

EXECUTIVE

# HORN



*Magazine of the President of the Republic of Liberia*

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**A Collage of Development Across Montserrado County**

# '26' MESSAGE from the President

*One People, One Nation United for Peace and Sustainable Development*



The true greatness of any nation is manifest in its ability to remain united and forge ahead in the spirit of unity, peace, reconciliation and development despite the odds. Ten years ago, we, as a nation, were divided by guns that kept us frightened and wide awake. We took shelter far from our homes and took refuge in foreign lands.

Liberians gathered and prayed for the peace and security we now enjoy. The energy that sustained us has propelled us to move ahead, despite the challenges. Today, we can look back and see where we have come as one people. There is so much development that we, as a people, can boast of. Together, we have kept our peace; built roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals, yet the challenges are enormous. Our accomplishments seem small, as we yearn for more.

Truly, sustaining our peace and development is not an event; rather, it is a process that will take us many years. From the first day of this administration, in 2006, we embarked on a course to revitalize our shattered economy, rebuild our devastated infrastructures, and restore our lost dignity. This course is

achievable only if we remain united as one people, and this involves our commitment and our desire to ensure that the barriers that foment division are removed.

As we mark Liberia's 167<sup>th</sup> Independence Celebration, let us remain united as a people and a nation. Where there is antagonism and resentment, let us unite for the peace of this glorious land of liberty. Where there is bitterness and strife, let us ensure that this path of development becomes irreversible. Let us embrace our true identity and join hands together to rebuild Liberia.

This edition of the *Executive Horn* Magazine covers activities and programs from a year ago August 2013 to July 2014; publication was postponed while we addressed housekeeping issues. During these months, in furtherance of our development agenda, we, among many activities, dedicated a mini-hydro power plant in Yandohun, Lofa County, which brought light to rural communities. To protect future generations, we launched the Anti-Human Trafficking Five-Year National Action Plan. And to promote and ensure transparency in the workings of government, we signed the Code of Conduct Law that applies to all public officials and employees.

Enjoy this edition of *Executive Horn*, dear reader, as we wish you a joyous July 26 Independence Celebration!

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## Profile of MONTSERRADO COUNTY



The Executive Mansion.

At the foundation of the country, Montserrado is the oldest County in Liberia. It was the first of three counties to sign the Declaration of Independence on July 26, 1847. Before then, in 1821, the American Colonization Society (ACS) led a group of African American freed slaves who settled on Providence Island, along the Mesurado River, in what is now Monrovia, Liberia's capital city.

Most townships and cities are named after these early settlers or the states or plantations from which

they came: Brewerville, Virginia, Royesville, Careysburg, Harrisburg, Caldwell, New Georgia, Crozierville, Clay Ashland, and Arthington -- to name a few.

Montserrado County borders Bong County in the north, Bomi and Margibi Counties in the west and east, respectively, and the Atlantic Ocean in the south. The county originally had three administrative territories: Gibi, Marshall, and Bomi. Gibi and Marshall later formed what is now Margibi County, while Bomi became a County of its own.

Today Montserrado is made up of two Statutory Districts: Careysburg and Todee; two other recognized subdivisions, St. Paul River and Greater Monrovia, have no official administrative status; six cities (excluding Monrovia): Bentol, Arthington, ClayAshland, Brewerville, Paynesville, and Careysburg; one borough: New Kru Town; two chiefdoms, seven clans, and 21 townships.

At the time of its founding, Montserrado County was composed of three main tribes: the Deygbo or Dey on the coast, and the Kpelle and Gola in the north. These groups were joined by ex-slaves from the United States in 1821. Eventually, all of Liberia's 16 tribes came to populate the county, so that today Montserrado, and particularly Greater Monrovia, is considered highly diverse and representative of the population of Liberia as a whole. Bassa- and Kpelle-speaking citizens are in the majority, making up 21 percent and 52 percent, respectively, of the county's population, while every other language and dialect can also be found. English, though, is the official language of the country.

The county is blessed with beautiful natural plains, fertile soil, lush natural vegetation, islands, ample rivers and gorgeous beaches. The smallest county by size, Montserrado is home to 1.1 million people, according to the 2008 Population and Housing Census, corresponding to almost half of Liberia's entire population. About 70 percent reside in the capital, attracted by urban life, commercial business, and government jobs. Before then, the 1984 Population and Housing Census, put the county's population at nearly 500,000.

Being the largest prize in the struggle for power that involved as many as 18 armed fighting forces at various times during the nation's civil conflict, Montserrado County suffered immensely as a result. The waves of attacks occasioned widespread human rights abuses, massive loss of life and property, and the devastation of essential public infrastructure. To this day, some of the county's basic infrastructure remains damaged, and basic social provisions are to a great extent grossly inadequate, particularly in rural areas.

# Profile of MONTSERRADO COUNTY



The Capitol Building.

However, since the ascendancy of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the citizens of Montserrat have stressed that their main priorities are: roads, education, and health. They noted that without roads, it is not possible to develop the county, since so many areas are inaccessible by vehicle, and they miss out on basic services such as education and health. Improved health services are needed to address outbreaks of diseases and to assure the productivity of the labor force. Education is needed to combat the high illiteracy, particularly among women, while education, together with vocational skills, allow for a

strong work force, able to take on the task of developing the county for a more prosperous future.

Heeding the calls of the people, the Sirleaf administration, working with partners, continues to work determinedly in restoring infrastructure and basic services to Liberia, in general, and Montserrat County, in particular.

Although the Liberian leader brought back power for the first time in 14 years, she is working to expand electricity by reconstructing the destroyed Mt. Coffee hydropower plant while building mini-hydros in other parts of the country. Reconstruction of a destroyed road network system, essential for trade and development, is continuing, with over 300 miles (500 kilometers) of paved roads; the reconstruction of bridges is taking place, as is the restoration of water and sanitation systems. The catalogue of improvements also include: health, education, and every sector of the country's activities.

