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Liberia & Indonesia Consolidate Bilateral Relations, Sign MOUs on Technical Cooperation and Trade; President Sirleaf Now in Bali for the Fourth UN High Level Panel Meeting (Jakarta, Indonesia, Tuesday, March 26, 2013) President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Indonesian President H.E. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono have expressed satisfaction with the results of the Liberian leader's State Visit and are confident that the visit would lay a stronger foundation for promoting closer bilateral ties and cooperation.

According to a Dispatch from Jakarta, Indonesia, the assertion was contained in a Joint Statement by the two leaders following a bilateral meeting at the Istana Merdeka Palace.

At the invitation of President Yudhoyono, the Liberian President paid a two-day State Visit to Indonesia from March 24-25, the first State Guest from Liberia since the establishment of diplomatic relations between both countries in 1965. The State Visit took place ahead of the Fourth Session of the High Level Panel of the Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in Bali, Indonesia on March 26 and 27.

During the meeting held in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding, both Presidents discussed bilateral cooperation, particularly since their historic first bilateral meeting in Monrovia on January 31st. The Joint Statement indicated that the two leaders expressed their satisfaction with the cordial and brotherly ties between the two countries and underlined their commitment to bring the bilateral relations to a higher level. They also discussed regional and global issues of mutual interest and concern.

Indonesian President Yudhoyono reiterated his country's commitment to assist Liberia through technical cooperation and capacity building in various sectors, particularly in industry, agriculture, fishery, education and human resource development. He informed President Sirleaf on the progress and follow-up to bilateral commitments and understanding between the two leaders in Monrovia in January 2013.

On industrial technical cooperation, the Indonesian President informed President Sirleaf that at the invitation of the Indonesian Minister of Industry, from March 6-9, three Liberian delegates visited Indonesia where they conducted site visits to a number of industrial and agro-industrial centers and engaged in consultations with relevant Indonesian officials and business communities to learn of Indonesia's industry potentials, policies as well as best practices. The two leaders believe this program would lay a strong foundation for the enhanced capacity-building and mutually beneficial cooperation for the two countries especially in areas of agro-industry, furniture making, garment and textile industry.

On agriculture cooperation, President Yudhoyono reiterated his country's readiness to support Liberia with sharing of experience and expertise in areas covering rice production, including rice breeding, irrigation management, and practical harvesting technology aimed at increasing rice production output. The Indonesian government has decided to send its agriculture experts and trainers to work closely with their Liberian counterparts and to offer Liberian agriculture officials, trainers and farmers to participate in various trainings provided by the Indonesian government, including the International Training Workshop on Water Management



for Agriculture, to be held in Addis Ababa, and Bali in May 2013.

On education and human resource development, President Yudhoyono informed the Liberian leader that a number of scholarships schemes and training programs organized by the Indonesian government are to be made available for Liberians, some starting in 2013. Included in these schemes are the Art and Culture Scholarship, Mid-Career Diplomatic Training, Darmasiswa Scholarship, Graduate and Post-Graduate Scholarship in the framework of South-South Cooperation, training for Mid-Career Police Officers, and National Resilience Institute Training for Senior Military Officers. Relevant ministries and agencies of both countries are to work closely in facilitating Liberia's participation in these programs.

The two leaders agreed on the need to enhance interaction, coordination and collaboration as they discussed concrete steps to enhance bilateral trade and investment cooperation. Both Presidents noted with satisfaction the increase in trade volume between the two countries from US\$30.9 million in 2011 to US\$39.5 million in 2012. At the conclusion of their bilateral discussion, President Yudhoyono and President Sirleaf witnessed the signing ceremony of two Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs), including the MOU on Industrial Technical Cooperation between the Ministry of Industry of Indonesia and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Liberia and the MoU on the Promotion of Trade between the Ministry of Trade of Indonesia and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Liberia.

Foreign Minister, Mr. Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan signed the two MoUs on behalf of Liberia; while the Indonesian Minister of Industry, Mohammed S. Hidayat signed the MoU on Industrial Technical Cooperation and the Minister of Trade, Gita Wirjawan signed the MoU on the Promotion of Trade.

