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# President Sirleaf, Secretary of State Clinton Sign Partnership Agreement

*Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the United States*, Tue, Jan 15, 2013

(WASHINGTON, D.C. – Tuesday, January 15, 2013): At a simple ceremony held at the U.S. Department of State on Tuesday, January 15, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made history as they signed a Statement of Intent launching a Partnership Dialogue that institutionalizes the long-standing bilateral relationship between Liberia and the United States of America.

The U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue is intended to promote diplomatic and economic cooperation between the two countries by providing a flexible, non-binding mechanism to

ensure sustained, high-level, bilateral engagement on issues of mutual interest. It will allow the two countries to look at their relationship strategically, with a view towards the long term, and to focus on those areas that encourage broad-based economic growth, including agriculture and food security, energy and power infrastructure, and human development.

The Partnership Dialogue will not affect the two governments' other bilateral or multilateral commitments or obligations.

Mrs. Clinton, in one of her last official acts before stepping down as U.S. Secretary of State, said that she was delighted to have this occasion, once again, to host President Sirleaf of Liberia who has been a good partner over many years. Especially over the last four years, she said, "it has been a great personal pleasure for me to work with her to strengthen the partnership between the United States and Liberia, and I also am grateful as well for her personal friendship."

Continued, Secretary Clinton: "Today, we are taking another important step to deepening the partnership between our nations and to support Liberia as it continues down the path of democratic and economic reform. The Partnership Dialogue we are about to sign will expand the cooperation between our countries and ensure high-level engagement for years to come. This agreement establishes Working Groups in three key areas; first, agriculture and food security. Helping Liberia's farmers use their land more effectively and get their crops to market more efficiently will be critical to improving the health and prosperity of Liberians under the Feed the Future Initiative; look for new opportunities to attract private investment in the agriculture sector; and recommend policies to promote food security and better nutrition."

In the second area, energy and power infrastructure, Secretary Clinton said "we know that access to affordable, reliable energy is essential to creating jobs and sparking growth that helps to build a strong economy. So, we will take stock of all outstanding needs for the generation, transmission and distribution of energy; promoting a regulatory environment that's friendly to new investments in energy; and look for ways to accelerate development of a well-governed and inclusive energy sector."

Regarding the third area, Secretary Clinton said that the Partnership will look at human development with a real emphasis on creating more economic opportunities for the people of Liberia, to expand access to education and employment so that many more Liberians have a chance to not only better themselves and their families, but



make a contribution to their nation.

Secretary of State Clinton said she believed that it was more than fair to say that “this last decade has been a success story for Liberia. The people of Liberia have emerged from a time of violence and lawlessness, and have made tremendous commitments toward economic and political reform.”

The United States has stood by Liberia during this challenging process, Secretary Clinton said, adding, “But I think it is also more than fair to say that it was aided considerably by the leadership, the determination of a woman who understood, with every fiber of her being, what was at stake.” On behalf of the United States, she thanked President Sirleaf for the great work under her leadership, and pledged the continuing support and friendship of the United States to her and to the people of Liberia.

“I have always seen Liberia’s progress as underpinned by its special relationship with the United States,” said a satisfied President Sirleaf, as she responded, and added, “The launching today of the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue is an historic achievement; one that will cement the strategic cooperation between our two countries for generations to come, regardless of the occupants of the White House or the Executive Mansion.”

President Sirleaf said she felt privileged to have been invited to the State Department this week – one of the last weeks that Secretary Clinton will be in office – to thank her for all that she has done for Liberia and the Liberian people, and for always being there for Liberia. She added, “For me personally, it was important to be here today, to see that you have fully recovered from your recent illness, to embrace you, and to let you know that all of Liberia prayed for your speedy recovery.”

The President said that the establishment of the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue was the fulfillment of a wish, first articulated last June, for the institutionalization of the long-standing bilateral relationship between Liberia and the United States.

“Just seven months ago,” the Liberian leader recalled, “as we made the rounds among congressional and U.S. Government officials, we put forward proposals on how the United States could work with Liberia, as a partner, to consolidate its gains. One proposal called for the establishment of a Joint United States-Liberia Bi-National Commission, as that which pertained in the 1960s, which aimed to ensure that the partnership would endure for fifty years and more.”

President Sirleaf remembered that when she had made the case to Secretary Clinton, her support had been instantaneous, as she assured that she would figure out how to embed such a relationship in the two governments and countries. “And here we are today,” she observed, adding, “With the signing of this Statement of Intent, Liberia stands with the United States as a reliable partner in the region.”

The President said she looked forward to carrying out the first meeting of the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue under the leadership of Secretary of State-designate, Senator John Kerry, who had been an essential supporter of Liberia during his long service on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, including his time as Chairman. The President recognized that this would not be just a job for the two governments, but also for the business communities of both countries and other stakeholders in Liberia.

President Sirleaf used the occasion to comment on Liberia recently being declared eligible for Compact Status by the Millennium Challenge Corporation. She described it one of Liberia’s “proudest achievements,” coming just two years after the country was awarded a Threshold Program and seven years after the re-establishment of democracy in Liberia. She recognized, in the audience, the presence of MCC President Daniel Yohannes, and promised him that Liberia will deliver a Compact program that will be comprehensive and resulting.

The Liberian leader also thanked the departing Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Mr. Johnnie Carson, for his steadfast leadership on Africa policy over the past four years, and hoped he would continue to find a way to stay engaged with Liberia.

