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## U.S.-Liberia Relations Will Continue to be Further Strengthened Despite Change in Governments, says U.S. Assistant Secretary Linda Thomas Greenfield

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Washington, D.C. – Jan. 13/2017: United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, says that the relationship between the United States and Liberia will continue to be further strengthened, irrespective of change in the U.S. Government or the Government of Liberia. According to a dispatch from the Embassy of Liberia in the United States, Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield was speaking on January 10, 2017, at the closing of the third round of the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue at the State Department in Washington. Noting that 2017 will be a momentous year for Liberia, which is holding Presidential and General Elections, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield said it will also be a momentous year for the United States. “In 10 days, we will inaugurate our 45th President, and soon thereafter, there will be many new faces at the State Department and throughout our government. Some of us whom you’ve known for a long time, including me, will soon be moving on to new chapters in our lives,” she stated. Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield further noted: “While between now and the next Partnership Dialogue in 2018 many of the participants on both delegations will change, what will not change is our commitment together.” Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield, who headed the U.S. Government delegation, said that Liberia has been a strong partner to the United States on issues of concern before the United Nations and regional bodies, and has been a stalwart partner in working together to fight transnational crime, promote democracy, and protect citizens in both countries from diseases with disregard for national boundaries. “We have been there for each other and this will continue as our foundation,” she reaffirmed. Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield and Liberia’s Foreign Minister Marjon V. Kamara, who headed the official Liberian Government delegation, signed a Joint Statement concluding the Partnership Dialogue. According to the Joint Statement, the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue convened four working groups focused on the following: Overcoming Challenges to Liberia’s Economy; Expanding Agriculture Production and Trade; Enhancing Liberia’s Investment and Infrastructure Climate; and Supporting Post Ebola Recovery and Health Strengthening Efforts. The first working group session, “Overcoming Challenges to Liberia’s Economy,” was co-chaired by Liberia’s Minister of Finance and Development Planning Boima Kamara and U.S. Department of State’s Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs Patricia Haslach. Regarding the Liberian economy, the Joint Statement states, “The United States and Liberia recognized that the Liberian economy has faced substantial challenges from the dual shocks of Ebola and declining commodity prices. They reviewed and discussed potential reforms aimed at strengthening macroeconomic fundamentals and diversifying the Liberian economy to build resilience, promote sustainable growth, and deepen the financial system.” The second working group session, “Agriculture and Food Security,” was co-chaired by Liberia’s Agriculture Minister



Dr. Moses Zinnah, Liberia's Minister of Commerce and Industry Axel Addy, USAID Liberia Mission Director Anthony Chan, and U.S. Department of State's Office of Global Food Security Senior Advisor, Caitlin Welsh. The Joint Statement also states, "Recognizing the important role the agricultural sector must play in Liberia's food security and economic development, the United States and Liberia committed to continued collaboration in support of Liberia's Agricultural Transformation Agenda, through the Liberia Agribusiness Development Activity and other programs, with the ultimate goal of improving food security among Liberians. Both governments intend to increase efforts to encourage private companies to invest responsibly in Liberia's agriculture sector and to increase agriculture trade. The third working group session, "Post-Ebola Recovery and Health System Strengthening Efforts," was co-chaired by Liberia's Deputy Minister of Health Tolbert Nyeswah and U.S. Department of State's Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Caryn R. McClelland. According to the Joint Statement, "Acknowledging the adverse impacts of the Ebola epidemic on the Liberian economy and society, the working group reviewed ongoing initiatives and programs aimed at achieving improvements in the health sector to include ending preventable child and maternal deaths, creating an AIDS-free generation, and strengthening global health security to ensure rapid response and resilience to disease outbreaks..." The final working group session, "Enhancing Liberia's Investment and Infrastructure Climate," was co-chaired by Liberia's Minister of Public Works Gyude Moore, Liberia's National Investment Commission Executive Director George G. Wisner, the Millennium Challenge Corporation's Acting Vice President for the Department of Compact Operations Kyeh Kim, and the U.S. Department of State's Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Finance and Development, Lisa Kubiske. According to the Joint Statement, "The United States and Liberia reviewed a number of successful collaborations in the transportation, water supply, energy, and information and communication technology sectors." The Joint Statement further states that "Recognizing the importance of good regulation, fairly consistently administered, in attracting private sector investment, the United States and Liberia also committed to continued collaboration in standing up the Liberia Electricity Regulatory Commission to regulate the electricity sector. The United States and Liberia further recognized the importance of sound regulation in Liberia's petroleum sector to attract responsible private investment." On the margins of the working group session, "Counselor-related issues" became a parallel bilateral discussion, co-chaired by Liberia's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal Affairs Cllr. Deweh Gray, U.S. Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs David Reimer and Consular Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary Edward Ramotowski. Speaking at the close of the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue, Foreign Minister Kamara lauded the U.S. Government for the successful hosting of the third round the Dialogue, and looked forward to "the retooling of U.S. support to meet key objectives identified during the deliberations."





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