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August 9, 2004

2004-004

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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. PLEDGES \$200 MILLION TO RECONSTRUCT LIBERIA

UNITED NATIONS—The United States delegation, led by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, pledged \$200 million at the International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia to support the recovery and development of Liberia in its transition from a conflict-ridden society to one of stability and growth. The two-day conference, co-hosted by the United Nations (UN), World Bank, and the United States, in collaboration with the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL), offers significant momentum to rebuild Liberia after 15 years of civil conflict.

Secretary Powell emphasized the U.S. commitment to the people of Liberia: “With our African friends, and with the United Nations and with Liberians themselves, we are helping to create a new government, a responsible government, to care for the needs of a desperate people.”

E.U. and Ireland: \$125 million

The conference, which took place February 5 and 6 at UN Headquarters in New York City, succeeded in raising pledges for Liberia’s reconstruction efforts from the European Commission \$120 million (U.S. dollars), Ireland \$5 million (U.S. dollars), and other contributors.

“This conference was a catalyst for a dialogue between the world community and the National Transitional Government of Liberia. Chairman Bryant presented a compelling plan for the future of Liberia as a peaceful, productive neighbor, and the international community responded with pledges to insure Liberia’s robust and sustainable recovery,” said Andrew S. Natsios, Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. “We expect more countries to pledge assistance to Liberia in the immediate future,” added Natsios.

Immediate Assistance

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Secretary Powell, and World Bank Regional Vice President of Africa Callisto Madavo opened the floor to international pledges on the second day of the conference with remarks calling for international supporters to join together to meet the needs of a country moving away from a history of conflict to a future of promise. Other conference speakers included Chairman C. Gyude Bryant, head of the NTGL, as well as Administrator Natsios, Mark Malloch Brown of the United Nations Development Group, and a representative of the European Union.

Following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Accra, Ghana, in August 2003 that brought an end to civil strife in Liberia, this conference is a partnership of bi-lateral, multi-lateral, and international supporters who pledge support for the security and rebuilding of Liberia. The U.S. pledge will help provide immediate humanitarian efforts, assist in the community-based reintegration of displaced persons, refugees, and former combatants, train a new police force, and support a transitional government by assisting in election planning, independent media, and in other areas as well as to support health, education, and agricultural projects.

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