Madam Sirleaf congratulated President Barack Obama on his forthcoming inauguration, on January 21st, to a second term of office, and said she trusted that she could count on America’s continued support, under his leadership, to Liberia and to Africa.

Finally, on a more personal note, President Sirleaf said: “Madam Secretary – Hillary – you have been a true friend of Liberia and to me personally. You are the only Secretary of State in the history of our bilateral relationship, which spans more than a century and a half, to make two trips to Liberia while in office. You have supported our country’s progress, championed our political process, and pushed to settle Liberia’s external debt.

“As we bid you farewell, I remain convinced that in this era of economic challenge, history will show that your support and the investment of the U.S. Government and the American people in Liberia will return significant dividends.”

The President concluded: “We will continue to guard the peace, promote reconciliation, build strong democratic institutions, ensure good governance and transparency, and encourage broad-based economic development. We will continue to tell our success story because that is also, Madam Secretary, your



success story.”

Witnessing the signing ceremony were State Department officials dealing with African Affairs, Liberians and friends of Liberia. They included Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson; Dr. Johnnetta Cole, Director of the Smithsonian’s African Museum of Art; Jennifer Davis, of the Legal Office of the Secretary; Stephen Hayes, President of the Corporate Council on Africa; Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Acting Director of the Peace Corps; Deborah Malac, U.S. Ambassador to Liberia; Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Director-General, Department of State; Daniel Johannes, CEO of the Millennium Challenge Corporation; Debbie Harding, former Peace Corps volunteer; and many more.

Among those representing Liberia were: H.E. Jeremiah Sulunteh, Liberia’s Ambassador to the United States; Cllr. Seward Cooper, Legal Advisor to the President, Hon. Lenn Eugene Nagbe, Minister of Transportation; Ms. Shirley Brownell, Communications Director to the President; Embassy of Liberia staff; and other well-wishers. President Sirleaf came to Washington for the sole purpose of launching the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue. That done, she boarded a plane Tuesday afternoon to return home, and was expected to arrive in Monrovia Wednesday evening.

**Statement by Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf At Signing Ceremony of Statement of Intent Establishing U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue United States Department of State Tuesday, January 15, 2013**

Secretary of State Clinton, Members of the Administration, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honored to be here today for several reasons.

First, I feel privileged to have been invited to the State Department this week, one of the last weeks that you, Madam Secretary, will be in office, to say thank you for all that you have done for Liberia and the Liberian people; to say thank you for always being there for Liberia.

Second, for me personally, it was important to be here today, to see that you have fully recovered from your recent illness, to embrace you, and to let you know that all of Liberia prayed for your speedy recovery.

Third, I have always seen Liberia’s progress as underpinned by its special relationship with the United States. The launching today of the U.S.-Liberia Partnership is an historic achievement – one that will cement the strategic cooperation between our two countries for generations to come, regardless of the occupants of the White House or the Executive Mansion.

Dear Friends:

Today marks an historic day for the Government and people of Liberia – the fulfillment of a wish, first articulated last June, for the institutionalization of the long-standing bilateral relationship between Liberia and the United

States of America.

Just seven months ago, as we made the rounds among Congressional and U.S. Government officials, we put forward proposals on how the United States could work with Liberia, as a partner, to consolidate its gains. One proposal called for the establishment of a Joint United States-Liberia Bi-National Commission, as that which pertained in the 1960s, which aimed to ensure that the partnership would endure for fifty years or more.

I recall, vividly, that when I made the case to you, Madam Secretary, your support was instantaneous. You assured me that you would figure out how to embed such a relationship in our governments and countries. And here we are today!

With the signing of this Statement of Intent, Liberia stands with the United States as a reliable partner in the region. The U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue will allow our two countries to look at our relationship strategically, with a view towards the long term, and focus on those areas that encourage broad-based economic growth, including agriculture and food security, energy and power infrastructure, and human development.

We look forward to carrying out the first meeting of the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue under the leadership of Secretary of State-designate, Senator John Kerry, who also has been an essential supporter of Liberia during his long service on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, including his time as Chairman. We recognize that this will not just be a job for our two governments, but also for the business communities of both countries and other stakeholders in Liberia.

Madam Secretary:

I am especially pleased that we were recently declared eligible for Compact Status by the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Coming just two years after being awarded a Threshold Program and seven years after the re-establishment of democracy in Liberia, this is one of Liberia's proudest achievements. I would like to recognize the presence here today of MCC President Daniel Yohannes and to promise to you that we will deliver a Compact program that will be comprehensive and resulting.

I take this opportunity to thank Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson for his steadfast leadership on Africa policy over the past four years. Ambassador Carson, we wish you the best and hope you will continue to find a way to stay engaged with us in Liberia.

We also congratulate President Barack Obama on his forthcoming inauguration to a second term of office. We trust that we can count on him and on America's continued support, under his leadership, to Liberia, and to Africa.

Madam Secretary – Hillary – you've been a true friend of Liberia and to me personally. We are pleased that, in the history of our bilateral relationship, which spans more than a century and a half, you made two trips to Liberia while in office as Secretary of State. You have supported our country's progress, championed our political process, and pushed to settle Liberia's external debt.

As we bid you farewell, I remain convinced that in this era of economic challenge, history will show that your support and the investment of the U.S. Government and the American people in Liberia will return significant dividends.

We will continue to guard the peace, promote reconciliation, build strong democratic institutions, ensure good governance and transparency, and encourage broad-based economic development. We will continue to strive to

I, **Gabriel I.H. Williams**, Madam Secretary, America's success also. I thank You

**Minister Counselor**

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