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Vice President Boakai Holds Town Hall Dialogue in the Washington D.C Area, Takes Ebola Fight to Compatriots; American University Memorializes Fallen Dr. Samuel Brisbane

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(WASHINGTON D.C., USA – Wednesday, August 6, 2013)

Vice President Joseph Nyumah Boakai has engaged compatriots in the Washington D.C. area of the United States of America in a three-hour long Town Hall dialogue on the prevailing Ebola outbreak in Liberia.

According to a Dispatch, Vice President Boakai, speaking during a Town Hall dialogue held at the Trinity Episcopal Church in Washington D.C., United States of America on Wednesday, August 6, extended greetings from President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and their compatriots in Liberia and indicated that it was the responsibility of Government officials visiting countries around the world to meet with and update citizens abroad about the situation back home.

He reminded the gathering that his Town Hall meeting was not meant for the usual political undertone; rather the gathering was meant to inform Liberians about the Ebola virus disease that was gradually becoming lethal in the country as well as update them about interventions and actions that Government and its partners are taking to combat the spread of the disease.

The Liberia Broadcasting System's Director General, Darryl Ambrose Nmah, provided information about the affected counties and updated them on the number of persons that have succumbed to the disease so far as well as those confirmed with the virus, giving Liberians in the U.S. a clearer picture of the Ebola crisis on the country and its people.

The Liberian Vice President spoke about all of the emergency measures taken so far by Government to combat the spread of the virus to include: the establishment of a National Task Force on Ebola, the launch of a National Action Plan and an initial contribution of US\$5 million to immediately begin the implementation of the plan fight the disease.

He also named the temporary suspension of work for all non-essential staff at government ministries and agencies for 30 days, restriction on public gatherings, closure of market places at major border points, the closure all border points excluding the Roberts International and James Spriggs Payne Airports, the Bo Waterside, Ganta and the Foya Crossing Points, as well as measures put place at designated entry and exit border points to safeguard the public and protect the further spread of the virus.

Other measures Vice President highlighted were the disinfection of public places, temporary closure of all schools, restriction of travels for government officials with limited exceptions, increased outreach, awareness and



sensitization, decentralization of the national effort to combat the virus, standing orders to the security forces to help enforce the orders, new travel measures, and most recently, the declaration of a State of Emergency. He praised the efforts of non-governmental organizations, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), and Samaritan Purse; World Health Organization, Center for Disease Control, as well as other international and local partners that have stood by the Liberian Government and people in combating the spread of the disease.

Most especially, the Vice President paid tribute to all health care workers - doctors, nurses, and laboratory technicians, paramedics, volunteers - who have either died or fallen ill due to the Ebola virus. He also acknowledged the excellent work of all foreign health workers including the two Ebola infected Americans now back in the U.S., the chief administrator of the St. Joseph's Catholic Hospital, late Cameroonian Bro./Dr. Patrick Nshamdze; the late Ugandan Dr. Sam Mutooro Muhumuza, Dr. Samuel Brisbane, and all others aiding the fight. The Liberian Vice President urged his fellow compatriots in the Diaspora to develop a spirit of cooperation with the Government and people of Liberia and thanked them for the level to cooperation thus far on the Ebola fight. Vice President Boakai reiterated that all of the natural and man-made disasters around the world has never defined the countries affected and thus called on Liberians both at home and abroad not to allow the Ebola conflict to define Liberia. "This too shall come to pass and Liberia will surely be normal and back on its feet. Let us hold together and don't allow the Ebola outbreak to define us and our country," he urged.

Dr. Boakai briefed the audience about the situation concerning the late Finance Ministry consultant Patrick Sawyer and informed them that on the sidelines of the U.S.-Africa Leaders Meeting, he met with Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, where he expressed regrets for the unfortunate situation with Mr. Sawyer which landed the virus in Nigeria.

Earlier, Liberia's Ambassador accredited near Washington DC, H.E. Jeremiah Sulonteh, briefed the Vice President and Liberians attending the Town Hall dialogue about initiatives undertaken by the Embassy to gather support for the country's fight against the deadly Ebola virus. He presented an initial amount of US\$15,000 to the Liberian Vice President on behalf of Liberians in the United States. He welcomed Liberians to the Town Hall meeting and presented the Vice President and delegation who were well received by the audience in the jam packed hall.

A long period of questions and answers followed the Vice President's presentation with Foreign Minister Augustine Ngafuan, Presidential Legal Adviser Cllr. Seward Cooper, Commerce Minister Axel Addy, Gender and Development Minister Julia Duncan Cassell and National Investment Commission's chairman Michael Wortorson being permitted by the Vice President to provide inputs on some of the questions with bearing on their sector. All of the intervening officials called on Liberians abroad to stop being negative and destructive about their country and encouraged them to help rebuild the country. "No investor goes to a country when is it constantly demonized on the social network, local and international media. We must leave the country alone if we can't help it," the officials urged.

Meanwhile, the Indiana University has memorialized fallen Liberian Doctor Samuel Brisbane for his courageous and dedicated service to his fellow countrymen. The Department of International Affairs of the University on Wednesday, August 6, 2014 named a building on one of its campuses in his honor.

The representative of the University at the Town Hall meeting also announced the design of long-term projects to enhance medical infrastructures in Liberia and requested a point of contact for the initiative.

Meanwhile, the Vice President will be engaged with a larger segment of Liberians in the U.S. when he is hosted by an online Liberian Media Network called the Liberia Destiny Debaters. He will later address a function of the UN High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda with reference to the Common African Position. The Vice President's intervention will focus on Peace and Security

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