We remember the country she inherited in 2006: a collapsed economy, dysfunctional institutions, damaged infrastructure, virtually bare minimal basic services for a people who had virtually lost hope. After only eight years in office, President Sirleaf and her team have turned a failed state into a country that has regained its standing among the comity of nations. Despite recent setbacks, President Sirleaf has promised to restore the declining economy to its full potential.



The Temple of Justice.

# Bentol - Waiting for Development



Administrative Office of the Superintendent of Montserrado County.

**B**entol City, previously known as Bensonville, is a small township in Careysburg District, some 16 miles (26 kilometers) from Liberia's capital, Monrovia. It is the administrative capital of Montserrado County.

The name "Bentol" was carved from those of two presidents: Stephen Allen Benson (1856-1864), who operated a farm there; and William R. Tolbert Jr. (1971-1980), when the then township of Bensonville was enacted as a city in Montserrado and as its administrative capital by the National Legislature of Liberia.

Bentol, which also serves as the headquarters of Careysburg District, has Fendell, Crozierville, White Plains, and Careysburg as its neighbors. Both the White Plains water treatment plant and the Mount Coffee hydropower project are located in the district.

History reminds us that freed slaves left the United States and found a haven in Liberia. Pioneers settled in various parts of the country, including today's Bentol. It is the birthplace of the late President Tolbert, Liberia's 19<sup>th</sup> Head of State.

Prior to the 1980 coup that ousted Tolbert as President, Bentol became a marketing and commercial center for the surrounding agricultural area. Its proximity to Monrovia spurred development and industrial activities that included the production of milled rice, sawn wood, plastics, soap, paints, furniture and fixtures, cement blocks, oils, processed fish, and confections. The coup d'état had a serious impact on this bustling city, which was massively looted and vandalized.

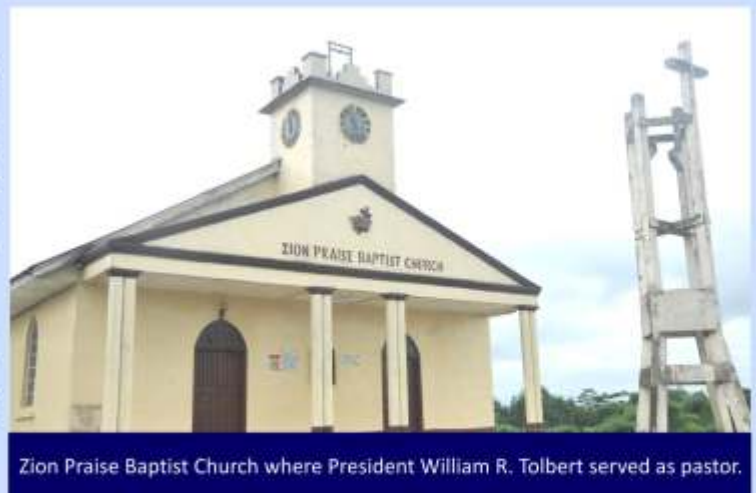
Today, Bentol City does not have much to show. It remains the capital of Montserrado County, but one does not notice that when driving through the first county's capital. Snaking through this once picturesque city, one cannot but notice the concentration of ruins that take you back in time -- the time when President Tolbert had a dream to turn this small town where he was born into the new capital of Liberia, but first making it the capital of Montserrado County.

Today, in this once scenic town, the Zion Praise Baptist Church, where Tolbert preached often, is one of the few intact buildings of the Tolbert era. All the other houses of the family clan in Bentol are decaying empty shells.

The majority of Bentol's population is Christian. The Methodist and Baptist churches were among the first Christian denominations to evangelize the community, and Bentol's residents hold strongly to their Christian beliefs and principles.

Like most parts of rural Montserrado County, agriculture used to be a small part of the economy of Bentol. Today, with a small population of approximately 4,089, according to the 2008 National Census, not much is happening with the many acres of fertile land, blessed by an abundance of rain. Overgrown bushes have taken over the county capital.

Sadly, neither the great plans that William R. Tolbert had for the transformation of Liberia, nor for the renamed Bentol, was realized. This city of the past is trying to pick up the pieces and move on.



Zion Praise Baptist Church where President William R. Tolbert served as pastor.

# PAST INDEPENDENCE DAY NATIONAL ORATORS, 2006-2013



**Montserrado County**



**Grand Bassa County**



**Margibi County**



**Bong County**



**Nimba County**



**Lofa County**



**Montserrado County**



**Grand Cape  
Mount County**

**Bomi  
County**

**Gbarpolu  
County**

# Profile of Elizabeth Davis-Russell, B.A., M.A., Ed.D, Ph.D., Liberia's Independence Day National Orator



Liberia's 167<sup>th</sup> Independence Day Orator, Dr. Elizabeth Davis-Russell, was born in Harper, Maryland County, to former Supreme Court Associate Justice O. Natty B. Davis and Diana Dueh.

She attended the Cape Palmas High School and later matriculated at the Suehn Academy, where she graduated. She continued her studies at London Tutorial College, in the United Kingdom, where she completed "O" levels. She then went to the United States of America and attended Oakland University, in Michigan, where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Psychology in 1965. She next attended New York University for graduate studies, obtaining a Master of Arts (M.A.) in Educational Psychology in 1966. Still aspiring to learn, she enrolled into Yeshiva University, also in New York, where she obtained a second Master's in Educational Psychology, in 1975.

Desirous of fulfilling her dream to become a psychologist, Dr. Davis-Russell again matriculated at New York University, and completed a Doctorate (Ph.D.) in Clinical Psychology in 1987. She then pursued post-graduate training and received Certification in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy at the Institute for the Study of Psychotherapy in New York City. She is today a trained and certified Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist from this Institute, and a licensed

Psychologist in the State of California, where she had a private practice in addition to teaching.

Dr. Davis-Russell's scholarly works include numerous journal articles, book chapters, book reviews, and two edited books on multicultural psychology. She has served on several national and international boards and associations. She is currently serving a three-year term (2011-2014) as a member of the Executive Committee of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), and is Co-Chair of the IAUP/UN Commission on Disarmament Education, Conflict Resolution and Peace.

