforts to strengthen the economy by creating jobs for its citizens, especially the youth, in expanding the global economic pie.

Finally, let me again thank the Kiel Institute for the World Economy for awarding me its 2014 Global Economy Prize in the category of Politics. I assure you that I will do all in my power to continue to measure up to your expectations of a recipient, as I lead my country and its contribution to a peaceful and prosperous globalized world.