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Pres. Sirleaf Calls for Long-Term Recovery Plans for Ebola-Affect Countries

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President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has emphasized that an effective long-term response to the Ebola virus disease will rest in plans and strategies for economic recovery and support for the transformation goals of the three countries worst-affected by the epidemic. The Liberian President was speaking on Friday, July 10, 2015, when she delivered the Mano River Union (MRU) Recovery Plan at the International Ebola Recovery Conference at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The conference was hosted by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. Speaking on behalf of Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, President Sirleaf said in

furtherance of the goal for long-term recovery, the 3rd Extraordinary Summit of the MRU, held on June 28, 2015 in Conakry, Guinea, adopted the sub-regional Post Ebola Socio-Economic Program, as well as the institutional and financing framework to ensure an effective implementation of the plan. According to the Liberian Leader, the MRU plan is clustered into two levels. She said that Level One which is estimated at US \$1.76 billion, focuses on health, water, sanitation and hygiene, governance, peace and security, agriculture, fisheries and food security, gender, youth and social protection, among others. She added that Level Two which focuses on sub-regional roads, energy access, and information and communication technology, is estimated at US \$2.24 billion. President Sirleaf renewed calls to the international community for the cancellation of the debt of US \$3.16 billion and also for direct budget support to the three worst-affected countries. "We also re-echo our call on the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the United Nations System to support the establishment of a Special Delivery Unit within the MRU Secretariat, backed by a project preparation facility for the preparation of bankable projects for effective implementation of the program," she said. President Sirleaf pointed out that in terms of aggregate cost, the financing gap is estimated at US \$7.2 billion, of which US \$4 billion will finance the sub-regional plan. She observed that while the resources required are significant, a strong Mano River Union can be a formidable force for recovery and resilience in the sub-region, which will attract private sector investment and capital in natural resources for sustainability and positive impact on regional stability and world trade. Concluding, President Sirleaf said the world as a whole has a great stake in how to respond together in this global threat, noting that the world is more ever connected together than before, and that virus and diseases, just like terrorism, know no boundaries.



Written by Abu Kamara & Gabriel Williams

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