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*Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the United States* , Fri, Aug 5, 2016

Washington, D.C.: On Tuesday, July 26, 2016, Liberia celebrated 169 years of independence as Africa's oldest republic. On July 26, 1847, Liberia declared her independence to become Africa's first republic, signaling to the world that the Black man was capable of self-governance. In Washington, celebrations marking the 169th independence anniversary, which included a day-long Cultural Extravaganza/Family Day, Intercessory Worship Service, and Diplomatic Reception, concluded on Sunday, July 31st with a Fashion Show to showcase the best of Liberian and African attires and clothing.

The celebrations were kicked off to a grand start on Saturday, July 23, 2016 on the grounds of the Embassy where several thousands of Liberians and friends of Liberia gathered to showcase Liberia's rich and diverse cultural heritage. The Cultural Extravaganza/Family Day, which started with the parade of flags of the 15 counties (political sub-division) and the National Flag of Liberia, included performances by a culture troupe and traditional mask dancers,



*Happy Independence Day*  
Celebrate Liberia at 169



...s of popular Liberian and African music until  
...on of Liberian Christian

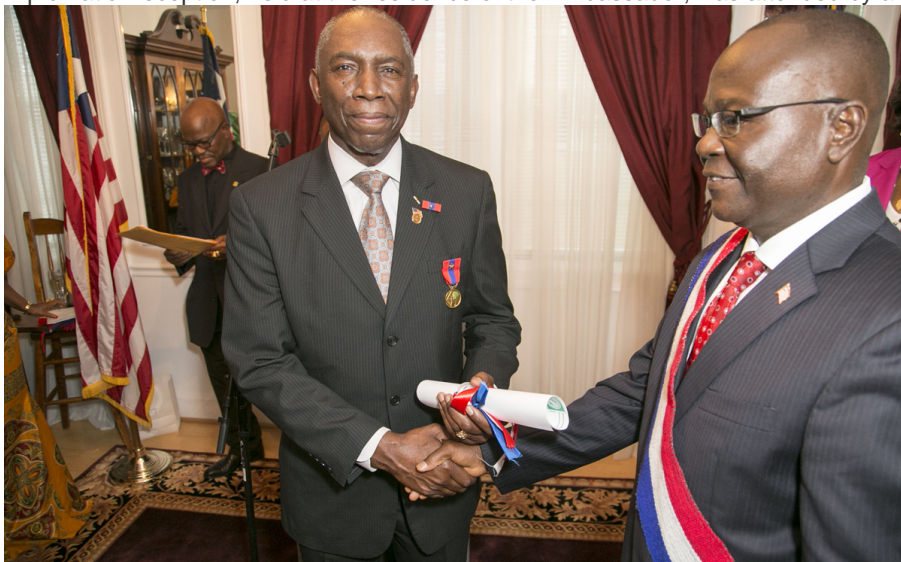
Ministers of Washington, D.C., Metro Area at

the Lamb of God Lutheran Church in Landover Hills, MD, Rev. Joseph W. Boayue, Jr., Senior Pastor of Christian Baptist Church, Silver Spring, MD, said all Liberians have a responsibility for the success of their country. Rev. Boayue, who was the guest



...nce its founding, 169 years of existence  
...orship

sustainable peace and progress of Liberia. He described Liberians as a resilient people who have persevered against tremendous odds, including the devastating civil war and the recent Ebola epidemic, through the grace of God. On Tuesday, July 26, 2016, the Diplomatic Reception, held at the residence of the Ambassador, was attended by an array of U.S. Government and Liberian



officials, members of the diplomatic corps,

Liberian community, business and religious leaders, friends of Liberia and well-wishers. Speaking at the impressive ceremony, Ambassador Sulunteh underscored the special historical relationship between Liberia and the U.S., and reaffirmed Liberia's unshakable determination to foster closer and more fruitful relations with the United States. The Ambassador noted with satisfaction that Liberia and the U.S. share a common commitment to the advancement of







international peace, security and

respect for human rights. He added that Liberia will continue to cooperate with the U.S. and other members of the international community in combating terrorism. “We will also remain steadfast against any attempts to reverse the achievements made in the spread of democratic values and good governance in Africa and other parts of the world,” he said. Ambassador Suluntuoh said the U.S. has been a strong bilateral partner in supporting



added that Liberia cannot forget U.S.

