



UNMIL/PIO/PR/111

Press release, 02 October 2006

“Women must seize the opportunity to make lasting change in Liberia,” says UN Envoy

Monrovia, Liberia – Liberian women in leadership positions across the country have been meeting during an unprecedented gathering in Monrovia to discuss women’s role in governance and decision making. Liberia’s President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, delivered a powerful and emotive keynote address while the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Alan Doss and members of the diplomatic corps were in attendance.



Leading Liberian vocalist Miatta Fahnbulleh entertaining the gathering

In an atmosphere filled with songs, praises and the celebration of Liberian women, the President recounted the progress that has been achieved during the past eight months, President Johnson-Sirleaf announced that the government had achieved 70 per cent of the ambitious goals outlined in her government’s 150-day action plan. She stressed the importance of planning and setting quantifiable and measurable targets. The President also recognized the major challenges faced by her administration in the areas of peace and security, economic revitalization, infrastructure, basic services, governance and the Rule of Law.

President Johnson-Sirleaf encouraged the women leaders to remain committed to the development of Liberia. “The eyes of Africa and the eyes of the world are on Liberia right now. This is a government that is headed by a woman. The success of this government will open the doors to women all over the world,” she said, and added: “My success is your success. My failure is your failure. This is our time, this is our day.”



President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf delivering the key-note address

Congratulating all the women who were elected during the free and fair elections last year, or appointed to positions of leadership, Special Representative Doss said: “Experience has shown that at all levels of governance women do and can make a difference in raising awareness and in bringing a different perspective to a nation’s development agenda.” Mr. Doss urged development partners to break away from the traditional model of development and place women at centre-stage in post-conflict Liberia. “Experiences in other countries show that it makes economic, social and political sense to put the power of choice in the hands of poor women. Only then can we get significant and quick advances in improving health and education,” the SRSR said.

The Women in Governance Forum was organized by the Ministry of Gender and Development, in close collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Ministers, County Superintendents, Legislators, Senators and women holding leadership position in government agencies and public entities will spend one day sharing experiences and discussing ways of enhancing and improving their performance.
