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President Sirleaf Addresses Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council – High Level Segment

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(NEW YORK, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – Thursday, July 9, 2015) President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says that due to the lack of consultations during the early years of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), most Least Developed Countries (LDCs) did not take ownership of the global objectives nor did they believe it to be solutions to their problems.

According to a dispatch from New York, the Liberian President made the observation when she delivered the Keynote Address at the High Level Segment of the Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Thursday, July 9, 2015. She spoke on “Implementing a Post-2015 Development Agenda That Works for the Least Developed Countries.”

The Liberian leader pointed to the lack of capacities and accurate measurements for progress as serious issues in assessing the real impacts of the MDGs in Least Developed Countries such as Liberia.

“Moreover, by utilizing a uniformed set of targets, the methodology overlooked differences in country conditions and capacities, leading to challenges in assessing progress made by respective countries,” she said.

Nevertheless, President Sirleaf indicated that the MDGs framework became an important tool for improving human development, especially in the Least Developed Countries; adding that significant progress has been achieved globally in addressing poverty, malnutrition and communicable diseases, as well as in human development indicators such as education and health.

The Liberian Chief Executive stressed that when the MDGs was launched in 2000, Liberia was still mired in conflict with no knowledge and participation in its formulation. However, she noted that since 2006, the country has made significant progress especially in education, gender equality and women empowerment, HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, as well as resource management.

“These have enabled Liberia to attract investment and promote sustained and inclusive growth aimed at raising people’s well-being and expectations,” she said.

President Sirleaf, however, emphasized that the Ebola outbreak exacerbated Liberia’s economic growth decline, and its transformation which was already being affected by decline in the country’s main exports of rubber and iron ore.

She said the experience of Liberia and its neighbors with the Ebola virus disease highlighted the fact that while all countries are at risk of such outbreaks, the Least Developed Countries are particularly vulnerable to public health emergencies, with severe impacts on the lives, livelihoods and the economies of these countries.

She reiterated that Liberia’s experience suggests the fundamental importance of infrastructure and essential



skills development, as well as training to strengthen the capacities of Least Developed Countries to respond to public health challenges and emergencies, and to mitigate shocks to health systems.

Liberia currently serves as a member of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries within the United Nations.

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