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# President Sirleaf Receives Letters of Credence from New United States Ambassador

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(MONROVIA, LIBERIA – Thursday, September 20, 2012)

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says she looks forward to the new United States Ambassador to Liberia building upon the excellent relations subsisting between both countries, and even taking it to another level.

According to an Executive Mansion release, President Sirleaf made the assertion when she received the Letters of Credence from Her Excellency Ms. Deborah Ruth Malac, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Liberia, during a ceremony held in the Foreign Ministry's C. Cecil



Thursday, September 20.

President Sirleaf called upon Ambassador Malac to be frank and open on any issue or concern that may arise during her tenure here. “You can be frank with us. You’re a diplomat; I’m not. So feel free at any time to sit and bring to us issues and concerns you may have; suggestions you may want to offer,” she said, adding, “You will find that we are open, ready to work towards the achievement of the goals that have been determined by our people.”

The Liberian leader noted that the United States has been Liberia’s strongest partner through all the years, during both the difficult and good times. She indicated that as Liberia enters its tenth year of peace, the United States has been with us, strengthening, motivating, encouraging and supporting the country.

President Sirleaf emphasized that the United States has supported Government through the Poverty Reduction Strategy to rebuild the Army, strengthen the security forces and expand their capabilities. She noted that they have also helped to address some basic infrastructure needs and start the process of good governance and

economic recovery, amongst others.

She outlined Liberia's challenges, including youth development, financial management, corruption, reconciliation, capacity and more, which are being targeted in a long-term policy, dubbed Vision 2030, that will concentrate on using decentralization and people's empowerment as a means of strengthening those goals which the policy aspires to achieve.

President Sirleaf thanked the United States for the bipartisan support that Liberia has and will continue to receive. "I look forward to taking that to a higher



level," she said.

Before presenting her Letters of Credence to President Sirleaf, Ambassador Malac pledged to further strengthen the relationship and partnership between both countries during her tenure as Ambassador. "As the U.S. Ambassador, I am committed to working alongside the Government of Liberia and the people of Liberia as you preserve peace and stability within the country, spur economic growth, and build institutions that will be accountable to the Liberian people," the new U.S. Ambassador said.

She noted that over the next three years, she and her team will leverage their robust foreign assistance resources to aid Liberia in its development. "Through USAID programming, the United States will continue to provide critical assistance to the health, education, agriculture, and business sectors," Ambassador Malac said, adding that with the US\$15 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Threshold Program already in progress, the United States is working with Liberia to improve land rights and access, increase girls' primary education enrollment and retention, and improve Liberia's trade policy and practices.

The U.S. envoy also outlined its support to Liberia's efforts to balance economic and environmental sustainability, and to improve transparency and accountability in the timber sector. Similarly, she said that as oil exploration continues, Liberia has an opportunity to develop its budding oil sector in a transparent and accountable way, ensuring that any potential benefits are received by all Liberians. "Through programs like the Energy Governance and Capacity Initiative, Liberia and the United States are already working together to put in place the mechanisms that promote good governance in the oil sector," she said.

Ambassador Malac, whose Foreign Service career has been spent working in Africa and on African issues, indicated that under President Sirleaf's leadership, Liberia has made tangible progress since the end of the civil war. She said this was demonstrated by the holding of two democratic and



transparent national elections,

suggesting that Liberians have demonstrated their strong commitment to the values of democracy which binds the two countries.

She noted that the Government's necessary reforms and visionary economic policies are guiding the country towards a better future for all Liberians. "My team and I stand ready to stand beside you as you tackle the remaining challenges, including building sustainable democratic institutions and a growing economy that benefits all Liberians," the new United States envoy promised.

Ambassador Malac stressed that security remains a key prerequisite for Liberia's long-term success, and promised U.S. continued bilateral support and through the work of the United Nations.

Concluding, Ambassador Malac noted that the road ahead is challenging; however, as U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, she assured that the U.S. will work with Liberia and continue to be a committed and strong partner. The new U.S. Ambassador is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, having served with the State Department since 1981. President Barack Obama nominated her as U.S. Ambassador to Liberia on May 9, 2012, and her nomination was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in July 26.

Ambassador Malac previously served as the Director of the Office of East African Affairs. Prior to that position, she was the Director of the Mid-Level Division of the Office of Career Development and Assignments in the Bureau of Human Resources. She also previously served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Prior to that assignment, Ms. Malac was Deputy Director in the Office of East African Affairs; Deputy Director in the Office of Agricultural, Biotechnology and Textiles Trade Affairs; and Political Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Dakar, Senegal.

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