Earlier, the first meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between Indonesia and Liberia, jointly co-chaired by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of both countries, H.E. Dr. R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa and Mr. Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan, respectively, convened at the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with members of the both delegations in attendance.

The meeting of the Joint Commission exchanged views on the bilateral relations with specific focus on political, economic, technical, regional and international cooperation dating back to 1965 when diplomatic relations were established between the two nations. They also decided that the venue and date of the second Joint Commission Meeting is Monrovia in two years. However, the Joint Commission will meet every six months to track progress and challenges in their work.

President Sirleaf and the Liberian delegation were honored with a State Luncheon hosted by President and Mrs. Yudhoyono at the Reception Hall, Istana Merdeka Palace. At the Luncheon, the Indonesian President again expressed his admiration for President Sirleaf's national and global leadership role, adding that she is an inspiration to many across the globe. He expressed joy for being able to reciprocate a similar gesture accorded him and his delegation while visiting Monrovia. "Your country's economy continues to grow despite the global financial problem, human rights promotion is at the highest peak and democracy is flourishing; you have made Liberia a country to be proud of," President Yudhoyono stated.

He informed President Sirleaf that Liberians residing in Indonesia were peaceful, law abiding and making immense contribution to the country and its national development priorities. He made particular reference to Liberians involved with sports particularly soccer and named Zac Krangar and Sunday Sieh, among others, as footballers doing well in his country. He reassured the Liberian leader of his commitment to uphold the spirit and intent of the bilateral relations with Liberia with specific reference to the MoUs. In response, President Sirleaf indicated that the private sector remains the principal engine for growth in developing countries including Liberia and that her desire is to attract more private sector investment to Liberia including those from Indonesia which remains cardinal and critical.

She expressed the hope that the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between Liberia and Indonesia which has seen two separate MoUs signed between the two countries already will yield positive benefits for the two nations and peoples.

President Sirleaf emphasized that as the world seeks to develop a new development agenda towards the conclusion of the current MDGs in 2015, more focus will be placed on economic transformation, social inclusion and human resource development. "Building Liberia's infrastructures which were badly damaged, fostering manufacturing and industrialization, promoting the concept of the value added chain and fostering regional and

global partnership are all very important and critical for Liberia as we develop the post-2015 agenda,” she pointed out. She noted that Liberia is endeavoring to learn from the Indonesian experience that has quickly elevated it to becoming an industrious and middle income economy.

During the State Visit, President Sirleaf and delegation also paid a learning and information sharing visit to Sinarmas Agro Limited. She was welcomed and briefed by the Chairman of Golden Agri-Resource Limited, Mr. Frankie O. Widjaja. He promised to expand its operations in Liberia and provide more job opportunities for Liberians. Sinarmas is a subsidiary group of Golden Veroleum which operates in south-eastern Liberia. The President also visited the Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperatives Promotion Center (SMESCO) which promotes artistry and develops entrepreneurs. During the visit she was received and led on a guided tour by the President Director of SMESCO Indonesian Company (SIC), Ir. Yuana Sutyowati. The visit was of interest to members of the Liberia Woodworkers Association who also formed part of the President’s delegation. President Sirleaf concluded the day’s activities with a visit to the National Heroes Cemetery in Jakarta for a wreath laying ceremony in honor of fallen heroes and heroines of Indonesia. President Sirleaf deposited a special wreath and prayed for the repose of the souls of the fallen heroes and heroines of Indonesia. The monument and cemetery are in the central part of Kalibata National Cemetery which consists of five growing monuments symbolizing the everlasting struggle of the Indonesia people which upholds the unity and sovereignty of the people of Indonesia.

In a related development, President Sirleaf has departed Jakarta for Bali to attend the Fourth Session of the United Nations High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda; the meeting will be co-chaired by President Sirleaf and President Yudhoyono and will be attended by representatives from all parts of the world.

[Click here to see other photographs of this event =====>](#) [1]

[Click here to read the entire speech as delivered by President Sirleaf at the luncheon given in her honor by President Yudhoyono =====>](#) [2]

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