leadership role during the fight against the Ebola epidemic, nor can the country fail to recognize the critical contribution of the U.S. of \$257 million grant through the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), for the rehabilitation of the Mount Coffee Hydroelectric Plant that will provide electricity to Monrovia and its environs. He expressed deep appreciation for U.S. contribution in capacity building, as well as other invaluable assistance

given in the overall security



sector reform, especially during this

critical period of UNMIL drawdown in Liberia. “We also express appreciation for the support in the rehabilitation of our educational and health infrastructure, including the renovation of teachers training institutes and the continuation of the Peace Corps program,” he stated. Ambassador Sulunteh also lauded Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S. Assistant Secretary for Africa, for her tremendous effort in seeking Liberia’s interest during her tenure as U.S. Ambassador to Liberia and also in her present capacity. Also making remarks at the Department of State, said



U.S.-Liberia bilateral relationship is

rooted in both countries’ deep historical ties. She added that like the Founding Fathers of the United States, Liberians share the vision of a nation based on respect for the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Ambassador Greenfield, who was the first female U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, said while there have been setbacks such as wars, diseases, poverty, Liberia has made tremendous progress. Highlighting a few of the accomplishments Liberia has achieved this year, Assistant Secretary Greenfield said Liberia joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) as its 163rd member after nearly 10 years of negotiating its accession terms. “This represents a major step for Liberia’s economic integration into the global trading system, and it adds another key African voice to this important forum,” she added. She also pointed out that the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

turned over full security responsibility to the Liberian Government after 13 years of deployment, noting that this historic transition reflects Liberia’s steady advances toward restoring peace and stability across the country. “Looking ahead,” Secretary Greenfield said, “Liberia is on track to accomplish much more, and we are proud to partner with Liberia on many different initiatives.” After successfully signing a US \$257 million Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact last year, she added, the U.S. and Liberia made extensive progress





in improving road

infrastructure and

expanding access to reliable and affordable electricity. Secretary Greenfield indicated that by 2030, Liberia aims to connect 70 percent of Monrovia to the electricity grid and provide access to 35 percent of the rest of the country. She added that through Power Africa, the U.S. is committed to continuing to support Liberia's efforts to meet these goals. The Assistant U.S. Secretary of State also pointed out that another key priority for both



leaders were presently in the U.S. for

academic and leadership training through President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative. "Empowering youth also means improving the education systems, and ensuring that young women have the same opportunities as young men," she said. Ambassador Greenfield spoke of the recent visit to Liberia by U.S. First Lady Michelle Obama to support the Peace Corps-implemented program, "Girls Leading Our World," that seeks to promote girls education. She added that in connection with the visit, the First Lady announced a new U.S. commitment to Liberia of \$27 million in funding to directly support the "Let Girls Learn" initiative through several new education programs in Liberia. Looking at the future, Secretary Greenfield noted that even though Liberia faces many challenges, those challenges can be turned into opportunities for the country to succeed. One key challenge she highlighted was the forthcoming 2017 presidential and legislative elections. "These elections are an historic opportunity for Liberia to create its own destiny, establish its own path and legacy for the future," she added. Secretary Greenfield lauded President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's decision to step down after two terms in office. "That decision gives the people of Liberia an opportunity to be the first generation to see the peaceful transition of power from one living, sitting president, to another, both elected by the people," she said. "When this happens, Liberia will be a huge example of a true democracy in Africa, and a leader for other countries on the continent to emulate." A major highlight of the

Diplomatic Reception was the conferral of “Distinguished Service Order” upon Lt. General William “Kip” Ward (rtd), who served as the first Commander of the United States Africa Command (U.S.-AFRICOM), for his contributions to the transformation of the Armed Forces of Liberia under the Security Sector Reform. The order was conferred upon General Ward on behalf of President Sirleaf by Ambassador Sulunteh. In response, General Ward said his contributions toward the reform of the Armed Forces of Liberia was because of the special historical ties between both countries and peoples. Two staff of the Embassy, Ms. Catherine J. Nmah, Second Secretary for Consular Affairs, and Ms. Nukey M. Gargard, receptionist, received certificates from the U.S. Secret Service commending them for their services at the Embassy. Ms. Nmah was also surprised with a certificate from the Liberian Community Association in the Washington, D.C. Metro Area for her meritorious services rendered at the Embassy. The certificate was presented to Ms. Nmah by Ms. Nee Allison, President of the Liberian Community Association. The independence anniversary celebrations concluded on Sunday, July 31, 2016 with the Fashion Show intended to showcase the best of Liberian and African attires and clothing. The Fashion Show, which was a relaxed atmosphere characterized by music, was held in partnership with Ms. Kimma Wreh of TeKay Designs and Excel Magazine International. During the show, held at Trinity Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., Ambassador Sulunteh spoke of the need to promote Liberia’s rich and diverse culture and huge tourism potential. With 350 miles coastline along the Atlantic Ocean lined with white sandy beaches, palm and coconut trees, Liberia also has 43 percent of the remaining rain forest in the West African sub-region, with unique plant and animal species, including the pygmy hippopotamus.

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

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