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President Sirleaf Addresses 70th Session of the UN General Assembly; Urges the UN to Find Responses to Increasing New and Emerging Challenges Facing the World

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According to a dispatch, President Sirleaf made the statement when she addressed the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Tuesday, September 29, 2015.

She indicated, however, that the creation of the UN was a realization that only a global organization, through the support of member states, would be suitable to grapple with the many challenges faced by humanity. At 70 years, President Sirleaf pointed out a number of achievements of the world body including a reduction in interstate conflict, cooperation in the protection and promotion of human rights, and in alleviating global poverty, disease and hunger.

The Liberian leader applauded what she called the “introspection” of the UN regarding the question of structural reform. “At seventy, we feel compelled to ask: Is our world organization hindered today by inflexible structures and overburdened by bureaucracies? Is the current structure of the UN fit for purpose - to play its role in the global transformation processes over the next 15 years?”

She commended the foresight of the UN Secretary-General in directing a comprehensive review of peace operations, peace building architecture and a global study on the implementation of Resolution 1325 on women participation in peace processes.

President Sirleaf, the only elected female African President, then called for more women participation in peace processes across the world, stressing that much more still needs to be done. “We must therefore all ‘step-up’ and take further measures beyond moralizing gender equality to tangible actions,” President Sirleaf proposed. The Liberian President reminded the world body that since the founding 70 years ago, only three women have served as President of the General Assembly, with one of them being Liberia’s Angie Brooks Randolph; only a few women continue to serve as special representative of the Secretary General and not a single woman has served as UN Secretary-General.

Speaking about the Ebola virus disease that ravaged the Mano River Union, President Sirleaf thanked the international community for assisting her country’s recovery.

“As we ponder, in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, three countries worst-hit by the deadly Ebola virus disease, we bear witness to the foundational creed of the United Nations - that we can always find it within our humanity to respond even to unknown enemies to our collective progress,” she acknowledged, adding, “We remain grateful to all of you for the outpouring of support and assistance as we faced down the deadly disease, the



greatest modern threat to global public health.”

Touching on the post-Ebola Recovery Programmes formulated by the three worst affected countries, President Sirleaf said, “We are now proceeding with implementation of our Post Ebola Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan with expectation of support from our bilateral and multilateral partners;” committing to a regionally approved Post-Ebola Recovery Strategy which the three affected Mano River Union countries have formulated. She said the three countries are determined to address the development losses incurred as a result of Ebola including rebuilding a more resilient health and education system.

President Sirleaf cited the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted in April, which offers pathways to various forms of financing, capacity building and technological exchanges to support the pursuit of these development objectives.

“We must now forge genuine partnerships in order to move ahead together on the road to strengthening peace and security, human rights, socio-economic development and environmental sustainability,” she assured, adding, “We stand firm in the political will to meet any challenge in our commitment to leave no one behind.”

Mr. Jerolim Mek Matthew Piah **Presidential Press Secretary/Office of the President Department of Public Affairs Republic of Liberia** email: jpiah@emansion.gov.lr ^[1] jeromapiah@yahoo.comweb ^[2]: www.emansion.gov.lr ^[3]

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5201 16th Street, NW • Washington, DC 20011 • USA • (202) 723-0437

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^[1] <mailto:jpiah@emansion.gov.lr> ^[2] <mailto:jeromapiah@yahoo.comweb> ^[3] <http://www.emansion.gov.lr>