



STATEMENT BY

**HER EXCELLENCY MRS. ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

AT THE

**SEVENTY-SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Remember Liberia which is making valiant effort to apply the tenets of democracy; President Sirleaf Tells 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has called upon the United Nations General Assembly to remember Liberia as it makes valiant effort to apply the tenets of democracy. she called attention to consider the lives saved, the wealth created, the stability assured, because the UN as a global body led at a time of great uncertainty in the sub-region and around the world. she asked member states to continue to lead, to spread the values of democracy, human rights, and good governance while strengthening solidarity for economic transformation and social resilience. "It is often in times of transition that great leaders emerge and institutions are strengthened", she said.

She reminded the United Nations that the 72nd Regular Session was being convened at a time of historic transition in Liberia, and during a period of acute challenges to our global order. "Today, we face the threat of climate change, the violence of terrorism, the risk and indignation of migration, and a nuclear escalation on the Korean peninsula. More over there is a race against time to accommodate a restless youthful population in search of opportunity and a brighter future" she noted.

According to a dispatch from New York, the Liberian leader spoke when she delivered her final address to the august body as President of the Republic of Liberia. she congratulated the current Secretary General on the election noting that his progressive and



creative leadership assures leaders of the world of his commitment and action to reform the United Nations for increased efficiency, better coordination and gender parity by 2021 at the senior leadership level. she also acknowledged the initial steps taken toward the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

President Sirleaf also congratulated Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, on his election as President of the General Assembly. "Your vast experience and strong diplomatic skills assure us that you will steer the affairs of this 72nd Regular Session in an effective manner. The Liberian delegation offers you its full cooperation and support".

Reflecting on this year's theme, "***Focusing on People - Striving for Peace and a Decent Life for all on a Sustainable Planet***", she ***pointed out that it*** is one which aptly captures a universal aspiration and that at the conclusion of the deliberations, the UN will forge a consensus and renew its commitment as leaders to transform the lives of the world's people and meet the responsibility to our planet. "The work of the United Nations has never been more important to the search for peace and the sustenance for global stability than it is today", she indicated.

President Sirleaf indicated that by its charter and purposes, the United Nations still represents the genius of the world's collective ability to live together in peace and harmony. she said it offers great hope to a troubled world and that Liberians bear witness to this truth, and remain grateful to the United Nations, and all of its organs and agencies, for the critical security interventions, and continued support toward Liberia's recovery and democratic aspirations.

"Eleven years ago, in September of 2006, I stood before this august body as the newly elected president of the Republic of Liberia, and, the first woman to be democratically elected as head of State on the



African continent. Today, I address you for the last time as I bring to closure my two terms of elected office. Liberia is just 22 days away from historic legislative and presidential elections. It will mark the first time in 73 years that political power will be handed over peacefully, and democratically, from one elected leader to another. This paves the way for the next generation of Liberians to lead the country into the future", she narrated.

The election, she said will signal the irreversible course that Liberia has embarked upon to consolidate its young, post-conflict democracy and that democracy is on the march in Liberia and on an irreversible path forward on the African continent.

She thanked all partners who made meaningful contributions, financial and in-kind to ensure peaceful elections, and those organizations which will deploy observer missions to attest to the integrity of the elections process.

President Sirleaf recounted that she assumed office after 25 years of development reversal which was further compounded by a 15-year civil war. "We have made great progress and laid the foundation for the next democratic government. We have reshaped the Armed Forces of Liberia and the Liberia National Police, professionalized our customs and immigration services and small Liberian Coast Guard. We are proud to report that since the formal turnover of the security responsibilities to the Government, Liberia has remained stable, peaceful and secured", the Liberian leader indicated.

she noted that her government transformed the economy from a growth rate of less than zero to more than 8.7% in 2013, until the health crisis and plummeting commodity prices brought a downturn to our economic recovery. Liberia has adjusted, we are resilient, embracing diversification, she stressed, adding that the focus today



is towards strengthening the agriculture sector for value addition, and infrastructure development with emphasis on roads and energy for industrialization.

"Previously dysfunctional public institutions now have the capacity to respond to the needs of our citizens through decentralized county service centers with ownership by strong local governments. And from the tragedy of the health crisis, we are strengthening our healthcare systems, prioritizing prevention and delivering capacity at the community level", President Sirleaf said.

she indicated that Impact is being felt, Life expectancy progressed from a low 47 years to a hopeful 62 years with reduction in maternal death from 1400 to 1100, an annual rate of reduction of 3.4%. Poverty rate has decreased from 63.8% in 2007 to 50.9% in 2016. That infrastructure has been repaired and restored, and that Liberia continue to rehabilitate damaged roads and construct new ones.

"With the increasing provisions of electricity, potable water and technology, cities and towns are bustling with new life. It is now possible to receive voice and data on your phones and mobile devices from virtually everywhere in the country, at competitively low rates. Liberia has enjoyed the benefit of multilateralism through full support provided by the United Nations, the African Union, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). From a pariah state, Liberia has gradually regained the confidence of nations and even risen to assume leadership roles in regional bodies, specifically ECOWAS and the Mano River Union", she said.

She recalled her privileged role played during the formulation of the Sustainable Development Agenda as Co-chair of Secretary-General



BAN Ki-Moon's High-Level Panel on SDGs and in framing the Common Africa Position (CAP) as Chair of the AU's High-Level Committee.

she said there is so much more to share about Liberia's post conflict transformation, including how we have empowered ordinary citizens and a shared sense of citizenship, giving women, including market and rural women a voice and the rights to be heard. How we have continued to transform the healthcare and education systems, engendered the entrepreneurial spirit in our youth, in our vibrant media and civil society. How we are establishing trans-border development corridors to enhance regional trade and strengthening the rule of law to tackle systemic corruption. Liberia is experiencing the birth of a post-conflict artistic community, in song, hip-hop, painting, poetry, storytelling and fashion.

"Liberia has come a long way. We could not have accomplished all of this without the world body, its political leadership, the generosity of its economic development support, humanitarian contributions, and, most importantly, the stabilization and security provided to our country through the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)", she said.

She applauded the President of the General Assembly and his predecessors, the member nations, and UN civil servants around the world who have sacrificed to see the very first generation of school-aged children growing up in an environment of peace, free of the violence of civil conflict.

she pointed out further that Liberia's transformation was powered by a world community that made a shared commitment to deliver peace to a country, and a sub-region, beset by civil conflict and cross



border destabilization. she also mentioned that the UN and its partner nations were of one mind, and from that global unity, a new Liberian democratic state was born. Liberia is a post conflict success story. It is your post conflict success story.

She concluded that the United Nations, as the preeminent world body must also continue to evolve, to more effectively serve the common interest of all Member States. "You must continue to chart the way forward. In your capable hands rest the hope and aspirations for a more just, peaceful and humane world, for the sake of our people and our planet", she ended.