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[Home](#) > President Sirleaf Assures That This Government Will Not Be Lame Duck Government

President Sirleaf Assures That This Government Will Not Be Lame Duck Government

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President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is calling for efficiency, coordination and a sense of common purpose across government as they embark on the final three-years of this administration.

According to an Executive Mansion release, the Liberian leader made the assertion at the end of a two-day Cabinet Retreat held in Julijuah, Bomi County on Wednesday, January 21, 2015.

The Retreat was intended to reunite the Official Family of the Executive Branch, have a commonness of purpose, recognize the Government's successes and to set ambitious but realistic and achievable targets for the next three years. Most of Government's development activities had been put on hold due to the Ebola virus disease that had plagued the country since March 2014.

Though one of the objectives of the retreat was to identify and set realistic and achievable targets, Cabinet Ministers are now expected to present their proposed priority projects to President Sirleaf next Tuesday, January 27, 2015.

Speaking at the end of deliberations Wednesday, the Liberian leader urged her official family to be integrated, vigorous, with a common purpose to make the most of the remaining 35 months of this administration.

For his part, Vice President Joseph N. Boakai, thanked the Liberian leader for initiating the Retreat. He hoped that government follows up on the decentralization process, making sure local officials and citizens in the rural communities are involved in the process. "I think we should begin to connect those people with the different programs being implemented because at the end of the day government has to account for what was or was not done."

Expressing his concern about State-Owned-Enterprises (S-o-Es), Dr. Boakai urged the Boards of the S-o-Es to be more assertive because they are responsible and represent the ownership of those corporations.

A separate retreat with S-o-Es and Cabinet Ministers is scheduled for next Friday, January 30 in Julijuah, Bomi County.

Speaking earlier, the chairman of the Governance Commission, Dr. Amos Sawyer, discussing within the context that this government has only three years to end its administration, urged Cabinet Ministers to identify proposed priority programs that will they will be able to complete to make a significant impact on the people as stipulated in the agenda of this administration. "It is important for this country's sake that this government finishes up strong. It cannot limp to the finish line," he said.

Dr. Sawyer noted that this will be the first time since 1944 that one administration with a living President is going to be turning over to another administration with a living President. Considering uncertainties along the way, he indicated that there will be the dynamics of the politics as well as programmatic ideas so it is important that there



is clarity of the agenda and strength of the implementation.

He predicted that as institutions are a bit fragile, programs must be clear and enforcement strong so that uncertainties and institutional weakness are minimized as a result of fragility.

The Governance Commission chairman suggested to the Liberian leader that government officials on the team now should recommit themselves to finishing the final three years or very early see some kind of change. "I think it's important that everybody on this team recommits themselves," he noted amidst laughter.

Summing up the statement, President Sirleaf assured that this government will not be a lame duck government. "We are going to take it to the finish line and then turn it over," she emphasized.

On the first day, nine presentations were made including the Cabinet Programs Update by the Director-General of the Cabinet, Mr. Jordon Sulonteh, who set out a process which Ministries, Agencies and Corporations need to follow to agree priorities by February 18. The first quarterly review of performance against those priorities is set for April 1, 2015; Review of the President's Top Priorities: Roads, Energy, Ports by the Head of the President's Program Delivery Unit, Dr. Clarence Moniba; Status Update and Execution Plan for Youth Development by Youth and Sports Minister, Mr. Lenn Eugene Nagbe; Status Update on Roads Infrastructural Development and Post-Ebola Execution by Public Works Minister, Mr. W. Gyude Moore, Sr. and Status Update on Energy Projects and Post-Ebola Execution Plan by Lands, Mines and Energy Minister, Mr. Patrick Sendolo.

Others were the Status Update on the new Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and Post-Ebola Executive Plan by Gender, Children and Social Protection Minister, Mrs. Julia Duncan Cassell; Status Update on the current Health Situation and the Execution Plan for a Normal Healthcare System by Health Deputy Ministers, Dr. Bernice Dahn, and Yah Zolia and Assistant Minister Tolbert Nyenswah; Status Update on the Re-opening of Schools and Education Execution Plan for Post-Ebola by Education Deputy Minister, Mr. Anthony Nimely and Status Update on the Agricultural Recovery Program and Post-Ebola Execution by Agriculture Minister, Dr. Florence Chenoweth.

On Day Two, Presentation on the 2014/2015 Budget Execution Report and the Agenda for Transformation and Economic Recovery were made by Finance and Development Planning Minister, Mr. Amara Konneh; Liberia Revenue Authority- Revenue Performance Update and Execution Plan for Revenue Growth by Commissioner-General, Mrs. Elfreda Tamba; Driving Inclusive Private Sector Growth Agenda – Ministry of Commerce and Industry Execution Plan by Commerce and Industry Minister Mr. Axel Addy; The Importance of Audit in Government and Post-Ebola Execution Plan was made by the Auditor-General Mrs. Yusador Gaye; while the final presentation on the Status Update on the Public Sector Reforms and Post-Ebola Execution Plan was made by the Civil Service Agency Director-General, Mr. George K. Werner.

The next Cabinet Meeting takes place on February 18, 2015 while the first Cabinet Inter-active Forum is scheduled for March 12, 2015. Below are some pictures from the retreat.



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