Dr. Davis-Russell has spent most of her career in higher education, with over 35 years of experience as a faculty member and an administrator. In October 2007, Dr. Davis-Russell was appointed President of the William V.S. Tubman College of Technology in Harper, Maryland County. She assumed leadership of the institution in July 2008.

Damaged as a result of the Liberian civil conflict, the school, under Dr. Davis-Russell's administration, was reopened on September 14, 2009, but was transformed from a college of technology to a university by an Act of the National Legislature. She saw the need for more than a technical college in a region that needed agriculturists, engineers, health professionals, education specialists, business managers and more. The William V.S. Tubman University began



# Profile of Elizabeth Davis-Russell, B.A., M.A., Ed.D, Ph.D., Liberia's Independence Day National Orator

with 287 students in 2009; five years on (2014), it has over 1,000 students. Today, the University is comprised of six colleges: College of Engineering and Technology; College of Health Science; College of Agriculture and Food Science; College of Education; College of Management and Administration; and College of Arts and Sciences. It is the second State-owned Bachelor's degree-granting institution of higher education in Liberia. Five years on, the University put out her first set of 80 graduates, on June 19, 2014.

Addressing Tubman University's first Commencement Convocation, its Visitor, who is also President of Liberia, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, termed Dr. Davis-Russell "a shining and unequalled example of service to our nation," by demonstrating great leadership skills as she fulfilled her vision of establishing Tubman University, a first-class institution, providing education and services, contributing to the southeast, her ancestral home, and to the nation.

Said President Sirleaf: "Dr. Davis-Russell, your impact on this institution has been significant: your insistence on an institution whose quality would be second to none in Liberia; that would be built upon, and retain, a foundation of core values and would endure on principles of operation free from corruption; that would be a catalyst for development; that would be a center of quality and excellence. This region, and our country, are deeply indebted to you, and your team."

Before her appointment at the William V.S. Tubman University, Dr. Davis-Russell served as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the State University of New York College at Cortland. Other appointments included: Presidential Associate at Alliant International University, in California; Dean for Academic and Professional Affairs at the California School of Professional Psychology; Professor and Director of the Cross-Culture Psychology Program at the California School of Professional Psychology; and Associate Professor, Founder and Director of the Center for Intercultural Clinical Psychology at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

Dr. Davis-Russell has received significant awards and honors, including: Fellow, American Psychological Association Society for the Study of Ethnic Minority Issues; Fellow, American Psychological Association Society for the Psychology of Women; Fellow, American Council on Education (ACE); and is a recipient of two Doctor of Humane Letters from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology and the Forest Institute of Professional Psychology, in Missouri. She's also the recipient of the Outstanding Psychologist Award from both the New York and Chicago Branches of the Association of Black Psychologists.

Dr. Davis-Russell is married to Thomas E. Russell. They have two children, Dr. Allison Hader and Scott Olie Russell; two grandsons, Daniel Hader and Cole Hader; and a son-in-law, Dr. Daniel Hader.

As the country celebrates its 167<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary, the National Orator will reflect on the need for Liberians to transform their minds, attitudes, and behaviors. As the country reconstructs after its 14-year civil crisis, it is faced with many competing priorities. Roads, bridges, and other infrastructure need to be rebuilt; education needs attention, as does providing healthcare. The list is endless. However, little or no attention is paid to the transformation of minds, attitudes and behaviors.

Her Oration is expected to raise the need to focus on the human factor: How do we (Liberians) shift from a warring mentality to one that fosters peace and reconciliation? What are the values upon which this new Liberia needs to be built? It looks to the Constitution for some of the values that are embedded within it, and proposes the restoration of some of those that can point the direction for the nation. It will challenge the common practice of leadership, often built upon self-aggrandizement, and propose a model of servant leadership.

Three entities, working in concert with one another, are proposed as suitable for bringing about this kind of transformation – the family, education, and society generally.

## President Sirleaf Signs Code of Conduct Law; It Applies to All Public Officials, Government Employees



**P**resident Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has finally signed into law the Code of Conduct Act. The Liberian leader signed the historic document in the presence of Senate Pro-Tempore Gbehzohngar Findley, Senator Jewel Howard-Taylor and an array of government officials and clergymen.

In March, the House of Representatives concurred with the Senate on the passage of the Code of Conduct with some adjustments. These included the establishment of an Ombudsman with responsibility for oversight, monitoring and evaluation of the Code of Conduct, and also to receive complaints on public officials and employees of government who violate the Code. The Bill, which was submitted to the Legislature in 2009 by the Executive Branch, was passed by the Senate last year and sent to the House for concurrence.

Article 90 (c) of the Constitution provides that “The Legislature shall...prescribe a Code of Conduct for all public officials and employees stipulating the acts which constitute conflict of interest or are against public policy, and the penalties for violation thereof.”

Speaking during the ceremony, the President thanked the leadership and members of the Legislature for fulfilling their constitutional duty by passing the Code of Conduct, which now applies to all public officials and employees of the three branches of government. She used the occasion to highlight portions of the Code of Conduct Law, with which public officials and government employees must observe and become familiar.

Section 5.1 stipulates that all appointed government officials wanting to contest for elected positions in government must resign at least three years prior to the date of the election. Section 5.2 states, in part, that in case of vacancy for an elected official, any appointee of government that offers to take up such elected position must resign three months prior to the date of the by-election.

Highlighting Section 9.1, Bribes and Gifts, the Liberian leader reminded public officials and employees of government that the Code of Conduct prohibits receiving or encouraging the giving of any form of bribe or casual gift in connection with the performance of his/her duties, whether for himself or herself or members of his or her family.

She, however, indicated that this provision does not apply to gifts given during traditional ceremonies and celebrations, and fees paid for lobbying, adding that the Legislature shall enact laws for the regulation of lobbying activities. “We will be coming back to the Legislature for them to fulfill their constitutional duties by being able to enact appropriate laws to enable us meet this provision,” the Liberian leader stated.

