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[Home](#) > An Overview of Vice President Boakai's Visit to the U.S.

## An Overview of Vice President Boakai's Visit to the U.S.

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Washington, D.C.: 9/13/12: As part of activities during his recent visit to the United States, the Vice President of the Republic of Liberia, the Honorable Joseph N. Boakai, paid a visit to Washington, D.C. from August 31-September 3, 2012. The Vice President was received upon arrival at the airport by Liberia's Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Jeremiah C. Sulunteh, and outgoing Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy, Ambassador Designate Edwin F. Sele. From the airport, Vice President Boakai came to the Liberian Embassy, where he was received upon arrival by the Chief of Mission, Hon. Jeff Dowana, and other officials and staff of the Embassy, including Mrs. Jeremiah C. Sulunteh.



Chief of Mission, Hon. Jeff Dowana.

**Vice President Boikai with Ambassador  
and Mrs. Jeremiah C. Sulunteh**

In welcome remarks, Ambassador Sulunteh underscored efforts the government is making for the development of Liberia under the inspiring leadership of Her Excellency, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. He also praised Vice President Boakai for his distinguished service to our country – Liberia – and humanity.

Ambassador Sulunteh briefed the Vice President on activities at the Embassy, including the launch of the ECOWAS Biometric Passport in June 2012, and plans in the making to set up a desk for Diaspora Affairs, which is in keeping with the President's policy for the government to be actively engaged with the Liberian Diaspora. In response, Vice President Boakai thanked Ambassador Sulunteh and staff for the sacrificial services to our country and people through the able representation of the Republic of Liberia here in the United States. The Vice President also inspected the soon to be dedicated Deputy Chief of Mission residence located a block

from the Embassy premises, which is nearing renovation completion.

Later on Friday night, Vice President Boakai attended a dinner during which he presided over the launch of the Gayah and Semera Fahnbulleh Foundation in the Washington, D.C. Maryland Metro Area. The well-attended dinner brought together an array of Liberians and friends of Liberia, with a focus on creating awareness and fundraising for humanitarian projects in Liberia.

The Gayah and Semera Fahnbulleh Foundation focuses on providing humanitarian assistance to Liberian rural dwellers, such as providing safe drinking water and improving sanitation.

Speaking at the event, Vice President Boakai indicated that there is a critical need for safe drinking water in many parts of Liberia. He added that even though Liberia has one of the highest rates of rainfall in the world, there is not enough safe drinking water for the general population.

The Vice President emphasized that though the government is making efforts to accelerate the pace of development in the country, there are still many areas of critical needs in the country, which is emerging from years of devastating civil crises.

Vice President lauded Liberians in the Diaspora for the steadfast support toward the development of their motherland, as exemplified by the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Gayah Fahnbulleh in providing support to the less fortunate in rural Liberia. He expressed the need for Liberians at home and abroad to unite and work together for sustainable peace and progress of our country.

For his part, Mr. Gayah Fahnbulleh reaffirmed his family's commitment to the objectives of their foundation in contributing to the improvement of the conditions of rural dwellers in Liberia.

On Saturday and Sunday, September 1-2, 2012, Vice President Boakai participated in the 16th Annual Convention of Effort Baptist Church and Friends USA, which was held at Shiloh Baptist Church in Washington,



**Vice President, Joseph Boikai (center) posing with visitors at a farewell dinner**

The convention, held under the theme,

“Planting the Vision: Rebuilding the Temple of God,” brought together current and former members and friends of Effort Baptist Church, based in Paynesville, Liberia.

Speaking at the benefit banquet during the convention, Vice President Boakai, who is a deacon at Effort Baptist Church, underscored the critical role of the church in the physical and spiritual upliftment of the people to ensure unity, peace and progress.

Vice President Boakai urged members and friends of Effort Baptist Church to continue to generously support the outreach and missionary work to help better the lives of people and bring about salvation.

The Vice President concluded his visit to Washington with a dinner hosted by Ambassador and Mrs. Sulunteh at the Ambassador residence on Sunday, September 2, 2012. Among dinner attendees were officials of the US State Department and other agencies, members of the diplomatic corps, former and present officials of the Liberian Government, business leaders, Liberian community and opinion leaders.

The Vice President Boakai, accompanied by Ambassador Sulunteh, traveled to Minnesota where he met with members of the Liberian community and local government officials in the state.

During town-hall meetings with Liberians in the Minnesota area, Vice President Boakai provided updates on progress in Liberia in terms of reconstruction efforts being undertaken by the government, mainly in the areas of roads, education, health, and provision of electricity, among others.

In the area of road reconstruction, he indicated that the repaving of the highway from Monrovia to Buchanan, Grand Bassa County is nearing completion, while the reconstruction of the highway from Redlight in Monrovia to Gbarnga, Bong County will commence during this dry season.

He stated that the government has taken major steps for the rehabilitation of the Mount Coffee Hydro Plant to provide electricity to the general public, and also that efforts were being made to complete community colleges to provide requisite education and training for young Liberians so as to enable to gain employment.

Vice President Boakai met with the City Council of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, during which several partnership agreements were discussed, including the Brooklyn Park and Kakata-Liberia sister-city relationship, as well as the Brooklyn Center and Voinjama-Liberia sister-city relationship.

The Vice President also met with officials of the Brooklyn Park Fire Department, which has already donated a fire ambulance to Liberia. The discussion also centered around how Brooklyn Park Fire Department could assist in procuring other firefighting equipment for Liberia, including fire trucks and ladder trucks.



## V.P. Boikai,(center) with Amb Sulunteh,(left) and visitor at Farewell Dinner Reception

Vice President Boakai also met with leaders of Hannipen Technical College, during which partnership efforts geared toward assisting the Booker Washington Institute (BWI) in Kakata to a vocational and technical college. The discussion included student and teacher exchange programs.

Vice President Boakai climaxed his visit to Minnesota with a dinner tendered by the Brooklyn Park City Council and the Liberian Community

***By Gabriel I.H. Williams***

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## Photos of Visit by B'More

[1. The inauguration of the Fahnbulleh Foundation](#) <sup>[1]</sup>

[2. Seviles for the Reunion of members of the Effort Baptist Church, Paynesville, Liberia](#) <sup>[2]</sup>

### 3. Farewell Dinner Given By Ambassador and Mrs, Sulunteh [3]

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[3]

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