

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

At the invitation of the President of Liberia, Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the President of the Republic of Benin, His Excellency Dr. Boni YAYI, at the head of a high power delegation, paid a two day working visit to Liberia on Tuesday, August 7 and Wednesday August 8, 2007.

The President of Benin and delegation upon arrival at the Roberts International Airport were given a rousing welcome by Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and officials of the Liberian Government as well as by the people of Monrovia and its environs.

The visit was in pursuance of the strong ties of friendship and bilateral relations that have historically subsisted between the Republics of Liberia and Benin, as well as the shared policy of the two Presidents for consultation and person-to- person contacts between and among African Heads of State and Government particularly those of ECOWAS, to discuss issues of common concern.

During the visit, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and President Boni YAYI, in an atmosphere of friendship, mutual confidence and understanding discussed, at length, bilateral issues of cooperation between their two countries and the prevailing situations in Africa and the world at large.

On the bilateral cooperation existing between Liberia and Benin, the two Heads of State agreed to continue to work together to give full and concrete meaning to the relations for the mutual benefits of their two countries and peoples.

In this vein, the two Heads of State welcome the finalization and signing of four bilateral agreements in the following areas:

- A. Framework Agreement
- B. Creation of Joint Commission
- C. Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation
- D. Cooperation between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries

President Johnson Sirleaf recalled with gratitude and appreciation, the solidarity shown, and the material support given by the Government and the People of Republic of Benin to the People of Liberia in support of the Liberian peace process, especially through the convening of the Peace Conference on Liberia in July 1993, leading to the historic Contonou Agreement, which formed the basis of all subsequent agreements, including the ultimate Comprehensive Peace Agreement of August 2003.

President Boni Yayi expressed appreciation to President Johnson Sirleaf for her kind sentiments and pledged Benin's support to Liberia's post conflict peace consolidation efforts, particularly in the areas of the building construction and public works with high intensity labor, mutual capacity building in the teaching of foreign languages through student exchange and the promotion of democratic institutions.

President Johnson Sirleaf also seized the occasion to brief her Beninois counterpart on her Government's development agenda, covering security, Governance reform, infrastructure reconstruction and economic revitalization, all of which aim to alleviate the conditions which produced

the Liberian conflict, and to move the country to durable peace, stability and development.

President Yayi commended President Johnson Sirleaf for her Government's far-reaching policies and programs, particularly the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Programs, which have helped greatly in the normalization of the socio-political situation of the country through the creation of a national consensus on reconciliation, reconstruction, economic development and renewal.

Concerning the West African Sub-region, the two Heads of State hailed the recent progress made in the Republic of Guinea, by the constitution of a Government of National Unity as well as the reestablishment of social peace and the launching of a process of economic revitalization. The two Heads of State also expressed their satisfaction with the consolidation of peace in Sierra Leone, as evidenced by the forthcoming General Elections in the country later this month.

Regarding recent political developments in Cote d'Ivoire, the two Heads of State noted that the Ouagadougou Accord of 4 March 2007 remains the most viable framework for the restoration of lasting peace in that sister Republic. They hailed the recent activities emanating from the implementation of said Agreement, including the arms destruction ceremony - the Flame of Peace - on Monday 30 July 2007, executed in the presence of the Head of State, the Prime Minister and other Ivorian leaders from diverse political groups,

witnessed by leaders of a number of African countries and representatives of the international community.

Regarding the situation elsewhere on the African Continent, of particular concern to the two leaders was the problem in the Darfur Region of Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic. In this connection, the two Heads of State welcomed the recent UN Security Council Resolution which mandated a twenty-six thousand strong hybrid United Nations/African Union Peace Keeping Force to be deployed in the Darfur region, as well as the Sudanese Government's willingness to cooperate with the deployment of the force and their mission to keep the peace and avert the humanitarian tragedy occurring in that part of the Sudanese region. They however, urged the International Community to move quickly to have all the warring groups in the Darfur region reach an early peace agreement with the Sudanese Government.

