

**Video Message by H. E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
to the Harvard International Development Conference**  
April 12, 2013, Cambridge, MA

Dear Friends;  
Colleagues,  
Alumni and Current Students:

I am honored to be able to address the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Harvard International Development Conference on *The End of Development: Why development must adapt or fail*.

When I left the Kennedy School 42 years ago, to return to my home in Liberia, I could not have imagined that I would one day address you as Liberia's President.

I did anticipate, however, that many of my classmates at Harvard would go on to do great things, and, indeed, they have.

I know that you will hear from a fellow graduate of the mid-career program, former Mexican President Felipe Calderon. You will also hear from two great friends of Liberia: Antoinette Sayeh, who was our Finance Minister during the critical early years of my administration; and Steve Radelet, who remains a close adviser.

The subject of your conference is that the world is changing, and development must adapt to keep pace with new models and new approaches. This is an urgent issue and one that we in Liberia know only too well. We have set ourselves the challenge to transform our economy, reduce our dependence on aid and resources, and achieve inclusive growth for all. We need to consistently examine our methods and look for ways to improve our effectiveness.

At the global level, I am honored to be a co-chair of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons that was set up by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to propose a set of post-2015 development goals. Dr. Amina Mohammed, who you will also hear from, is leading that effort at the United Nations, and was with us in Liberia in February as we continued our deliberations.

The post-MDG agenda is one piece in a huge puzzle of the direction of development in the next decade. Development faces severe challenges, and gatherings like this are essential to tackle and solve those problems. What brings you together is the vision of ending extreme poverty in all of its forms. That vision will only be achieved if you, the next generation, take it forward.

With that in mind, I wish you a successful Conference, and thank you.