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Liberian Diplomat Calls for Increased U S Support for Liberia's Educational System

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Washington, D.C. – 2/15/13: The Minister Counselor for Press and Public Affairs at the Embassy of Liberia in Washington, D.C., Hon. Gabriel I.H. Williams, has appealed for increased assistance from the United States for the development of Liberia's educational system.

Hon. Williams made the appeal recently when he deputized for Liberia's Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Jeremiah C. Sulunteh, during a program commemorating Black History Month at the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C.

He noted that although Liberia has made tremendous progress since the end of the civil crises, the national development goals of the country would be difficult to achieve until the young population of the country benefit from proper education and training in various areas of technology.

Hon. Williams stated that the young people constitute more than 60 percent of the Liberian population, and many of them were armed by various factions during the civil war because they come from impoverished background and lack proper education.

"With the post-war development that is ongoing now, if these young people are not educated, if they are not given a sense of belonging, if they do not have jobs, our country will continue to be fragile," he told the audience. The Liberian diplomat then lauded the United States for its constructive engagement with Liberia since the end of the civil war by being a critical part of the process to sustain the country's peace and progress.

Hon. Williams, who is also an author of a book on Liberia's civil war and its destabilizing effects in West Africa, riveted the audience with his presentation on Liberia-United States relations under the theme, "The Historical Significance of Liberia in the Emancipation Movement."

The impressive event, which was held under the auspices of the U.S. Education Department's branch of the organization called Blacks in Government (BIG), was held around this year's national themes for Black History Month, "Emancipation and the March on Washington."

Highlights of the event, held in collaboration with the Department's Equal Employment Opportunity Services (EEOS), were presentations by several speakers relating to this year's Black History Month themes.



**Hon. Williams speaks
at Black History Month
Event**





Hon. Williams receives present from Dr. Wanda Gill (center) and Ms. Karen Holliday of BIG Executive Board

Other speakers included former US Congressman William “Bill” Clay, Sr., a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), who provided “History of the Congressional Black Caucus”; while Ms. Darlene Young, National President of BIG, and Ms Cynthia Dinkins, Chief Executive Officer of Northern Virginia Urban League, spoke on activities of their respective organizations to empower African Americans, as well as children.

Making remarks at the start of the program, US Secretary of Education, Hon. Arne Duncan, said there was a tremendous sense of urgency within the US educational system, considering that many children, especially children of color and their families still do not have the opportunity they need to succeed. Secretary Duncan pointed out that while the US had made tremendous progress toward racial equality, there are still disparities between children of color and white children regarding access to quality education, expressing the need for efforts to be made to close the gap. Dr. Wanda E. Gill, President of BIG’s US Education Department Chapter, assured that her organization would work towards supporting educational programs in Liberia.

Hon. Williams was accompanied to the program by Ms. DeContee Clements, Diaspora Affairs Liaison at the Liberian Embassy.

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