



REMARKS

BY

HER EXCELLENCY MRS. ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

**AT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HIGH-LEVEL THEMATIC DEBATE ADVANCING
GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS FOR A
TRANSFORMATIVE POST - 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

NEW YORK

MARCH 6, 2015

H.E. Sam k. kutesa, President of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations

Ms. Phumzile Miambo- Ngcuka, Executive -Director of UN Women

H.E. Hon. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, President of Croatia

H.E. Hon. Ahmet Davutoglu, Prime Minister of Turkey

Ms. Sivananthi Thanenthiran, Executive Director, Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (AAROW)

Nohelia PROTECTED (YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE)

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr. President of the General Assembly and Madame Executive Director, I thank you for the invitation. I could do no less than respond favorably to join you and the Women of the World in this truly monumental year.

In 1995, we came together in Beijing, 17,000 governments from all over the world and 26,000 activists to envision a world where women and Girls have equal rights, freedom and opportunity in all spheres of life. This year marks the 20th anniversary of that historic event, when we adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

At a summit in January in Addis Abba, members of the African Union promoted a stakeholders consultation on the progress and challenges relating to women advancement, In the year 2015 designated by them as the year of Women Empowerment and Development in promotion of Agenda 2063.

In February 2015, San Diego, Women Leaders of the global community declared 2015 a year for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment.

In Rio, World Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to ensure women's equal rights, access to opportunity and participation in leadership in the economy, security and political decision making.

In a few months, members of the United Nations will adopt a Post 2015 development Agenda which will call once againfor more concrete action in advocating Gender Equality & Empowerment of Women & Girls for a transformative world.

There is no doubt that progress has to been made in the 20 years since Beijing more girls are educated, rural women have found their voices, more women hold professional position, more women are chief executives in the private sector, more women are in parliament, and in exceptionally high percentage such as in Rwanda, more women are vying for high political office and some of us have finally broken the glass ceiling.

Yet, as the San Diego Conference points out, the current pace of change has been much too slow, much too slow so that at the current pace; it will take 81 years to achieve gender equity in the work place where we have the highest echelon remains largely male and It will take 75 years to reach remuneration between men and women for work of equal value and more than 30 to reach gender balance in discussion making.

This simply is a clear manifestation of an unjustworld that seeks to leave no one behind. It is not enough to make nice speeches, hold international meetings, issuecommunique and declarations,. Women leaders have said unequivocally, it is time for equality and have issued a call for action, to achieve planet 5050 by 2030.This call seeks a commitmentto address 12 critical areas of concern - essentiallycall for the protection, education and training for women and girls;ensuring access to information and the factors forproduction; especially for rural women; removing the constraints that lead to participation, in decision making at all levels in the society.

As we continue negotiation for a post 2015 development agenda, our call for women empowerment and equality must go beyondrhetoric, must set the

goals that are realistic and achievable and design the monitoring and evaluation systems that motivate countries to action. This was the success of the MDGs, the spirit of progress and competition in the achievement of goals. Let us do the same in the next global goal for women.

Liberia has a history of turbulent times but in 2013 for the first time in two decades we celebrated ten consecutive years of peace and two successful general elections. Then came 2014 and we were hit by Ebola, an enemy that threatened all the gains of the past 10 years. Once again the Liberian people rose to the task. Today we can report that there are no new cases anywhere in the country for over ¹³~~8~~ days.

When the next five years celebration of Beijing takes place in 2020, I would have served and left a better country than I found. I want to thank all of you who provided the motivation and support that enabled me to break the glass ceiling. I hope that we will all work toward ensuring that the African Union does not return to male domination.

Thank You