



# **REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

## **EXECUTIVE MANSION**

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#### **At 22<sup>nd</sup> African Union Summit, President Sirleaf Presents Final Report of High Level Panel on Fragile States**

(ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA – Thursday, January 30, 2014) At the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Assembly of the African Union, taking place in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has presented the Final Report of the High Level Panel on Fragile States, recommending bold steps to reverse the entrapment of fragile states in poverty, while promoting the spirit of friendship and partnership, embodied in optimism and commitment throughout all nations.

Presenting the report, President Sirleaf, as Chair of the Panel, stated that it conducted a robust year-long consultative and deliberative process with African Governments and civil society whose responses noted that fragility is a universal problem; that all nations directly or indirectly are at risk and must work collectively to address it.

The President also noted that countries that lack robust institutions, diversified economies and inclusive political systems are the most vulnerable, and that fragility comes about when internal or external pressures become too great for national institutions and political processes to manage, creating a risk of violence.

Also addressing the meeting was the President of the African Development Bank, Dr. Donald Kaberuka, who, in October 2012, established the High Level Panel on Fragile States and invited President Sirleaf to Chair the eminent group. The Panel was asked to review the likely sources of fragility in Africa in the coming years, and to make recommendations both for the Bank and the wider policy community as to how they should be tackled.

According to a dispatch from Addis Ababa, the Panel Chair, in presenting the report, noted that the analysis clearly shows that fragility is rooted in poverty and that poverty is complex and multidimensional, and also determined that there are special circumstances of fragile states that need to be addressed through sustainable development and inclusive growth, which take into account changing population dynamics for job creation. The analysis also considers ensuring healthy, skilled and educated individuals; promoting better management and equitable access to natural resources; reducing inequalities, especially among the continent's youth and women; and increasing social protection for the most vulnerable.

The Chairperson also said that managing the underlying drivers of conflict require adequate policy responses to some of the most disruptive social, economic and environmental changes; that building resilient states and societies, through stronger links of institutions, and partnership at the national and regional levels, the private sector and civil societies, are paramount to the continent's survival.

President Sirleaf pointed out that the report endorses the findings of the New Deal on Fragile States, which calls for stronger ownership, harmonization, results and mutual accountability; that broad-based and participatory country leadership and ownership of all actors, including government, civil society and the private sector, are pre-conditions for sustained and irreversible gains.

Speaking further, President Sirleaf said that the report, which is based on the themes of managing change and forging partnership, recognizes that Africa is changing at extraordinary speed and that the values of peace, security and justice are central to development. These changes pose certain risks, and therefore fragility is seen not as a category of states, but a risk inherent in the development processes itself, in every country and region, and on every level. "If we are to build resilient and legitimate states, address the potential drivers of conflict and effectively meet challenges of change that will inevitably come, there is need

for inclusive and proactive policies to be implemented by all African countries, regional and continental institutions, as well as development partners,” President Sirleaf stressed.

There is a need for cooperation to be led by Regional Economic Communities that operate within the political context of the African Union, the President said, noting that the Report calls for greater involvement of Africa’s continental institutions, particularly the African Development Bank, which has championed the cause, to intermediate among all stakeholders of society, including the private sector to ensure the end of fragility through resilient states.

Concluding, the Liberian leader said that the Report calls for policies implemented going forward to be done under the framework of five recommendations, which stipulate: Increased focus on potentially disruptive economic, social and environmental change; new instruments for supporting private sector development in isolated communities; more use of private sector and civil society capacity in delivering public goods and services; investment in regional frameworks for resilience; and a more integrated response to conflict and fragility.

“There is confidence that with the guidance and commitment of Member States, measures can be implemented to ensure that, in the future and in conflict-affected areas, no person, community or nation will be left behind, and everybody can look to prosperity through sustained growth and development,” President Sirleaf declared.

For his part, the AfDB President, Dr. Kaberuka, in thanking President Sirleaf and Panel members for accepting to serve, observed that security and development are inseparable, and thus fragility, which leads to insecurity and conflict, must be tackled.

Dr. Kaberuka pointed out that the progress made in the Central African Republic and South Sudan had been reversed due to the re-emergence of conflict, and that they would have to start all over again. He said that the report helped in understanding the factors that promote fragility, and called for concerted actions, based on the Panel’s report, to address fragility sustainably.

Several African leaders who commented on the report praised the Liberian President for her brilliant leadership qualities and for being of service to the continent.

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