President Sirleaf also underscored Section 11.3, on Sexual Harassment, which frowns on unethical and unbecoming behavior such as the use of rude, abusive and obscene language, indecent dressing, and sexual gestures which constitute sexual harassment and violation of human dignity and human rights. Section 13.1 provides protection from reprisal or discipline, for public officials and employees of government who, in good faith, report allegations of wrongdoing in contravention of the Code of Conduct. Section 13.2 of the Code of Conduct encourages members of the public to report complaints of misconduct by a public official or employee of government.

## Dedicating NASSCORP Commercial Complex, President Says It's a 'Classic Example' of a Transforming Liberia



NASSCORP commercial complex.

Executive Mansion is renovated by a Liberian company, there will be greater commitment and passion for the work, as was done in the construction of the NASSCORP complex. "There is no way that others can do it for us better than ourselves and we all must have this at the back of our minds," the Liberian leader said, amidst loud cheers. She added: "There are some people who are politically charged, misguided and ill-informed. They will look at this building and say this is nothing. If this is their

definition of nothing, then we will continue to do nothing with these kinds of buildings."

Earlier, the Liberian leader dedicated the ELWA junction beautification project, under the auspices of the Paynesville City Corporation (PCC), adjacent the commercial complex. She described the beautification project as timely, as the area serves as the gateway to the nation's capital. She commended the PCC for its vision, but then challenged the Corporation's Acting City Mayor, Cyvette Gibson, to see the Duport Road junction as another place that could possibly be beautified. Madam Sirleaf had no doubt in the ability of the Mayor and her team in executing that project.

An US\$11 million commercial complex was dedicated at the ELWA junction, on June 6, 2014, transforming the landscape in Paynesville City, on the outskirts of the nation's capital, Monrovia. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, dedicating the complex owned by the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation (NASSCORP), termed it a classic example of the process of transforming Liberia, and that completion of the multi-purpose structure further demonstrated that Liberians still have a sense of what they want their country to be in the future and will help government achieve it.

"The dedication of this building will now fast-track the completion of the civil service and pension reforms that will enable government to fulfill its obligations to NASSCORP, in order that they expand their activities to other parts of country," the Liberian leader said.

President Sirleaf particularly expressed delight that the project is owned by Liberia and was built by a Liberian company, ECOCON Incorporated, owned by Henry Q. Taylor, demonstrating the realization of government's "liberianization" policy. To demonstrate her satisfaction with the work done, she told the company to get ready to take over the renovation of the Executive Mansion, which has been under renovation since its fourth floor was gutted by fire in July 2006.

President Sirleaf believes that if the



President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and NASSCORP Director-General Dewitt vonBallmoos.

## *Liberian Leader Launches China Union's First Shipment of Iron Ore; Expected to Export 50,000 Metric Tons Every Month*



GMT Phoenix being loaded with China Union's first shipment of 50,000 metric tons of iron ore.

One of the largest investors in post-conflict Liberia, China Union, has launched its first shipment of about 50,000 tons of iron ore from its newly constructed pier at the National Port Authority premises. The concession projects to export 500,000 metric tons of iron ore by the end of December 2014, approximately 50,000 tons per month.

Launching the shipment on February 12, 2014, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf described the event as a fulfilled promise to the people of Liberia, noting that what was taking place was the result of collective efforts. All should be proud of the achievement, as it was yet another intervention by her administration in reviving the broken economy she inherited. She

renewed government's commitment that proceeds from the shipment would be used strictly for the betterment of the Liberian people.

Concerning the welfare of the Liberian workforce employed by China Union, the President said the government would remain engaged with the company on the matter, in keeping with the country's labor laws. "While we engage China Union to improve conditions, we are equally calling on Liberians to cooperate with us as the process is gradual," she told cheering local employees at the company's pier.

China Union plans to double its workforce from 232 to 459 local employees, and with its first export and increased employment, the company is poised to economically revitalize the former Bong Mining Company area and provide its people a sustainable livelihood.

President Sirleaf praised the management of China Union for being focused about its operations, despite the difficulties that characterized taking control of the concession area, including the removal of squatters and the rehabilitation of port facilities.

The launching ceremony was witnessed by the Legislative Caucuses of Bong and Margibi Counties, among them, Senator Oscar Cooper and Representative Corpu Barclay. Other government officials included Madam Ciata Bishop, the new head of the National Bureau of Concessions; Madam Matilda Parker, Managing Director of the National Port Authority (NPA) among others.



## *Liberian Leader Addresses Monrovia Roundtable on Draft Oil Law; Hails Legislature's Role in Producing Draft Oil and Gas Law*



**P**resident Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has hailed the National Legislature for its role in producing a draft oil and gas law, and hopes the collaboration will reach a successful conclusion, resulting in a petroleum law that will benefit all Liberians.

The President stressed that the nationwide consultations by the Legislature further increased citizens' participation in assuming ownership of their country's oil future, which she said serves as an eye opener in demonstrating transparency.

Opening the Monrovia Roundtable Conference on the Draft Oil Law at the Samuel K. Doe Sports Complex on March 10, 2014, President Sirleaf said she was particularly pleased that the citizens are part of the oil law formulation, and believed that these broad-based inputs are about to produce one of the best oil laws in Africa.

"Usually, oil laws are made after a commercial discovery, not before; but my administration wanted to be ready before that time in preparing for the future generation of Liberians, thereby creating the right framework, building the right institutions, and strengthening our capacity before oil is found in order to give our country a strong start," she said.

President Sirleaf gave three reasons why there is a compelling need for a robust oil and gas law, ranging from attracting world-class oil companies to having a transparent and accountable sector. "First, we wanted Liberia to be positioned to attract world-class oil companies that would bring the highest degree of accountability and transparency, technical excellence, the highest standards for health, safety and the environment, and employment for Liberians. Second, we wanted Liberia to have a petroleum governance framework that strikes the right balance between providing revenues and other benefits to the State. Thirdly, we wanted Liberia to have a progressive petroleum law that would be a model for accountability, transparency and inclusion."

House Speaker, Honorable J. Alex Tyler, praised the collaboration between the Legislative and Executive Branches, and hoped this would serve as an example for future collaboration. He informed the audience that citizens' participation during the nationwide oil and gas consultations demonstrated to the Legislature that Liberians want to take ownership of their oil future, as exemplified by their turnout from one county to the other.

