

**Statement by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
On Liberia's Forthcoming Presidential Run-Off Election
Saturday, November 5, 2011**

Dr. Amos Sawyer, Former President of the Interim Government of National Unity;
Madam Gladys Beyan, Standard Bearer, Grassroots Democratic Party;
Counsellor Varney Sherman, Chairman, Unity Party;
Mr. Israel Akinsaya, Former Chairman, Liberty Party;
Counsellor Chea Cheapo, Standard Bearer, Progressive People's Party;
Ms. Monica Dokie, Vice Standard Bearer, Victory for Change Party;
Dr. Togba Nah Tipoteh, Standard Bearer, Freedom Alliance Party;
Mr. Jerome Barclay, representing the National Union for Democratic Progress;
Mr. Jonathan Mason, Standard Bearer, Union of Liberian Democrats;
Father Tikpor;
Officials of Government;
The Press;
Political, Business, and Social Leaders;
My Fellow Citizens:

We began this historic journey 11 months ago. As proud Liberians, we registered to take part in our country's second, uninterrupted presidential and legislative elections in decades.

On October 11, we turned out in large numbers – over 70 percent of eligible voters – and waited patiently, on long lines and in pouring rain in some places, to vote for the candidates of our choice.

We made history in Liberia on that Election Day, because we proved to the world, but most especially to ourselves, that we, as a people, have the maturity, the discipline and the tolerance to hold free, fair, transparent and democratic elections.

I thank the political party leaders, many of them here, who have accepted the results and have agreed to work with us in building a better Liberia.

Let me congratulate everybody who turned out to vote. All of us owe a debt of gratitude to those who worked so hard planning and implementing the elections, and all those who called for and prayed for peace in our nation. The world is celebrating our achievements.

In three days, on November 8, we will have another opportunity to go to the polls in a second round, this time to vote for a clear winner in the race for President and Vice President, as our Constitution requires.

This election is about a choice between hope and fear; between the unlimited potential our future holds and the ugly aspects of our past – a past where we were denied the right to vote; a past where we did not have the right of freedom of expression; and a past where politicians put their own self-interest ahead of the interests of the nation.

My Fellow Citizens: We are at peace. After decades of conflict and social disorder, Liberia is now raising a generation of children that do not know of war, whose sleep and schooling have never been interrupted by gunfire. We must cherish this peace. We must nurture it and ensure that our path is irreversible.

Mr. Winston Tubman, the CDC Standard Bearer, has called on Liberians to give up their franchise, their right to vote! He has told people to violate the Constitution and ignore the fundamental law which we, as a people, as a community, and as a nation have agreed to uphold. When you start violating the Constitution, where do you stop? If this is how they run their party, think of how they would have run our country! The Constitution governs us; it protects us; it is the thread that holds us all together.

Article 83 of the Constitution states: “Voting for the President, Vice President, members of the Senate and members of the House of Representatives shall be conducted throughout the Republic on the second Tuesday of each election year.” If no candidate obtains an absolute majority in the first ballot, a second ballot shall be conducted on the second Tuesday following. Elections were held on October 11, 2011, and were validated by 4,800 domestic and international observers as free, fair and transparent – not marred by a single act of violence.

The Constitution requires that the returns of the elections be declared by the Elections Commission not later than 15 days after the casting of ballots, and that was done on October 25th. Consequently, as also prescribed by the Constitution, the second Tuesday following the returns, this year, falls on November 8 – in three days – a run-off is called.

My Fellow Citizens: We thank God that our nation has come a long way. We have made great sacrifices to be where we are. We are poised to make history!

Do not succumb to fear and intimidation. Do not allow any politician to hold our country hostage. Do not allow Mr. Tubman to falsely claim “boycott” when what he is doing is forfeiting the right to the finals because he fears defeat!

Just think: The CDC has accepted to seat 15 of its partisans in the National Legislature as a result of the October 11 elections, but that same election, where they lost the presidency, they do not accept the results. By their reasoning, the elections are free and fair if CDC wins, but fraudulent when they lose. My Fellow Liberians, the law and the Constitution are not for personal interpretation!

The right to vote, to freely choose leaders of our country, is a cardinal principle of constitutional democracy. No individual, no party, no Standard Bearer can get in the way of our peace, security and stability.

On November 8, I urge you to go out and cast your vote for the candidate of your choice. The vote you cast will determine the future of our beloved country. Vote for peace. Vote for democracy. Vote for a better Liberia.

But through it all, let us remember, my Fellow Citizens, that this country belongs to all of us. When we wake up Wednesday morning, with this election behind us, we will all still be Liberians – one nation, with one history, one culture, one future. We will have to live together; we will have to work together to build our nation – this nation that we all love, this piece of God's Earth that we call home.

As I look toward the future, I see Liberians everywhere full of hope, full of promise and great optimism, and I believe in the vast potential of our country and its people. I have faith, my fellow Liberians, that peace, stability and democracy will prevail, and I have faith in a God who promised, and who has brought us this far, will carry us forward.

May God bless us all. May God bless Liberia.