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PRESS RELEASE Another Promise Fulfilled: Old Vai Town Bridge - Now King Zolu Duma Bridge Dedicated (MONROVIA, LIBERIA - December 30, 2011): President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on Friday dedicated the bridge linking the City of Monrovia to the commercial district of Bushrod Island.

Speaking at the dedication, the President thanked all those who played leading roles, including Ministers of Finance who spearheaded negotiations for the construction of the bridge, past and present Ministers of Public Works, other government agencies, the World Bank, as well as the Chico Construction Company and the Government of China for the partnership.

According to an Executive Mansion release, the President thanked Liberian workers for their dedication to the project and expressed satisfaction at its completion. She directed the Ministry of Public Works to continue to utilize the services of the workers in other areas following the completion of the bridge. The President said government will work with property owners along the Mesurado River to improve the area which she observed is becoming a big sewer that will not be allowed. "So we ask the cooperation of all of those who have property around here to make sure that Monrovia becomes beautiful also like other cities, to make sure that we have a presentable city." To protect the bridge, the President mentioned the construction of a fence. Any attempt to destroy it, she cautioned, would have a "compensatory response." The Chief Executive urged Liberians to use the bridge in the right spirit, to protect, maintain and secure it, and avoid acts that would undermine its lifespan. The President disclosed that the leadership of the Ma Juah Market, in Clara Town, has agreed to be relocated, to make way for a parking lot at the site. Public Works Minister Samuel Kofi Woods, in remarks, thanked all those who contributed to the successful completion of the bridge, particularly the Liberian workers who he described as the "real heroes that have made this bridge possible." The Minister drew attention to the consistent theft and abuse of the nation's infrastructure, and urged those responsible to join the government in efforts to build, adding, "It is men of courage and commitment that build; it is men of weak character who tend to destroy." He defended government's decision to construct a wall along the bridge, owing to the threat of potential theft, sand mining and other dangerous activities along the banks of the river. "This bridge belongs to Liberia and all of you; you must join us in owning it, in protecting it and in ensuring that its integrity is sustained. The President announced that the Via Town Bridge will now be known as the Zolu Duma Bridge, in honor of a former chief of the Dey tribe. King Durma played a leading role in providing the land to the Settlers for the construction of the bridge. Initially used as a railway bridge to transport crushed rocks to construct the jetty at the Freeport of Monrovia, the Vai Town Bridge was constructed between 1935 and 1936. In November 2006, the bridge, which had been transformed into a two-lane roadway and used by vehicles and pedestrians, collapsed. Funding for the construction of the US\$16 million bridge was provided by the World Bank upon a request in 2006 by the Government of Liberia for funding assistance for the demolition of the collapsed bridge and the construction of a



new one.

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