

**Remarks by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
At Ceremony Marking the Coming into Effect of Legislation
Establishing the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms
C. Cecil Dennis, Jr. Auditorium
Thursday, August 23, 2012**

We are here today to bring into effect the Act to establish the National Commission on Small Arms.

In doing so, we mark another significant step in Liberia's effort to make substantive contributions to maintaining peace and stability within our borders and the sub-region.

It is sometimes argued that small arms and light weapons are the real weapons of mass destruction because of the scale and scope of the mayhem that they cause worldwide.

Accounting for only one-fifth of the global arms trade, small arms kill and maim more people than conventional weapons.

Liberians can attest to the destructive impact of small arms; the Mano River Union countries have all seen and experienced the devastating and destructive effects of these weapons.

We know that their small sizes make them accessible to young children, and during our civil conflict this contributed to the widespread use of child soldiers.

Today, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to peace and stability, not only in Liberia, not only in our sub-region, but throughout the world since they are the weapons of choice and necessity of rebel movements.

This Act establishing the National Commission is but one additional step in our effort to control small arms and light weapons and to combat the illicit trade in arms. It is one step toward our commitment to continue to work with other individuals, institutions and countries to bring the arms trade under control and to see if we can stop these weapons that continue to destroy our countries and kill our people.

We will continue to use our membership in regional and international organizations, continue to use whatever influence we have throughout the world to continue to advocate for stricter controls on the trade and availability of weapons.

To all of you who have contributed to the work and to the formulation and the passage of this Act, we extend to you our thanks and appreciation and we call upon all of those who will be charged with the responsibility of implementing this Act to do so with the utmost commitment, realizing that the results of their work can lead to a better Liberia and a better world.

Thank you.