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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Secretary of State Assures Prez. Sirleaf of Continued Support

(MONROVIA, LIBERIA – January 17, 2011): United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Monday assured President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of her government's continued support in accelerating the development programs and priorities of the Liberian government.

Speaking during bilateral talks with Liberian government officials, Secretary Clinton praised the Sirleaf administration for the level of progress made in the country.

Acknowledging further the achievements, the top U.S. diplomat said the Liberian government has built a strong foundation and that the United States would help the country to speed up the transition to a post-conflict society. Mrs. Clinton said her government would work towards aligning its systems and support with the priorities of the Liberian government. "We have to find creative ideas that would back up your priorities in infrastructure, roads, ports, the power sector, agriculture," she said.

Mrs. Clinton also spoke of the role the United States government could play in tackling unemployment, particularly among the youth, disclosing that the U.S. would try to re-program some of its aid "because we know how essential it is that people begin to feel like they have a stake in the future."

Secretary Clinton said the United States also wants to support Liberia's reconciliation agenda which, she noted, is critical in national development. The United States government, she said, will continue to support Liberia in its security sector reform program, with particular focus on the police force. She observed that changes could be made to strengthen the police force and improve accountability. "We are going to continue to collaborate with you to assist you in that area," the Secretary of State assured the President.

Mrs. Clinton lauded efforts by government in tackling corruption, and hoped it would not relent in its fight. In general, she said, her government was very positive "about what we see happening."

Briefing Secretary of State Clinton and delegation earlier, President Johnson Sirleaf indicated that the country's development agenda is well on track. She said government has identified its priorities and is now moving into the agricultural sector, with emphasis on food security, working with small farmers.

The inadequate supply of electric power, the President said, is a major constraint facing government, adding that efforts are continuing to find a long-term solution to the problem.

The President also spoke of progress between the government and opposition political parties to move the country forward, but stressed that a major priority of government is to provide skills training for disadvantaged youths to make them more productive citizens.

President Sirleaf also informed the delegation of the country's long-term development agenda, aimed at transforming Liberia into a middle-income country by the year 2030. The President acknowledged that the



agenda is ambitious, but pointed out that with hard work, the goal is achievable.



The President assured the U.S. Secretary of State and delegation that government will continue to adopt measures to help fight corruption in the country. She admitted that despite steady progress, the punishment phase has been slow. Judicial reforms would be needed to help address some of the issues associated with corruption cases. “Once we have those reforms in place, we would see much action on the punishment side,” the Liberian leader stated.

Monday’s meeting was also attended by Liberia’s Ministers of Defense, Justice, Planning and Economic Affairs, Agriculture, State, and Gender and Development; Liberia’s Ambassador to the United States, William Bull; as well as the Acting Chairman of the Liberty Party, Senator Clarice Jah.

The Secretary of State was accompanied to the meeting by the U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson, Senator Christopher Coons (Delaware), the Chairman of the Africa Sub-Committee on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mrs. Clinton’s Chief of Staff, Sheryl Mills, among others.

Signed: _____
President

Cyrus Wleh Badio

Press Secretary to the

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