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# President Sirleaf Breaks Grounds for the Reconstruction of the New Mount Coffee Hydro Plant

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(Harrisburg, Montserrado County – Sunday, January 26, 2014)

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has broken grounds for the rehabilitation of the Mount Coffee Hydro Electric Plant, terming the occasion as “a good day for Liberia in its quest for affordable and cheap energy”.

According to an Executive Mansion release, in her brief remarks at the site in Harrisburg, lower Montserrado County, President Sirleaf said the rehabilitation marks the beginning of a life change for the people of Liberia.

The Liberian leader said that the project is the result of collective efforts of all Liberians who have resolved that affordable and cheap electricity is the surest way for an economic boom especially in the manufacturing industry.

She stressed that working together as one people will further direct the country’s development efforts thereby accelerating Government’s Agenda for Transformation of which energy is of top priority.



President Sirleaf along with Lands, Mine, and Energy Minister Sendolo, look at master plan for the new hydro electric plant in Mt Coffee.



Pres Sirleaf inspects ongoing construction of the new Caldwell bridge that connects Bushrod island to the township of Caldwell

President Sirleaf urged to the Harrisburg Township Commissioner as well as residents to take ownership of the rehabilitation process by cooperating with the engineers.

Besides power production and transmission, the Liberian leader indicated that the local community will soon begin to benefit from fish and other water resources upon the completion of the hydro plant which would subsequently turn the community into a tourist attraction and the only way this can be realized is through ownership by the people who live there.

The Ambassadors of the two fund contributing countries, Norway and Germany, in separate remarks reaffirmed their respective countries’ commitment to collaborating with Government in rehabilitating its energy program.

German's Ambassador Ralph Timmermann said he was particularly excited by the initiative and its potential to benefit government's revenue generation schemes as well as thousands of Small and Medium Entrepreneurs. Norway's Ambassador Hege Hertberg said the current status of the Mount Coffee Hydro is an example of what a civil war does to a country. Ambassador Hertberg noted that she is particularly impressed with the courage, commitment and vision of the President Sirleaf's leadership in reconstructing a devastated country.

The Norwegian Ambassador believes that the political will demonstrated by the Liberian President has shown great potential for Liberia becoming a middle income country. She expressed excitement that the Mount Coffee Hydro Plant would, upon its completion, supply homes, schools, streets, health facilities and at the same time reduce exportation of raw materials by the provision of cheap and affordable energy.

For his part, Finance Minister Amara Konneh disclosed that the cost of the rehabilitation and upgrading of the Mount Coffee plant is estimated at US\$230 million.

To fund the work, Minister Konneh said Government has concluded a US\$65 million concessional loan deal with the European Central Bank, while donors have committed US\$107 million. Germany and Norway have pledged grants of US\$32 million and US\$75 million respectively; while the Liberian Government has budgeted US\$45 million for the project. The remaining funds will be raised through the European Investment Bank as a loan and would help to fast track the loan acquisition.

"Government is desperate for the restoration of hydro facilities that if it means to reduce the number of foreign travels and fuel supplies to government officials to get the system on we will have to do that," Minister Konneh said.

Lands, Mines and Energy Minister Patrick Sendolo, for his part, indicated that the rehabilitation of the Mount Coffee Hydro is a dream come true and a further demonstration of a responsible and visionary leadership for economic revitalization.

Minister Sendolo reiterated that the stage at which the rehabilitation process has reached is as the result of each and every Liberian's efforts and quest for cheap and affordable power and hopes that the unity for power demonstrated by all Liberians will serve as strength for smooth rehabilitation of the facilities.

For his part, Representative Matenokay Tingban, who chairs the House's Committee on Lands, Mines, Energy and Natural Resources, pledged the lower House's commitment to allocating budgetary funding for the financing of the project.

The rehabilitation process is divided into three phases: Phase One is expected to witness the switching the turbines on by December 2015; while full capacity will be restored by May 2016 at which time all three turbines would come on.

The Mount Coffee Hydro plant was dedicated by President William V. S. Tubman in 1964 and served as a cheap and affordable source of electricity until its destruction during Liberia's civil conflict.

Meanwhile, as part of President Sirleaf's weekend activities, she also inspected ongoing construction work on the Caldwell Bridge that connects Caldwell, Louisiana, Harrisburg and Townships with Bushrod Island.

The new bridge is being constructed through a grant agreement between Liberia and the People's Republic of China. It is being constructed by a Chinese construction company, CHICO, and is expected to be commissioned in March 2015.



The remains of the looted Mt Coffee Hydro Plant in Harrisburg



The old Caldwell Bridge is to be replaced by a new bridge which is now under construction.

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