

**Keynote Address by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
And Formal Opening of the National Capacity Summit  
Validating and Lunching the National Capacity Development Strategy (NCDS)  
Monrovia City Hall  
Tuesday, June 22, 2010**

**Ministers and Other Officials of Government;  
Our International and Development Partners;  
Ladies and Gentlemen;  
Fellow Liberians:**

I am very pleased to be here this morning, and to have the opportunity to officially open this National Capacity Summit.

We are here today to put this issue of capacity front and center, and to commit our energies to restoring our nation's capacity to realize a new vision of Liberia.

We are here because we are prepared to discuss capacity as a solution and not only as the constant challenge we face in all our endeavors.

We are also here because leaders from government, civil society, academia, and the private sector are advancing a cohesive strategy for building capacity over a long-term horizon, and we all need to get behind it and push forward together.

Our National Capacity Development Strategy is an ambitious effort. It is based on the conviction that Liberia cannot advance without building the knowledge and skills of our people, and creating a workforce that can propel our industries forward and uphold all pillars of our society. Our Strategy also reflects Liberia's

readiness to move out of an “emergency mode” and build capacity on a much larger and more sustainable scale.

We often attribute our lack of capacity to the years of devastating conflict that Liberia endured. While it is true that conflict caused a ruinous brain drain and destroyed our institutions and infrastructure, we have now had several years of peace and stability. We are beginning to enjoy the right conditions for building capacity and achieving prosperity. So, there are no excuses for our capacity gaps. We can fill these gaps and transform our people and institutions if we can target our resources wisely.

This is the aim of the National Capacity Development Strategy. It sets forth an approach for investing in human capital development across all sectors and industries, and proposes major investments in systematic human capital development. Part of the work of this National Capacity Summit is to take this approach forward, and for all Liberian institutions and partners to use this strategic platform to channel investments into knowledge and skills development.

The National Capacity Development Strategy is our plan for investing in the human capital we need to drive economic growth, maintain security, extend social services to the people, uphold justice, govern effectively, and more. This translates into tangible investments in doctors, teachers, engineers, construction workers, agricultural specialists, judges and lawyers, and the list goes on.

We appreciate that human capital development is necessary but not sufficient for restoring and further building our national capacity. To this end, the National

Capacity Development Strategy defines the institutional investments we need for these professionals to be fully productive.

I especially support the emphasis that the NCDS places on how we will invest in our own capacity development institutions, including our technical/vocational education and training institutes, our universities, and our professional training institutes. We must mobilize major efforts to revive each of these education and training institutions if we are to build capacity on a cost-effective and sustainable basis. Investing in our own institutions also drives greater self-reliance and national ownership of our Capacity Development Agenda.

Going forward, we are here to validate the National Capacity Development Strategy and use it as our singular framework for steering capacity development investments in a coordinated manner – linking up with the Civil Service Reform efforts, our Economic Growth Strategy, our next National Development Plan, and our National Vision. And we want to do this together – deepening our involvement with the private sector and civil society to join forces for capacity development.

I am pleased to formally open our National Capacity Summit, and I encourage you to put your support and energies behind our National Capacity Development Strategy because building capacity is a massive undertaking for Liberia. We have a vision for a better Liberia with the capacity we need to emerge as a middle-income country by sub-Saharan Africa standards and a commitment to help the future generations of Liberians have a much brighter future.

There's a full agenda and much ground to cover today, and I wish you every success in these deliberations. I thank you.