The President Pro-Tempore, Senator Gbezhonghar Findley, on behalf of the Liberian Senate, renewed their commitment to all stakeholders in the oil sector in working with them to reach a logical conclusion in producing a comprehensive oil law for Liberia.

# MONTSERRADO COUNTY



Central Bank of Liberia under construction.



Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.



National Elections Commission headquarters.



University of Liberia Fendell Campus.



The Liberia Bank for Development and Investment.



Chevron Monrovia Central Park.



Newly constructed Nyenn Standard Primary School in Todee District.



National Housing Authority low-cost housing estate nearing completion in Jah Tondo Town, Brewerville.

# MONTSERRADO COUNTY



Peace Park under construction in Bentol.



The new Monrovia Vocational Training Center complex under construction in Paynesville.



Mount Coffee Hydro Power Plant under renovation.



Japanese Heavy Fuel Oil Plant at the Liberia Electricity Corporation.



The King Zulu Duma Bridge, in Vai Town, at night.



The newly constructed Caldwell-Louisiana Road with solar street lights.



The SKD Boulevard in Congo Town.



Ongoing road rehabilitation work on the Paynesville Redlight-Gbarnga Highway.

## President Dedicates Mini-Hydro Power Plant in Lofa County



Yandohun mini-hydro plant.

After dusk, much of rural Liberia falls into obscurity as residents have to resort to candlelight, lanterns, or flashlights to snake their way through the darkness of their homes or communities. Where there were once working power plants, only the shell of these structures remain. But not for Yandohun and surrounding towns in Kolahun District, Lofa County.

In the late 1970s, a Peace Corps Volunteer named Gary Duncan, traditionally referred to as Selle, conceived and later experimented with the idea of a 30-kilowatt plant that served the local community, before it was destroyed during the country's civil war.

In January 2010, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf issued Executive Order No. 23, establishing Liberia's Rural and Renewable Energy Agency (RREA) and a Rural Energy Fund (REFUND) to bring modern energy services to the country's rural areas. It directed the Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy (MLME) to turn a dream into reality by ensuring that off-grid rural communities benefit from low-cost energy under a project called Catalyzing New Renewable Energy in Rural Liberia. The rehabilitation and expansion of the hydro power plant in Yandohun to 60 kilowatts became a pilot project to government's initiative.

On February 19, 2014, to the sounds of drumming, singing and dancing, the elated residents of Yandohun, Dagalahun I and Dagalahun II could not conceal their emotions, knowing that their lives were about to change as they began to enjoy 24-hour electricity; but more importantly, at a very low cost of L\$200 (US\$2) monthly for each house.

Switching on the micro-hydro power plant, an excited President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf called for maximizing the facilities for the transformation of its users. She encouraged the residents to see the energy as an opportunity to once and for all transform their lives by engaging in small businesses that would benefit them and their families, especially small and medium enterprises like rice mill processing, cold water, ice making, among other businesses.

She challenged the people to form a cooperative in achieving this, which would lead to more SMEs. "Do not just use this electricity to dance at night under light. It's your opportunity to make use of what you have been blessed with, and the only way you can help government fight poverty is by getting involved in the fight. This is why the hydro has been built here," the Liberian leader told an ecstatic crowd.

In an effort for the community to take ownership, the RREA has trained 100 local residents to operate and manage the facilities, including switching, connection, collecting bills, and maintenance.



President Sirleaf switches on transformer at power plant.



## Since Independence, Second Liberian President to Visit Vahun



President Sirleaf is welcomed by children to Vahun, Lofa County.

For the second time since the country's independence, citizens of Vahun, Lofa County, were able to receive a sitting President of Liberia when Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf paid a two-day visit there in February 2014. She not only visited Vahun, but also slept there.

Before then, only President William R. Tolbert Jr. had visited and slept in Vahun, in 1972 (42 years ago) through the instrumentality of the late Professor Dr. Benjamin Dennis of Michigan State University, a son of Vahun who lived in the United States. He extended an invitation to President Tolbert to visit his home town during one of Tolbert's visits to the United States.

President Tolbert accepted the invitation to visit Vahun anytime Dr. Dennis was vacationing in Liberia. Thus, in 1972, because there was no car road, the two of them flew to Vahun. During that visit, President Tolbert promised the people of Vahun that the next time he visited with them, he would go there by car. He then mandated the agriculture company based in Foya at the time, AGRIMECO, to immediately connect Vahun to Foya. The road was completed two years later, in 1974, and Tolbert drove into Vahun and made subsequent visits when he visited Lofa County.

Until then, all transactions of Vahun District were done with Sierra Leone; even the medium of exchange was Sierra Leonean currency.

Overwhelmed by her presence, citizens praised President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for the level of development currently taking place in the district. Expressing the gratitude of the people of District #2, Representative Fofi Sahr Baimba Sr. said that if the Liberian President had not been interested in the district, her administration would not have been reconnected by an all-weather 68-kilometer road from Bolahun junction. "This road now takes you a little over two hours to Voinjama. Before then, it took someone between seven to eight hours to Voinjama, the county capital," he asserted. The Vahun road was fully rehabilitated in 2011. The citizens, through their Representative, made the statement during a Town Hall Meeting with the Liberian President.

President Sirleaf, responding, thanked the citizens of Vahun for all they've done for her, and for their patience because it had been a long-time promise to visit with them.

She challenged citizens of Lofa to encourage their sons and daughters living in other parts of the country and in the Diaspora to return home and contribute to the rebuilding process of the country, especially Vahun District. "There are doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers from this district. We challenge them to come back home and work for you," she urged, also encouraging government officials hailing from the district to return home and even construct residences there, as that would encourage them to return home regularly.

## Zubah Town's Duport Road Market Turned over to Marketing Association, as President Sirleaf Presents Check of US\$25,000 to LFGC



President Sirleaf receives the deed for the market property from Pastor Uje Khasu of the Lighthouse Gospel Church.

**F**or the past 17 years, marketers at the Zubah Town Duport Road market were squatters, paying annual fees to the church on a piece of property owned by the Lighthouse Full Gospel Church. Not anymore!