Faced with the persistent armed conflict in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region and elsewhere in Africa, the two Heads of State called on African countries to work rapidly to put in place the necessary mechanism of the Security Council of the African Union so as to enhance its capacity for Conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa in order to ensure the security, peace and stability of the Continent.

On the question of an African Union Government, the two Heads of State welcomed the outcome of the Grand Debate which took place at the recent

African Union (AU) Summit in Accra, and which, although accepting the idea in its totality, prescribed a gradual approach to realizing this goal.

On the Economic situation confronting the African continent, President Johnson Sirleaf and President Boni Yayi expressed their ardent wish that the abundant resources of the African Continent would be harnessed and utilized to the benefit of all of the African peoples and those in the Diaspora. In this regard, they renewed their commitment to all the decision, programs and agendas adopted by African countries geared toward the fight and elimination of poverty on the African continent

Touching on a number of international political situations, the two Heads of State expressed serious concern over recent developments in the Middle East relative to the internal Palestinian problems and the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. In this connection, both Presidents urged all parties to recommit themselves to dialogue aimed at the durable peace in the region, a secured Israel and the establishment the viable Palestinian State. Accordingly, both leaders support the American proposal for an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, the work of the Middle East Quartet as well as the proposal of the Arab League for a permanent resolution of the crisis.

Concerning international terrorism, President Johnson Sirleaf and President Boni Yayi praised the progress realized by the International community in combating this threat, and renewed the shared commitment of their two governments to actively contribute to the global fight against all forms of terrorism, extremism and intolerance.

The Heads of State also reaffirmed their firm belief in multilateralism as the appropriate framework for the resolution of contemporary global problems.

On the global economic situation and the UN Millennium Development Goals, the two Heads of State called on the industrialized and high income countries to accelerate efforts towards meeting their commitments to developing nations, especially post-conflict nations, through greater debt relief, removal of trade barriers to enhance greater trade, as well as the delivery of greater development assistance to poorer nations.

During their discussions, the two Heads of State were assisted by senior officials of their countries as listed in the attachment to this Communiqué.

Among the major activities which took place during the visit, President Boni Yayi met with the Bankers' Association of Liberia and the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations in Liberia, Mr. Allen Doss and officials of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

At the end of the Visit, His Excellency, President Boni Yayi expressed his gratitude and appreciation to Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the People of Liberia for the warm and fraternal welcome and hospitality accorded him and members of his entourage.

The President of Benin extended an invitation to his Liberian counterpart to visit the Republic of Benin. The Liberian Head of State accepted the invitation, with the understanding that the date of the visit will be jointly determined through diplomatic channels.

Done in the City of Monrovia, Republic of Liberia, this 8th day of August,
A.D. 2007

FOR THE REPUBLIC OF BENIN
HIS EXCELLENCY
DR. BONI YAYI PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF BENIN

FOR THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
HER EXCELLENCY
ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF
PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

Senior Officials assisting the two Heads of State during their discussions:

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

1. H.E. George W. Wallace, Jr.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
2. Hon. Brownie J. Samukai, Jr.
Minister of Defense
3. Hon. Olubanke King-Akerele
Minister of Commerce
4. Hon. Toga G. McIntosh
Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs
5. Hon. Lawrence Bropleh
Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism

REPUBLIC OF BENIN

1. Hon. Issifou KOGUI N'DOUROU
Senior Minister in Charge of National Defense
2. H. E. Moussa OKANLA
Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration, French Speaking
World and Benin Citizens Abroad
3. Madam Mariam ALADJI BONI DIALLO
Special Advisor to the President for Diplomatic Affairs

4. Mr. Honore-Theodore AHIMAKIN
Director of Africa and Middle East, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
African Integration, French Speaking World and Benin Citizens
Abroad

5. Mr. Christophe GBEGBO
Charge d’Affaires a.i., Embassy of the Republic of Benin to Liberia
with residence in Abidjan