

**Remarks by H.E. Jeremiah C. Sulunteh at the 166<sup>th</sup> Independence Reception  
hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of Liberia**

**Washington DC, USA**

**July 26, 2013**

**“Liberia at 166: A Reason to Celebrate”**

**Salutation:**

- **Hon. Eunice Reddick, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and other officials of the US Government**
- **The Doyen and members of of the Diplomatic Corp,**
- **Minister Meapeh Gono-Glay and other officials of the Government of Liberia**
- **Hon. Jeff Dowana, Deputy Chief of Mission and staff of the Embassy**
- **Mrs. Pathera Laura Graham Askie, our Distinguished of Honor and other honorees**
- **Mrs. Kabeh Sulunteh**
- **Distinguished Invited Guests & Friends of Liberia,**
- **Fellow Liberians, Ladies & Gentlemen**

Permit me, at the outset, to bring you heart-felt greetings on behalf of Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, the Government and People of Liberia and the Embassy in Washington, DC.

Today we gather here to celebrate another milestone in the history of Liberia. One hundred and sixty-six years ago today, our forefathers declared independence and established a nation state. Liberia became a home to many freed African American

slaves that would later establish a government and provide leadership. Although it experienced its bitter past, Liberia remains a proud nation in Africa.

As we observe this day, we would like to report that in the midst of all the challenges Liberia has faced, steady progress has been made, and today, **“We have a reason to celebrate.”**

I am humbled and delighted to report that during the past fifteen months of our tour of duty, the relations between Liberia and the United States has become stronger.

The United States has been an important partner to Liberia’s development for which we remain grateful. From the founding of the country and even during our darkest days and now in our transformative stage, the U.S has been a trusted partner. In order to institutionalize this relationship, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton signed a partnership dialogue in January 2013. This was followed by an inauguration of the dialogue in May, which focused on three key priority areas, such as:

- Agriculture & Food Security
- Energy Infrastructure
- Human Development

These key areas are critical to Liberia’s agenda for transformation as the government envision to making Liberia a middle income country by 2030.

Furthermore, we should like to mention that Liberia began eligible for the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in December 2012 and we look

forward to a continuous effort with the US in meeting our development agenda as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, on the home front, we should like to report that the Government of Liberia has made steady progress even in the midst of challenges:

- Maintained Peace & Stability since the signing of the 2003 Accra Peace Accord
- Held two successive democratic elections
- Served as a post-conflict success story and a blue print for regional peace in West Africa

Progress has also been made in the socio-economic sector of the country:

- Liberia has attracted Foreign Direct Investment in the tune of \$17bn., looking forward to providing the infrastructure to convert these investments into job creating industries
- Instituted several education reforms which saw enrollment rising to 1.5m students during the 2012 academic year in 11,954 schools.
  - Several universities and colleges are now operating in the country
  - GOL is constructing community colleges in most of the counties in Liberia.
- Most government hospitals & clinics have been fully rehabilitated while many new ones were constructed across Liberia.
- Several miles of have been rehabilitated and or constructed:
  - Belle Yallah road newly built
  - Monrovia- Buchanan Road recently paved and dedicated
  - Fish Town- Harper Road Pavement to start soon
  - Red Light- Gbarnga road expansion and pavement in progress.

\* Funding for the rehabilitation work on the Mt. Coffee Hydroelectric plant is being finalized to supply electricity to Monrovia & its environs.

\* The West Africa Power Pool project (WAPP), which tackles the issue of power supply deficiency within West Africa, has begun along Liberia's borders with neighboring countries. And as we celebrate tonight, street lights are being turned on in Luguatou, Doaplay and Karnplay for the first time.

\* Arrangements are being concluded to rehabilitate the ports of Buchanan, Greenville, Harper & Monrovia.

\* The Government is making all efforts to make RIA an International Airport & hub for West Africa.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, although steady progress has been made, we are still faced with a lot of challenges: The Government continues to find ways to address the problems of **LIMITED MANPOWER/CAPACITY, CORRUPTION, GENUINE RECONCILIATION**, as well as **REFORMING LAWS AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS** to meet present realities. These areas of national imperative remain the major challenges in our country

Fellow Liberians and friends of Liberia, I would like to thank all of our development partners including the World Bank, IMF, and the United States for standing with us. I want to make this clarion call to our partners, especially the United States, not to get weary but to continue to stand by us as we put our nation on an irreversible path of growth and prosperity.

Finally, let me inform all of our diaspora Liberians, especially in the United States that as part of our effort to take the Government to the people, we are finalizing arrangements to begin the issuance of the Liberia ECOWAS Biometric passports across the United States; and that the 167<sup>th</sup> Independence celebrations of our country will take place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 2014. We hereby direct the

Deputy Chief of Mission to begin work with the leadership of the Liberian Association in Pennsylvania towards this effort.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your attention and Happy Independence Day!

All Hail Lone Star All Hail! HAPPY INDEPENDENCE!