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Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the United States , Mon, May 11, 2015

MONROVIA, LIBERIA – Saturday, May 9, 2015) The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Liberia free of the Ebola virus disease, thus becoming the first of the three worse affected countries to have brought an end to the epidemic. In the jammed packed conference room of the National Ebola Command Center, the WHO Representative Dr. Alex Gasasira, declared, “The outbreak of Ebola virus disease in Liberia is over.” He said Liberia has interrupted transmission of the Ebola virus and 42 days have passed since the last laboratory-confirmed case was buried on March 28; the criteria established by WHO has been met. The WHO Representative said the interruption of the transmission is a monumental achievement for a country that reported the highest number of deaths in the largest, longest and most complex outbreak since Ebola first emerged in 1976. Statistics from the WHO notes that there were more than 3,000 confirmed Ebola cases in Liberia, and 7,400 suspected or probable cases, with more than 4,700 deaths estimated to have occurred since the outbreak was declared in March 2014. A total of 378 healthcare workers became infected; while 192 died of the virus. Dr. Gasasira warned, however, that transmission persists in neighboring Guinea and Sierra Leone creating a high risk that infected people may cross into Liberia. “The government is fully aware of the need to remain on high alert and has the experience, capacity, and support from international partners to do so,” he re-echoed adding, that his organization is here to support Liberia as the response transitions from outbreak control, to vigilance for imported cases, to recovery of essential health services. On behalf of WHO and its Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan, and the Regional Director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, Dr. Gasasira conveyed their heartfelt congratulations to the people and government of Liberia on the monumental success. Before, Dr. Gasasira made the official declaration, the head of the epidemiological team at the Incidence Management System, Dr. Luke Bawo, exhibited a map portraying all of Liberia in green with the number 42 overlaid on it. This signified that two maximum incubation periods of the virus, a total of 42 days, had passed since the safe burial of the last confirmed case of Ebola in the country, fulfilling the official principles for concluding that human-to-human spread of the virus had ended. When Dr. Bawo completed his presentation, the room packed with government officials, international and local partners, and reporters burst into rapturous applause, with some even crying. But the epidemiologist warned that Liberians maintain vigilance throughout until the two other worse affected countries, Guinea and Sierra Leone, achieve the 42 days without a new confirmed case. Before her remarks, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf requested a moment of silence in memory of the over 4,000 persons who died as a result of the Ebola virus disease. Trying to relive the horrifying moments of the critical days of the virus, she thanked all Liberians who had fought Ebola and expressed appreciation to all the country’s international partners and others around the world whose hearts were with Liberia. “I say to all of you, what we have done, we’ve done it for love of country, love of people,” noting that the task is not over but perhaps the most difficult task has just begun. She



urged Liberians not to get overzealous but continue the precautionary measures. Following the official declaration from the WHO, President Sirleaf led an array of government officials, international and local partners, amongst others on a tour to several health facilities including Ebola treatment units, an interim care center for Ebola orphans, and met with widows and other survivors. They visited ELWA-II Ebola treatment center, ELWA Hospital, St. Joseph's Catholic Hospital, John F. Kennedy Hospital, Kerkula Interim Care Center, Redemption Hospital, Island Clinic Ebola treatment center and Banjor. President Sirleaf paid tribute to health workers and acknowledged their efforts in combating the deadly Ebola virus disease. She also provided tokens of appreciation for their invaluable service to the country. Meanwhile, an official day for celebration and thanksgiving takes place at the Centennial Memorial Pavilion on Monday, May 11, 2015 at which time President Sirleaf will officially be presented the WHO Declaration. Christians have been advised to pray for the souls of those departed due to the Ebola virus on Sunday, May 10; while Islamic prayers is being planned for Friday, May 15, to the memory of members of the Muslim community who succumbed to the virus. The President of Togo and ECOWAS' head of the region's Ebola Virus Disease Response and Eradication Process, His Excellency Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe is expected to join President Sirleaf at Monday's program. Others expected to grace the occasion include the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Kadré Desiré Ouedraogo, Ghanaian Foreign Minister, Hanna Tetteh, and Nigeria's Health Minister, Professor Onyebuchi Chukwu, among others. Please Click here to view some pictures from this event =====>> [1]

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