

**Special Remarks by H.E President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
At Dedication of the Dr. Joseph Nagbe Togba, Sr. Office Complex
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
Thursday, January 26, 2010**

“Never to give up;
Never to give in;
Against all odds, we rise!”

Thank you, Miss Liberia USA [Miss Lawdia Kennedy, who sang “Still I Rise.”

I am delighted to join in celebrating the completion of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare Office Complex, named in honor of Liberia’s first trained Medical Doctor and Director-General of Public Health, the late Dr. Joseph Nagbe Togba, Sr.

I am happy that his son John, his grandson, all of the family members who are here to join in this celebration, that they’ve taken the time to come and be with us as we honor the memory of this great man.

Twenty-five years ago, the government of the day began construction of a permanent home for the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. It pleases me greatly that this structure, once an eyesore sheltering Liberians displaced by the war, will henceforth serve as the permanent headquarters of our Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. We can proudly say that our dream has come true.

For this generous gift, we must thank you, Honorable Ambassador H.E. Zhao Jianhua] and the Government of the People’s Republic of China. As I often say, China leaves “big footprints” in the development projects they undertake: the University of Liberia Fendall Campus; the Jackson Fiah Doe Memorial

Hospital; the Agricultural Technology Demonstration Center at the Central Agricultural Technology Institute (CARI). All of these are big-ticket items.

Ambassador, today you made some other commitments, for other footprints. I remind you that, since I face it all the time, when you make commitments, Liberian people never let you forget.

Let me express profound thanks and appreciation to you for this magnificent gift – a true mark of friendship and solidarity between our two countries, further demonstrating China’s commitment to support our mission of lifting Liberia and lifting Liberians.

We acknowledge your effort, Ambassador, even though it started before your tenure. But I know where you were in Beijing, and I know the role that you played from there before you came here, and how instrumental you were in getting this started.

I congratulate and give special thanks to the construction company, and all the works they have completed and for the time they did so.

This \$5 million Complex commenced with an exchange of letters on January 21, 2010. So two years, just about, we are now seeing an edifice, as we look today and share in celebrating it in memory of one of Liberia’s great sons.

It’s a great day for the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, as they can now have adequate premises and we can reduce the cost of rental buildings in the country.

But this is more than newer buildings and more space. It is, for us, an attestation and acknowledgement of a great son who struggled, on his own, in those days when recognition and support were not forthcoming, that today we can make up for this neglect and thereby set the example for the recognition of all the many great sons and daughters of Liberia who may not

have been recognized for their contribution to the development of our country.

I understand that there are Liberian doctors in the audience, who have come, also, to join in and celebrate. May I ask you to stand. Thank you all, those of you who have remained here and those who have come back here. Thank you for being a part of reducing that ratio that Dr. Coleman referred to. We just want to say a big honor to all of you for being here.

I hope that this Complex will inspire policy makers to work hard to enhance basic health care. Let us focus on reforming and managing our health sector to deliver comprehensive, quality health and social welfare services that are equitable, accessible and sustainable for all Liberians.

Thanks to you, Minister of Public Works [Samuel Kofi Woods] and your associates for ensuring that the construction met all the technical specifications and finished on time. You, too, made some commitments when you spoke. And as you did, everybody looked at you and looked at the Minister of Defense, and said the next one...

Thank you, Dr. Gwenigale, you and your team. We've just re-nominated both of you to continue to serve in your portfolios. And we hope that after your hearing, where I'm sure you'll be grilled by the Legislature, that they also will be asking you to make some commitment to ensure that you do even more, in the second term, to be able to provide good service to our people.

I thank all of you who have come out to honor our great son. I thank all of you who have worked with the ministries involved. To the workers, the Liberian workers out there: by giving support to the construction company, by ensuring that the materials here were used properly and not taken away, we also owe you our gratitude, and I want to commend you and thank you, the workers, for all that you have done. I hope you will be prepared to carry on....

God bless us all.