On April 17, on behalf of the Liberian Government, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf presented a check of US\$25,000 to the Church for the two lots of land hosting the market in District #4, Zubah Town, Duport Road. She also handed over the deed of the property to the leadership of the marketing association.

Speaking at the program, the Liberian leader made a commitment that government will construct a modern market building on the property, with funds allocated in 2014/2015 fiscal budget. Situated in a prime area, the market is accessible to all the surrounding communities of District #4 in the Paynesville Community, including Duport Road, Soul Clinic, Cow Field, Rehab Road, among others.

Meanwhile, President Sirleaf encouraged the introduction of adult literacy programs at the markets so that marketers can benefit from some education that would equip them to be better business women and business men.



Assistant Superintendent, Eliza Baysah, leads a group of marketers as they jubilate and dance.

## *President Sirleaf Confers with Pope Francis at the Vatican; Appeals to Him to Pray for Liberia*



**P**resident Ellen Johnson Sirleaf thanked Pope Francis and the Catholic Church for the church's commitment to peace and reconciliation, as well as its contributions in the fields of social welfare and education in Liberia.

During a meeting with the Holy Father at his private library in the Apostolic Palace in Vatican City on April 5, President Sirleaf and the Pontiff discussed the cordial relations between Liberia and the Holy See, and expressed satisfaction about the positive progress made in strengthening Liberia's democratic institutions.

The Liberian leader highlighted her government's efforts towards peace and reconciliation, which the Pontiff encouraged. She praised the church for its immense contributions in the areas of healthcare delivery, education, and social welfare throughout the country.

President Sirleaf appealed to Pope Francis to pray for the country in order to have a sense of holiness, reconciliation, and peace so that all Liberians might love one another. She also asked for the Pontiff's prayers for courage and tolerance. The two also exchanged views on regional and international issues, with particular reference to trouble spots around the world.

Francis is the 266<sup>th</sup> and current Pope of the Catholic Church, Bishop of Rome, and absolute Sovereign of the Vatican City State.

Following the meeting, President Sirleaf said: "I think for us, this is more or less a one-time opportunity. I found the Pope very affable." She added that she also found Pope Francis to be a very humble man. President Sirleaf is the first Liberian President to visit a Pope at the Vatican since 1990.

Other Liberian Presidents who visited the Vatican were: President William V. S. Tubman, who met with Pope Pius XII on September 23, 1956; President William R. Tolbert Jr., who met with Pope Paul VI on June 4, 1977; and President Samuel K. Doe, who met with Pope John Paul II on February 15, 1990.

Later, President Sirleaf met with His Eminence, Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, accompanied by the Secretary for Relations with States, Dominique Mamberti. She extended thanks and appreciation to the Holy See for its support to Liberia over the years, particularly during the civil war. They discussed how relations between the Vatican and Liberia could be strengthened, especially with support to social welfare, health and educational institutions.

During her visit to Vatican City, the Liberian leader was also taken on a guided tour of St. Peter's Basilica, the largest church in the world and one of the holiest Catholic sites.

## Liberian Leader Addresses First Commencement Convocation at W.V.S. Tubman University, Receives First Honorary Degree



William V.S. Tubman University President, Elizabeth Davis-Russell, congratulates President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

For the first time since its establishment as a university five years ago, the William V.S. Tubman University has held its first Commencement Convocation, conferring degrees in various disciplines on 80 students.

William V. S. Tubman University, located in Harper, Maryland County, and named after Liberia's 18<sup>th</sup> President, was opened in 2009 as the second public-owned Bachelor's degree-granting higher education institution. It is the successor institution to the William V.S. Tubman College of Technology, which was damaged during the civil conflict. Tubman

University's six colleges include: Engineering and Technology; Health Sciences; Agriculture and Food Science; Management and Administration; Arts and Sciences; and Education.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who served as the Commencement Speaker at the graduation on June 19, 2014, said that it was satisfying that the country can boast of a few more graduates skilled in areas where Liberia desperately needs expertise: Agriculture, Engineering, Nursing, Public Health, Guidance and Counseling, among others. The President also received the University's first honorary degree, of Doctor of Law (LLD) Honoris Causa.

Speaking on the theme, "The Quest for Quality Education," the Liberian leader stressed the need for students to seize the opportunity, but emphasized that quality education requires faculty with integrity, qualified in their disciplines, and committed to the learner.

The President, who is also Visitor to the University, said that in order to produce leaders of tomorrow, institutions like Tubman University must empower Liberia's youths by teaching them not only the theory, but leadership skills, social responsibility, issues about the environment, among other disciplines. She called for a holistic education that engages students in theory, and practical learning through service and social responsibility to the local and global community, thereby being assured of students that are informed and prepared.

Education -- quality education -- is not cheap, President Sirleaf declared, neither for the provider nor the beneficiary, and that the best results from such an expensive undertaking are obtained only when serious effort and time are devoted to get the most out of the opportunities that are available. "To the extended audience out there, you can buy a degree but you cannot buy an education," she pointed out amidst cheers.

Reflecting on Tubman University and its leadership, the President indicated that the institution serves as a regional magnet; that young people are gravitating towards Harper, Maryland County; because they know that they will obtain the quality education that is fundamental for their own success, and for Liberia's economic, social and political transformation, as outlined in the country's "Vision 2030 - Liberia Rising" and the five-year development strategy, "Agenda for Transformation." The enrollment at the University has grown from 287 in 2009 to 1,000 in 2013/2014.

Ten students received degrees in Nursing; 7 in Public Health; 9 in Secondary Education; 7 in Guidance and Counseling; 18 in Agriculture; 10 in Accounting; 2 in Business Administration; 13 in Public Administration; and 4 in Economics.

## President Launches Ministry of Education 3-Year Operational Plan (2014-2016), Estimated to Cost US\$58.7 Million



President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf launched, on May 24, the Ministry of Education's Operational Plan (2014-2016), under the theme of "Quality Education for All: Redirecting Our Future," with recommendations aimed at improving the nation's education sector.

