

**REMARKS AND TOAST PROFERRED BY
HER EXCELLENCY MADAM ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

AT THE LUNCHEON HOSTED IN HER HONOR BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY LUIS INACIO LULA DA SILVA
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL**

**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS
BRASILIA, APRIL 7, 2010**

Your Excellency, President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva;

Honorable Ministers and Officials of Government Present;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps Present;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

All Protocols Observed:

Let me, on behalf of members of my delegation, the Government and people of Liberia, and in my own name express deepest appreciation for the kind invitation extended us to visit your great country, Mr. President. We are profoundly touched by the meticulous care and courtesies accorded us since our arrival here in Brasilia.

Brazil has always had a special place in my heart, and I have cherished vivid memories since I worked with this country many years ago as an official of the World Bank. I was

awestricken by the wealth of the country and the spirit of hard work and resourcefulness of the Brazilian people.

It is a source of pride and admiration, therefore, to see the great strides and achievements Brazil has made in the last few decades. As an emergent global economic power, Brazil now serves as an engine of growth and expansion for the world economy. It has developed an enviable reputation for scientific and technological advancement. Brazilian companies and Brazilian products in agriculture, agro industry, petrochemicals, mining, aircraft manufacturing, and petroleum have become household names across the globe.

Since your incumbency, Mr. President, the impact of your agenda for social inclusion and poverty reduction with your Fome Zero (Zero Hunger) Initiative has been phenomenal. Brazil has succeeded in achieving and, in some instances, in surpassing some of the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) and lifting millions of its citizens above the poverty threshold. Your poverty reduction strategy, and especially the endeavor to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty, offer invaluable lessons that could be a model for the world.

We note with satisfaction that the pursuit of peace and the peaceful settlement of disputes are among the guiding principles of Brazil's foreign policy. It has, accordingly, played an important role in collective security arrangements. We are, indeed, very grateful for Brazil's contribution to the civilian component of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Liberia is committed to working with Brazil for the reform of the United Nations and, especially, the Security Council to reflect today's realities and to ensure fair and equitable representation of all the regions of the world.

You deserve highest commendation, President Lula, for your Africa Policy which seeks, as a matter of priority, to deepen and expand relations between Brazil and the Continent. The hosting by Brazil, in 2006, of the Second Conference of Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora (CIAD II) and your many sojourns to several African countries have made Brazil truly a bridge between the Continent and Diaspora Africans. You have engendered stronger recognition and ignited greater awareness of the longstanding close cultural and historical relationship between Africa and Brazil. The result is that the two sides are increasingly forging genuine partnership. We urge you to continue to provide the leadership in this effort aimed at uniting the continents of Africa and Latin America.

Your Excellency; Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

158 years ago, the young independent country of Brazil extended recognition to the newly independent Republic of Liberia. Shortly after Brazil recognized Liberia in 1852, the two countries signed, later that same year, a Treaty of Friendship and Commerce. Subsequently, in 1925, they concluded a Treaty for the Judicial Settlement of Controversies. The relationship between our two countries has remained cordial throughout all these years, but we have no record of the exchange of summit visit. Brazil has remained a partner. There were once VARIG flights to our country, and we

have received support in the training of our football coaches. A little over a year ago, Brazil responded with urgency in helping us to combat an army worm invasion.

Our visit today therefore takes on historic proportion. The visit also could not have come at a more auspicious time. Liberia is emerging from a most destructive and devastating civil conflict with all the attendant challenges of collapsed infrastructure, weak institutions, and little or no basic social services. Brazil is increasingly becoming a world economic leader with a remarkable record of social engineering, legendary achievements in national development and scientific and technological innovation. Liberia can learn a great deal from Brazil's experience and expertise in our post conflict reconstruction program.

Ours is an agenda for national transformation based on a Poverty Reduction Strategy that is built on four Pillars: Peace and Security; Economic Revitalization; Governance and the Rule of Law; and Infrastructure and Basic Social Services. A strategic partnership and transformative engagement with Brazil would help accelerate our reconstruction program, improve our macroeconomic environment, and contribute to the development of a viable platform for the pursuit of mutuality of interest in investment, trade, infrastructure and agriculture.

I am pleased to state, Mr. President, that our discussions earlier this afternoon, including the signing of Cooperation Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding, have laid a solid foundation for such a strategic partnership between our two countries and peoples. We reaffirm our commitment to the full implementation of these agreements.

Mr. President, permit me on behalf of the Liberian people, to invite you to visit our country as we celebrate our 163rd Independence Anniversary on July 26, or at any other date that your schedule permits.

TOAST

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, as we celebrate this beginning of a lasting strategic partnership between Liberia and Brazil, I ask you to raise your glasses and drink with me to the continued health and success of His Excellency, Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, a man of vision and a towering world leader, and to everlasting friendship between the peoples of Liberia and Brazil.

Thank you.