

**Statement by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
at the Commissioning Ceremony of Officials of Government
C. Cecil Dennis, Jr. Auditorium
Friday, September 6, 2013**

Honorees,
Fellow Liberians:

Many of you were with us when we started in 2006. In those early years, there was little to complain about because there was little to compare. Today, for example, the people of Matadi complain because the people of Gardnersville have lights. The people of Caldwell complain because the people of West Point have water. The people of Voinjama complain because the people of Buchanan have a paved road.

Today, you are assuming public service and responsibility in a difficult political environment: when those who wrongly accuse, defame and attack you become the victors; when you adhere to the principles of your upbringing and your faith you become a victim of blackmail and extortion; when hustlers become heroes through poisonous pens; when you refuse to join the clamor of rumor-mongering and lies, your silence is mistaken as weakness to be exploited.

Yet you must continue. We will continue to stand firm and stand strong. Yours is still a calling to national duty, to service above self, to help your country achieve a potential that is within reach.

This ceremony is a call to you to develop the rectitude that enables you to challenge wrong and to find the inspiration to do even more to restore the willfully damaged reputation of your country. Yours is still the public duty to stand tall when the wind blows and the arrows fall; to stand tall when success becomes the reason for failure.

Even through these changing times, I implore you to jealously guard the public trust and to serve with abiding faith in your Creator, with rekindled love for your country and diligence to your duty.

Finally, we reconfirm our commitments to all the freedoms that are now enjoyed, and, within the reach of our powers, renew our sacred pledge to continue to meet the needs of our people and to remain focused on development despite the distractions. We will continue to do what is right and to place our faith in truth, which we know will always prevail. We will continue to serve our country, and may God bless the Republic.