The Operational Plan is based on several documents, including the Education Reform Law of 2011, the Education Sector Plan (2010-2020), the Roadmap for System Transformation, and the National Agenda for Transformation (AFT), among others.

The Plan highlights priorities identified by education stakeholders at several consultative meetings, including the National Education Roundtable Conference 2013, and the Joint Education Sector Review, taking account of clear messages that there is a need to reform the education sector and other emerging trends within the

system. The Plan serves as a catalyst to accelerate the "Education for All Goals", and is underpinned by the principles of ownership and accountability. It proposes a range of strategies and activities for improving the quality of educational services to ensure that young people within the borders of Liberia are fully prepared for a favorable livelihood in a changing regional and global environment.

The cost of implementing the Three-Year Operational Plan is approximately US\$180 million, with the projection for year one estimated at US\$58.7 million. Of this amount, US\$3 million is available, while the funding gap is US\$55 million. The Plan shall be financed through the national budget and donors' contributions. In addition, public-private partnerships will be sought to mobilize resources to support implementation of interventions contained in the Plan.

Commenting on the proposal, Mr. Thomas Doe Nah, representing civil society organizations, said that Liberia requires a revolution in the education sector.

President Sirleaf said it is necessary, in furthering the goals, ideals and plans presented by the Education Ministry in its Operational Plan (2014-2016), to go one step further. "Just think, if a Deputy and Assistant Minister were required to go in the classroom and teach for two months so that they can experience what teachers experience instead of sitting in the office writing papers," President Sirleaf said.

Noting the substantial number of university graduates from government-supported programs, especially the University of Liberia Teacher's College, who receive monthly stipends to go into education to increase the number of teachers in the country, the President asked, "Where are they?" She proposed that these graduates be identified and recruited to work in the classrooms of rural areas for specific periods, to repay government for what it has done for them. She also urged the President of the University of Liberia, Dr. Emmet A. Dennis, to consider making it a requirement that prospective graduates of the Teacher's College give one semester's work to public service in schools before graduation.

## Launching 5-Year Action Plan on Anti-Human Trafficking, President Sirleaf Says Government is Ready for Fight



President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has alerted the world and would-be perpetrators that the Government of Liberia is ready for the fight against trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

Speaking during the launch of government's 5-Year National Action Plan on the Fight against Trafficking in Persons at the Monrovia City Hall on March 25, the President stressed that trafficking in persons is one of the biggest illegal activities against the violation of human rights in the world, and Liberia must join other countries in strong action to combat this crime.

To further demonstrate government's seriousness about fighting this crime, the Liberian President announced that three expatriates have been indicted

and are in prison awaiting trial, while other perpetrators are being prosecuted.

The Liberian leader highlighted a case where two individuals were unanimously found guilty for illicit trafficking of some Moroccan and Tunisian nationals, on December 31, 2013, but to her surprise and disappointment, a motion for retrial was granted by the Judge. "The government is still pursuing this matter to its logical conclusion, to ensure that the victims get the justice they deserve," President Sirleaf promised.

Providing an overview of the 5-Year Action Plan earlier, Labour Minister and Chair of the Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force, Cllr. Juah Lawson, said it is part of a series of interrelated prior and ongoing actions by government in response to the threats and challenges engendered by this serious transnational crime which uses Liberia as both a transit and destination point.

She disclosed that in 2005, the Transitional Legislative Assembly of the National Transitional Government passed an Act that banned and criminalized all forms of human trafficking in Liberia. This was followed by the establishment of a national task force along with a secretariat, as well as standard operating procedures. This was further enhanced, in April 2013, when the government amended the Penal Law regarding extortion, environmental crimes, trafficking in human beings and illicit migrant smuggling, thereby reinforcing the legal framework responsible for dealing with these interrelated international crimes.

The Plan, renewable every five years, provides for its incorporation into government's five-year national development program, the Agenda for Transformation, to ensure recurrent budgetary and sustainable support. In terms of its vision, the Plan outlines four program areas of focus: prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership.



**From L-R:** U.S. Ambassador Deborah R. Malac, Acting Justice Minister Wheatonia Dixon Barnes, Labor Minister Cllr. Juah Lawson, and President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

## Commissioning Mineral Water Processing Plant, President Sirleaf Urges Other Liberians to Venture into Business

There are those with the notion that Liberians do not venture into business, thereby leaving it in the hands of foreigners. One Liberian who has dispelled that notion is Montserrado County District #1 Representative, Josephine Francis, proprietress and chief executive officer of Liberia Resources Incorporated.

This female lawmaker recently brought into the country new state-of-the-art equipment to produce pure and safe drinking water and other beverages for the Liberian market. The Aquarius Mineral Water is part of Liberia Resources Incorporated, a conglomeration of Aquarius Beverages, Liberia Brick and Tile, and Arjay Farm, situated in Kingsville, upper Montserrado County.

On April 27, 2014, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf led an array of dignitaries to commission the Aquarius Mineral Water processing plant, committing government's support to Liberian-owned businesses. She said it is time to support Liberian businesses, as they have shown potential that when supported, they can make the difference, and citing Rep. Francis as an example.

Stated President Sirleaf: "Liberian business structures have, over the years, favored big businesses, especially concessionaires, due to lack of capital leading to marginalization; but what we see now is a real demonstration that Liberians can do it too." She added that, despite government's meager resources, it is ready to support Liberian small and medium enterprises through the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, and encouraged the Ministry to further engage Liberian businesses in actualizing their dreams.

President Sirleaf said she was glad that Mrs. Francis could take and pay back a loan, subsequently leading to the establishment of the beverage processing plant, demonstrating that when focused, Liberians can do what people see as impossible.

With the setting up of the water purification plant, according to Rep. Francis, her company began to supply the Liberian market with varieties of beverages, beginning on May 15. She urged her compatriots to venture into similar businesses in order to empower themselves.

The commissioning ceremony was graced by United States Ambassador Deborah Malac; Commerce & Industry Minister Axel Addy; the president of the Liberia Chamber of Commerce, Monie Captan; as well as residents of Kingsville, upper Montserrado County.

