

**Opening Remarks by H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
President Republic of Liberia and  
Co-chair of High Level Panel on Post-2015 Global Development Agenda  
London  
Thursday, November 1, 2012**

Mr. President;  
Mr. Prime Minister;  
Members of the High-Level Panel;  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to be here today to continue our discussions on the post-2015 agenda. Following our first meeting, in New York, I have had opportunities to exchange views with political leaders, members of the private sector, civil society organizations and multilateral organizations concerning our work.

There is great enthusiasm out there to provide input, share ideas and contribute in some shape or form to this process. This is truly encouraging, a testimony of the confidence in our capacity to produce thoughtful, independent and inspiring recommendations to the UN Secretary-General as he moves to present a report on the post-2015 development agenda framework.

In our discussions today, we must be guided by the repeated call of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to be both ambitious and practical. I would add bold. We must set aside the preconceived notion that we will never reach consensus on contentious issues that have been debated for years, or that we should limit our ambition based on what blocs of countries may accept or reject.

We must be guided, in our work, by the clear acknowledgement that, despite the progress of the last fifty years, despite improvements recorded on some indicators of human development, business as usual is the least desirable path to embark upon. We must also be guided by the firm conviction that there is no difficulty that cannot be turned around.

his means, first, that whatever framework we propose must table and address, in the quickest and most transparent way possible, the pressing economic, social and environmental challenges of our time. We know what they are, and

include: extreme poverty, unemployment, particularly youth unemployment; widening inequality and social exclusion within many countries, rich and poor alike; gender-based discrimination; environmental degradation which puts at risk many key ecosystems; climate change, energy crisis, food insecurity.

The problems are interrelated and affect all nations. We must therefore take a holistic approach to tackle these issues.

The path towards sustainable development and inclusive growth must support job creation, provide greater fairness in access to natural resources, reduce inequalities, increase social protection for the most vulnerable, and ensure environmental preservation. It must include as well a new governance regime, a new “compact,” not just among governments but all development stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society. Any new framework we propose will work only if society is engaged as a whole and if individuals, organizations, private companies and governments take ownership of the process. The compact must therefore redefine relationships between the different actors based on comparative advantages and accountability.

Colleague co-Chairs;  
Members of the Panel:

Our challenge is not so much to identify goals than to make sure that they can be relevant to all countries in spite of the tremendous diversity of situations and development trajectories.

That concern for practicality should not be overlooked in the deliberations of this Panel. We certainly should see to it that our secretariat remains mindful of this requirement while putting together, for our consideration, the building blocks of the draft framework that we shall be reviewing during our next consultations.

As all of us have tremendous expertise and equal commitment to making the framework not only sound but relevant and actionable, I am confident that we will have fruitful deliberations.

In the coming weeks, I will continue my outreach efforts, mostly targeting institutions and organizations in Africa, but also reaching out to key

stakeholders in other parts of the world, including political leaders, government and intergovernmental organizations, private sector, academic and civil society organizations. I am confident that such exchanges will add another layer of understanding to our initiatives. We must tap into the vast reservoir of knowledge everywhere to find answers to the complex questions confronting us.

Dear Friends:

The task ahead is daunting, but I cannot think of a better group to take on the challenge. I look forward to productive and thought-provoking discussions throughout the day.

### **President's Closing Press Statement on Thursday, November 1, 2012**

Distinguished Members of the Panel:

We have now reached the end of a very successful day of deliberations on the many critical issues that are now confronting our world. I am personally delighted by the level of the debate, the diversity of views, as well as the multiplicity of perspectives that were expressed here today.

Just a month ago, in New York, many were wondering how all this was going to work. This morning, I said that if there was a group anywhere that could take on this process and find solutions to the many critical issues before us, we could and I am now comforted in that opinion.

Expectations are high and the challenges are serious, but I am confident that we will provide the Secretary-General and, indeed, the world with a strong contribution to the discussion around our common future.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Prime Minister David Cameron and his team for a remarkable job in planning and organizing the event. We must also thank the Secretariat for working under very difficult circumstances to produce the material that served as basis for our discussions. And to all the panellists, I want to say thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to commit to this effort.

As we leave London and head to Monrovia in a few weeks, I can say that we have laid the first building blocks of the architecture of the Post-MDG-2015 Framework. I look forward to all of you joining us in Liberia to continue the discussions, and I encourage you to maintain an open line of communication at all times with the Secretariat.