

**Keynote Address by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
At Closing of Second Global Meeting,  
International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding  
Monrovia, Liberia  
June 16, 2011**

Distinguished Guests,

It has been an honor for Liberia to host the Second Global Meeting of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. The International Dialogue offers us a unique platform to come together and discuss issues of common concern and actions to address them.

For us, in Liberia, it has given us the opportunity to take stock of how far we've come and to plan where we want to be as a nation. After years of conflict, suffering, and the loss of many lives, Liberia today finds itself at a crossroads: it can remain faithful to its recovery and reconstruction agenda and transition to a longer-term agenda for lasting peace, stability and development; or it can stray from that course and risk a relapse into conflict.

Since 2006, the Government and people of Liberia – with the support of regional and international partners – have endeavored to stay the course. Together, we have put in place a reform program – first through the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy, and then through the Poverty Reduction Strategy – that has borne considerable fruit in establishing institutions and processes that are consolidating peace and security, revitalizing the economy, entrenching institutions of good governance and the rule of law, and reconstructing the nation's social and physical infrastructures for the delivery of basic public goods and services.

As a result of this progress, our country can now embark on the path to graduating from fragility to becoming a middle-income nation by 2030. To assure a smooth and irreversible journey, we are developing and committing to a vision and strategy for reaching middle-income status. This vision, embracing a strategy of broad participation and inclusive growth, will allow us to build the human resource capacity it requires while forging a stronger sense of citizenship, national cohesion and responsive governance.

The Monrovia International Dialogue thus ties in nicely with our national visioning efforts, for without a peaceful and stable nation, we will not achieve our goals.

The First Global Meeting of the International Dialogue, held in Dili, Timor Leste, in April 2010, set the tone for the ambitious work plan we have been implementing this past year.

In saying this, let me acknowledge the hard work and strong leadership of Timor Leste's Minister of Finance, Her Excellency Emilia Pires, and Bella Bird of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, for having guided our efforts.

The Dili Declaration and, importantly, the g7+ statement, outlined goals and challenges in effectively building peaceful States, and called upon us to find solutions to the challenges. I believe that in the past few days, we have responded to that call.

In Dili, all our representatives and other participants realized that everyone has a critical role in shaping the international agenda on peacebuilding and statebuilding. I am, therefore, pleased that my country is contributing to this process and in hosting this meeting.

Liberia has been an active member of the International Dialogue since its beginning, and has worked closely with Co-Chairs from the Democratic Republic of Congo, France, Timor Leste and the United Kingdom. We have done so because we believed this Dialogue process would help change the way we look at and address the challenges faced by countries in fragile and conflict situations.

We saw in the Dialogue an effective vehicle to generate new ideas by bringing together diverse communities, including politicians, security and development practitioners, and civil society from the East and West, South and North.

We wanted frank discussions about successes and failures in the way we work together to support the building of peaceful societies.

We wanted answers to why aid is not fully effective in our countries.

We wanted ideas and commitment to help us to better use our joint resources to consolidate peace.

We, the countries that have experienced conflict, wanted to show our people that we can deliver results quickly, and sustain them over the long term.

Most importantly, we saw in the Dialogue a vehicle to create a new and stronger leadership from fragile and conflict-affected countries; to voice our commitment to act individually and together, as the g7+, to move from conflict and fragility to peace and stability.

This Second Global Meeting, its outcomes and the work you've done to bring us to this stage, are proving that our expectations were correct. In these few days together, we have reached a turning point in the discourse on conflict and fragility for three main reasons.

Firstly, in taking this agenda forward, the leadership by the g7+ countries is uncontested. We have in it a new voice and a new commitment to work collectively, as a group, and individually, as empowered leaders and countries, to build peaceful and stable futures for our people.

Secondly, as a consequence of this empowered leadership, we all agree that the time is ripe for a new partnership between our countries and our bilateral, regional, and multilateral partners, across the diplomatic, security and development communities.

This partnership will be aligned to and will support our priorities. The Paris Declaration and the Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations have provided the basis for reflection on the practices of development partners. However, they only engage one side, and one community. We are now committing to what we hope will be a more comprehensive agreement, one that will hold us accountable to our people and to each other for what we do to build peaceful States.

Thirdly, we have agreed to act. In Dili, last year, and at various meetings since, in particular the working group meetings in Paris, Kinshasa and Freetown, our representatives have researched, discussed, and built a consensus on few critical actions that will make a

difference in the way we do business in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

We, the g7+, have committed to support inclusive political dialogues, as the basis for national visions to build peaceful States. We have committed to ensure that national plans support the delivery of the vision generated through dialogue. And we, the g7+, and you, our partners, have committed to deliver on this vision more effectively. We will work together to build the necessary capacities to consolidate our peace and our institutions, and to ensure that our joint resources are best utilized.

The challenges ahead are big, but not bigger than what most of our countries have experienced. There is still much work to do and issues to discuss. For instance, we know and understand that managing risk is a concern for our partners, as it is for us. We also know that the world provides many examples of how this can be achieved.

We are aware that we have to deliver tangible results to our communities and that you, our partners, will have to convince your people that supporting our countries is a worthwhile investment. "Results" is the keyword nowadays.

The list of what still needs to be addressed is long, and it is important that we have now reached a turning point in our thinking. We now have to do the same in practice.

We will have other opportunities this year discuss what we have talked about and have agreed here in Monrovia: at two regional consultations, one in Africa and one in Asia, in September and October; and then, of course, at the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, in Busan, South Korea, in November-December.

We will go to Busan with our strong commitment and the clear messages that are emerging from this meeting. We want to leave Busan with a strong and clear sense that our people, our issues, and our concerns will not be left behind. We hope that the International Dialogue will continue to accompany us, the g7+, and our partners, in our journey.

We have the knowledge, we have the resources, and we have the will to make a difference. We also have two vehicles – the International Dialogue and the g7+ – to bring these together. Let us use them to make fragility and conflict history for as many countries as possible, and an unlikely future for the rest.

Before closing, let me again extend our warmest thanks to Timor Leste for their leadership of the Dialogue and of the g7+, and to the United Kingdom for the dynamic and committed support. We also thank the Co-Chairs of the four working groups who have worked with the members to develop the important messages we have discussed and agreed over the past two days. We thank all the countries and organizations represented here for allowing this process to happen and to be the success that it is.

Liberia, as a member of the g7+ and of the International Dialogue, will continue to strive to move this agenda forward. Now is the time for action!

I thank you.