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President Sirleaf lauds Congressional Black Caucus for Supporting Liberia's Peace, Progress

Washington, D.C. – September 22, 2017: President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has lauded the United States Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) for being at the forefront in advocating for Liberia from years of conflict to the present era of peace and development.

According to a dispatch from Washington, President Sirleaf made the commendation on Friday, September 22, when she spoke at the 2017 Africa Braintrust hosted by the Congressional Black Caucus, CBC.

The CBC is a prominent organization made of mostly African-American members of the United States Congress. The 2017 Africa Braintrust took place during the Congressional Caucus 47th Annual Legislative Conference and was held under the theme: "Renewing our Commitment and Engagement with Africa".

The Liberian leader recalled that the progress achieved throughout her tenure by the government and the Liberian people would not have been possible without the generous support of the CBC and many friends of Liberia on Capitol Hill in Washington and beyond.

She paid tribute to the late Congressman Donald M. Payne, Sr., former Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, who she described as "a champion of peace for the then war-torn Liberia." She added that the late Congressman Payne fought to improve human dignity and impacted the lives of millions across the globe. President Sirleaf also paid homage to Congresswoman Karen Bass, host of The Africa Braintrust, who she described as "a true leader in the U.S. Congress; a great friend of Africa; and a dedicated supporter of Liberia." President Sirleaf used the opportunity to recognize former Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., who, as member of the House Appropriations Committee, helped ensure Liberia's democracy dividends were realized.

"To the CBC, Congressman Payne, Congresswoman Bass, along with the countless advocates and organizations that have been of tremendous assistance to Liberia, helping us come back from civil war, through the Ebola crisis and now into our historic elections. I take this opportunity to express sincere gratitude and appreciation for your consistent contributions to the people of Liberia," she noted.

She told the audience, which crowded the large conference hall that Liberia's representatives and presidential



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President Sirleaf speaking during the Annual Africa American Congressional Braintrust event in Washington D.C.

elections - slated for October 10; will mark the first time in 73 years that power will be democratically transitioned from one president to the next through elections, as is constitutionally mandated.

President Sirleaf indicated that the forthcoming elections are historic for Liberia and more importantly, it gives further evidence to the consolidation of democracy and peaceful political transitions in the ECOWAS region, which has over the past years achieved peaceful transition through elections in Cape Verde and Ghana, and eventually The Gambia despite some initial challenges.

"After 11 years as president, I willingly step down, believing in the consolidation and triumph of democracy in Liberia, as well as believing in the need to open political space to a new generation of leaders, especially for women."

President Sirleaf disclosed that as she transitions out of office, there is an unprecedented number of women who are running for political office, including one presidential candidate and six vice presidential candidates. She added that close to 160 women are seeking seats in the legislature.

"The Liberian people are resilient and I have faith that we will continue to uphold the pillar of democracy as we enter a new chapter in Liberia's history," she concluded.

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Source URL (modified on Sep 4 2018 - 4:27pm):<https://liberianembassyus.org/in-the-news/president-sirleaf-lauds-congressional-black-caucus-for-supporting-liberias-peace>

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