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(MONROVIA, LIBERIA – Thursday, September 25, 2014)

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, on Thursday, September 25, joined world leaders at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to participate in a High-Level Meeting on Response to the Ebola virus disease outbreak in sub-region.



The meeting, held under the leadership of United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, also had in attendance United States President Barack Obama, World Health Organization Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan, World Bank President Dr. Jim Kim, African Union Commission Chairperson Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Guinean President Dr. Alpha Conde, Sierra Leonean President Ernest Bai Koroma, among others.

According to an Executive Mansion release, the Liberian leader, via a video link from the Monrovia office of the African Development Bank (AfDB), informed world leaders that Liberia today is faced with the greatest challenge because it cannot allow the projection of a worst case scenario that over 100,000 innocent citizens will die from an invisible disease they did not start and do not understand. She stressed that the resulting effect of this epidemic will reverse the gains in malaria, child and maternal mortality.

President Sirleaf said the deadly Ebola virus disease has so far taken the lives of over 1,700 persons including 85 of those trained to save lives. She indicated that as a consequence of the disease, livelihoods are being threatened, there has become a precipitous decline in economic activities, loss of income and jobs, health services have deteriorated, prices of basic commodities have increased and there is limitation in free movement. "Partners and friends, based on understandable fear, have ostracized us; shipping and airline services have sanctioned us; and the world has taken some time to fully appreciate and adequately respond to the enormity of our tragedy," President Sirleaf emphasized.

She told the High-Level Meeting that Liberia is fighting with the support of many of its partners; adding that the country is intensifying its response, building and staffing more treatment centers across the country and moving more aggressively to prevent the transmission and change in behavior through community outreach and ownership programmes.

President Sirleaf said Liberians have proudly developed a resilient spirit of overcoming great tragedies and with the help of its partners is poised to do so once again. "We thank many of you around this table who have joined in the fight; partners who through robust response have given us renewed trust in the value of partnership; partners who have given us renewed hope in a bright future for our children," she noted.

She told the world that not long ago Liberia was the epicenter of a regional war by which it experienced the total economic collapse and massive destruction of infrastructure and institutions, adding that the country has faced many challenges in its historical journey.

In separate statements earlier, U.S. President Barack Obama, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, WHO Director-General Margaret Chan, World Bank President Jim Kim and AU Commission Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma said the world needs to act and act very quickly to address the Ebola epidemic plaguing the West African sub-region.

They indicated that the world has not done enough to contain the further spread of the virus and urged countries and international organization to remove red tapes in their processes to respond quickly and urgently to the epidemic.

The World Bank committed an additional US\$400 million to the fight against the disease and urged the world to unite in the fight to defeat the spread of the virus.

Guinean President Alpha Conde and Sierra Leonean President Ernest Bai Koroma joined President Sirleaf to call for a united global action to bring the world's deadliest outbreak to a quick end and prevent thousands of innocent men, women and children from dying.

In another development, President Sirleaf has dismissed, with immediate effect, the Assistant Minister for Sectorial Planning at the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Jeremiah Krah for assaulting police officer Beauty Mulbah.

The Liberian leader described as "unacceptable" an assault on a law enforcement officer, particularly a female, by an official of government and trust that the action will serve as a deterrent to others in government who would want to use their positions to abuse and violate the rights of others.

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