Liberia Resources Incorporated was established in 2008 by Mr. and Mrs. Roger Francis to produce beverages. They began with the production of water sachets, but later encountered production problems that eventually slowed down operation for a few years.



## At 57<sup>th</sup> Armed Forces Day Anniversary, C-I-C Sirleaf Commissions New Liberian Leadership; Urges Them to Lead by Example



President Sirleaf commissions Brigadier General Daniel Ziankhan, Chief of Staff, and Colonel Eric Dennis, Deputy Chief of Staff, of the AFL.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, commissioned, on February 11, 2014, Armed Forces Day, the first post-conflict Liberian Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff, and Brigade Commander.

Commissioned were: Brigadier General Daniel Dee Ziankhan, Chief of Staff, replacing Nigerian Major General Suraj Alao Abdurrahman, who served diligently as the Command Officer-in-Charge for seven years; Colonel Eric Wamu Dennis, Deputy Chief of Staff, replacing Colonel Daniel Moore, who was retired after 35 years of service; and Colonel Prince C. Johnson III, Commander of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade.

Performing the ceremony during the AFL's 57th Anniversary Celebration at the Barclay Training Center, the Commander-in-Chief challenged the newly commissioned senior officers to maintain the regimentation and discipline of a professional military.

"Your leadership must exhibit commitment to duty and obedience to constituted authority. You must demonstrate that you are ready, willing and capable to lead. You must exhibit good leadership qualities and lead by example," President Sirleaf urged, stressing further, "You cannot afford to fail yourselves, your compatriots, your mentors. Much has been sacrificed and invested in bringing you this far; I challenge you to perform your duty as leaders of our new military."

The Liberian leader emphasized that the transition in the AFL was based on a credible vetting process and on the order of merit, and she was convinced that the government had appointed a cadre of well-trained, experienced, and disciplined Liberian officers of the country's Armed Forces.

President Sirleaf also praised the outgoing Command Officer-in-Charge, General Abdurrahman, for his leadership and commitment to the transformation of the AFL. She extolled him as a brilliant officer with impeccable credentials and track record of excellence, and admitted him into the Humane Order of African Redemption with the Grade of "Knight Commander."

She extended thanks and appreciation to partners for their support in rebuilding the Armed Forces to what it is today. She praised the United States, Nigeria, Ghana, the People's Republic of China, the United Kingdom, Rwanda, Benin, Sierra Leone, and the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

Speaking further, the Commander-in-Chief announced the approval of National Defense Strategy, which focuses on Liberia's national defense imperatives and regional peace and security. She said the security challenges the country faces require a clear assessment of the strategic environment and the resources necessary to construct a durable, flexible, and dynamic strategy that emphasizes human security.



The Commander-in-Chief of the AFL inspects her troops.



## *Liberian Leader Praises Honorees for Committed and Dedicated Service, as Ministry of State Retires 26 Employees*



President Sirleaf poses with MOS retirees.

After many years of dedicated and committed service to the Government of Liberia, specifically the Presidency, 26 personnel of the Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs have been honorably retired.

They were retired, having attained the age of 60 years and/or served the country for between nine and 33 years.

“Many of you served during very difficult times; during the years you maybe couldn't take pay, there was no means of transportation to get to and from work, but you still carried out your duties diligently,” President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf told the retirees, adding that though in some cases it was suffering for some of them, they stayed on.

Speaking during a ceremony held on June 11, the Liberian leader indicated that after years of sacrifice and dedication, these staff were now bowing off the stage and making way for their children and other younger ones. However, she stressed that going into retirement did not mean that a person is inactive, as there are many other things that they can do to live a productive retired life, including going into small business, farming, or training the younger ones.

She promised to reach out to them in whatever way she can assist in the years ahead, and added, “Thanking you today is a continuous process for us. We want you to know that we care for you, commend you, and honor you for your dedication and service to country.”

President Sirleaf's advisor on foreign affairs, Amb. George Wallace Jr., presented the certificates to the honorees; and the Minister of State Without Portfolio, Amb. Conmany Wesseh, presented each retiree with a service award and an envelope of gratuity. President Sirleaf made a personal contribution of US\$5,000.



President Sirleaf decorates outgoing Nigerian Command Officer-in-Charge Maj. Gen. S. A. Abdurrahman.



Tienii Commissioner Haja Magdalene Fahnbulleh (far right) and the joint security officers who confiscated over 315 kilograms of marijuana in Grand Cape Mount County.



The Chair of the African Union's High-Level Committee of Heads of State and Government, President Sirleaf, poses with other African leaders at the HLC Meeting in N'djamena Chad.



President Sirleaf poses with Portrait Artist Stephen Coit, Deans Iris Bohnet and David Ellwood of the Harvard Kennedy School, after her portrait was unveiled.

## Presentation of Letters of Credence



H.E. Miroslaw Adamczyk, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary (Apostolic Nuncio) of the Holy See.



H.E. Sharon Barli of Israel.



H.E. Senturk Uzun, Republic of Turkey.



H.E. Adres Luis Azevedo Dos Santos, Federative Republic of Brazil.



President Sirleaf delivers 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Message to the National Legislature. She, House Speaker Alex Tyler, and Vice President Joseph Boakai stand as the National Anthem is played following her address to the 53<sup>rd</sup> Session.



President Sirleaf and Her Royal Highness Princess Haya bint Al Hussein of Jordan.



AIFB President, Dr. Donald Kaberuka, and President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at the High-Level Panel Meeting on Africa's Fragile States in Monrovia.



L-R: Foreign Minister Ngafuan, Finance Minister Konneh, President Sirleaf, EBID President Ifo, ECOWAS VP McIntosh, and President Pro-Tempore Findley.



One of the banners depicting a clear message as Liberians celebrate 10 years of peace.



President Sirleaf consoles a health worker at the Redemption Hospital as they mourn the death of a colleague, Esther Kesselee, who died of the Ebola virus.



Funeral Service of the late NTGL, Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant; his casket draped in white, sits in the aisle.

# Looking Forward

July 26 Independence Celebrations, 2015-2017



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[www.emansion.gov.lr](http://www.emansion.gov.lr)

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