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Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the United States , Tue, Oct 2, 2012

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Washington, D.C. – 10/03/12: Liberia's Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Jeremiah C. Sulunteh, has called for further strengthening of the historical relationship between Liberia and the United States through various areas of partnership, including education, science and technology, trade and commerce, as well as best practices in governance. He said Liberia, which is endowed with natural resources, including diamond, gold, iron ore, timber, rubber, various cash crops, and oil, is seeking to further strengthen its partnership with the United States that would be mutually beneficial. Ambassador Sulunteh made the call when he deputized for President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as the Keynote Speaker at the 141st Founders' Day Convocation of Alcorn State University in the State of Mississippi. Founded in 1871, Alcorn State University is the oldest historically black land-grant institution in the United States.



He observed that it was particularly pleasing to note that Alcorn State University's "choice to keynote the 2012

Founder's Day Convocation is an esteemed daughter and first female president of a country that embodies the yearning of freed slaves to establish on the homeland, the Continent of Africa, a nation-state in their quest for self-governance." Ambassador Sulunteh reflected on the historical relationship between the Republic of Liberia and the State of Mississippi, from whence between 1829 and 1860, more than 500 freed slaves travelled to the west coast of Africa to settle in an area that became Liberia.

"Today, we have come to join you celebrate the founding of this great institution and we do so with a reflection on "Mississippi and Liberia Relations in the context of fostering partnership to promote education and culture," he said, adding: "This relationship recounts a story of two shining pillars, each situated on two separate continents – Alcorn State University of Mississippi, United States of America on the one hand, and the founding of the Republic of Liberia in Africa, on the other."

The Liberian diplomat noted that it was with similar experiences and history that Alcorn State University, a first-rate institution of higher learning, was established to champion the cause of humanity; whilst the promise of Liberia's statehood as a beacon of hope for Blacks everywhere was actualized. Today, he added, "Liberia continues to make its mark, in spite of its recent turbulent past and challenges of nation-building."

Ambassador Sulunteh pointed out that even though Liberia was nearly doomed to self-destruction, it took the visionary leadership and resilience of the Liberian people, with great support of the international community, to

turn the country into a post-conflict success story.

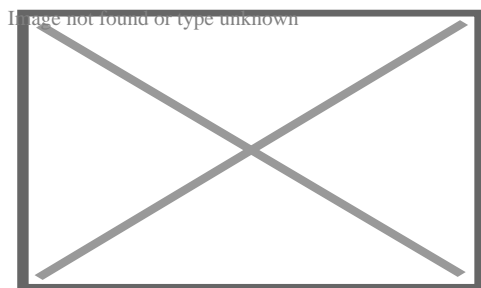
He stated that Liberia has made remarkable progress in various areas, including institutional building, economic recovery and consolidating its democracy. He added that over the past six years, Liberia has attracted more than \$16 billion foreign direct investment, and building infrastructure that would turn the investments into job-creating industries.

He also stated that the issue of education and training for the youth of Liberia remains a critical factor in addressing unemployment in a country where 70 percent of its 3.8 million inhabitants comprise the youth, who are the future leaders of Liberia.

"In this regard, the question may be asked how can Alcorn State University and Liberia use the experience of their past to forge even a stronger partnership to their mutual benefits? We note with delight that already an agreement was signed on September 11, 2011, formally establishing a sister-city relationship between the cities of Greenville, Mississippi, USA and Greenville, Sinoe County, Liberia, with strong emphasis on the building of health and educational centers in Greenville, Liberia as well as improving tourism and cultural exchanges, among others," he said.

Ambassador Sulunteh emphasized that Liberia could immensely benefit from the rich experiences of Alcorn State University in building the capacities of young Liberians through scholarships in the areas of agriculture, the sciences, education and nursing, as well as faculty exchanges between the higher institutions of learning in Liberia and Alcorn State University.

Ambassador Sulunteh concluded his address with a call to Mississippians as follows: "We would like to invite you to come home; come to Liberia, trustees, faculty, staff and students of Alcorn, and residents of Mississippi to the place of your ancestors to see where you may find the need to support our efforts to transform, develop and preserve this Land of Liberty." Click [=====](#) [1] to read the full text of the address.



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Source URL (modified on Oct 2 2012 - 9:03pm):<https://liberianembassyus.org/in-the-news/amb-sulunteh-calls-for-further-strengthening-of-partnership-between-liberia-and-us>

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