

**Transcript of Interview with H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Moderated by Mr. Darryl
Ambrose Nmah, Director General, Liberia Broadcasting System
On the Super Morning Show
Held at the Studios of the Liberia Broadcasting System, Paynesville
Monday, July 1, 2013**

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf: I am pleased to be here; good morning to all.

DG Nmah: Let me just inform you, Madam President, that by kind courtesy of our partners, this interview is also heard by Liberians across the world. So, if you are there, its www.globalafricradio.com. So, maybe you have a special message for Liberians who are not in the country and are in the Diaspora, this morning. You want to greet them?

President Sirleaf: Absolutely. I'd like to say to them that we are thankful to all that they do to support the country through remittances, through connections with their families and their institutions, and we're just looking forward to many of them who are coming home, even if for just short periods of time, and we hope some of them will think about relocating and joining the process of reconstruction.

DG Nmah: Well, that says it for you out there. I'm sure most of you are keen on following – Gerald promised to wake up most of the Liberians in the United States – but those of you in the UK and other parts of Europe who have already started hitting us on the website, you know that the interview is on. Madam President, it's quite a while, you've recently been out in Abuja, Nigeria; before then, you were out in Washington, in New York, in Japan and in Addis. The trip took you out of the country for some time. Could you give us some of the highlights of those, starting with the HLP debate and the finalization of the Report that you've been working on, with your partners on the High-Level Panel for the Post-2015 Millennium Development Goals?

President Sirleaf: Well, the High-Level Panel completed its work, and so I joined the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to go to New York to look at the final report and make final revisions and so that that Report could be prepared to be presented to the Secretary-General by the President of Indonesia on May 30.

The Africa Union was a Summit that celebrated the 50th Anniversary of our institution. You know that Liberia was one of the Founding Members of the Organization African Unity, which is now the African Union. In Tokyo, there was the Tokyo International Conference on African Development. I happen to have been in the UN when the first one, in 1993, was launched, and so going back there for what is likely to be my last one, it was interesting to meet some of those who had worked with me in the United Nations Development Programme to TICAD started, and, of course, we used that opportunity to talk about the projects that Japan is supporting for Liberia. They approved another consignment of rice, which is ongoing; they concluded the arrangements and, as you know, the contract was signed for the

rehabilitation and expansion of Somalia Drive; they also concluded the arrangements for a 10-megawatt power plant that will be installed here by the end of next year.

That when well, and then we went to the States where Forbes had their annual meeting; they brought together all of these billionaires. And I was glad they focused on Liberia, and they wanted to see how they could support three of what they called the “social entrepreneurs.” Three of them are operating here, and they wanted to see what they can do to support. I will get the results – I haven’t gotten that yet – as to what’s the level of support. They will be bringing out a magazine on Liberia, its progress, and what’s happening. All in all, I would say that a very resulting, a very worthwhile trip.

DG Nmah: But at the African Union, we got the reports back about the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) that has been set up by leaders, and your preferment to chair such. Is that some extra added responsibility, or how does Liberia take such responsibility added to you?

President Sirleaf: Well, yes, but not so much. It probably means two meetings a year, which I would chair; there’s a full secretariat, there’s a full technical team that does the work. What it will do is to put some pressure on Liberia because we’ve just joined the APRM, and a team will be coming to assess where we’re going. We have to form our national team because that process begins to examine comparators between countries on the progress they’ve made in corporate governance, in economic governance, in liberties and what not, so this will provide me an opportunity to be able to interact with colleagues from other countries on the progress they’ve made, and how Liberia can use some best practices. As you know, Dr. [Amos] Sawyer was very instrumental; he was heading the Panel. For a while he was a member, and then he became Chairman. And so I will be taking a lot of cues from him and carrying on some of the good work. But it’s largely a chairmanship without my having to do any of the main responsibility.

DG Nmah: You also visited the G8 Summit where underdeveloped and developing countries look at that as some privilege to be invited to those Summits of the eight most powerful nations in the world. What did you take to the Summit, and should we be upbeat about our President coming to that Summit?

President Sirleaf: Well, let me say how pleased I was to have been invited by the UK Prime Minister because he is, the UK is the current Chair of the G8. I was invited with three other African regional institution leaders. The topic of that was to focus on financing – illicit financing. Kofi Annan had just headed a High-Level Panel that put out a report. In the report, called “The Africa Progress Report,” Liberia features prominently in there. Some of our strengths and some of our weaknesses are all pointed out in that report. The G8 members wanted to see how they could collaborate to help countries to stop illicit flows, to enable countries to keep their own resources, to manage natural resources in a better way. Liberia is a natural resource country, so those discussions and the decisions taken by the G8 have very much relevance for Liberia. So I was very honored to have been there with members of the G8. G8 is G8; these are the eight largest economies in the world, but the fact that you get invited to just sit in as an observer is a great honor to Liberia, and I’m glad that I was a part of it.

DG Nmah: Madam President, however there are critics who believe that the President needs to be at home, that you've been traveling too much. What would be your response to that?

President Sirleaf: Let me just say that sometimes I, too, get a little bit tired of travel, but these bring great things for Liberia. Many of the things that you see me conclude are in terms of our investment. Today, people are proud to be Liberians; people are proud of Liberia and the progress we've made. Sometimes, we at home don't feel so proud of ourselves, and I think that's wrong. I think we should know where we've come from. Personally, I bring to the international development debate many years of experience in the private sector and the public sector, working internationally and at home, so there's a high demand on my time. I'm able to represent Liberia effectively; I'm able to speak convincingly. I can tell you that for every trip I take, I've probably turned down about eight. So these trips bring good things for Liberia.

Concerning these travels, I hear some people say, but you know, she travels, but is she reporting? Look, since 2006, when I travel and I come back, I file an expense report. That's my fiscal discipline that I've practiced throughout my professional life, and I do not move away from that. I say since 2006 – so we're not talking about something I'm doing right now. Anyone can check the records at the Ministry of Finance. There are times when the funds I carry I may under-spend, in which case I return the money to government. There are times when I have over-spent, and I've put in a claim to be refunded. I do it consistently. As a matter of fact, when the travel appropriation was audited by the General Auditing Commission, in their report they recognized that the President is the only one who clears her travel arrears. And it's in the report; it's nothing I'm just saying, it's documented. This is the discipline I live by. There are some things that people really don't know; they need to find out some of the things we do to ensure that our integrity is in place.

DG Nmah: We are live on ELBC and across the world on www.globalafricradio.com and other radio stations. Very soon we'll acknowledge those who are simulcasting this interview with Her Excellency, the President.

Speaking of that, which brings us down to the fight against corruption, Madam President. Are we winning this war?

President Sirleaf: We've made good progress in this war; it's a tough one. And I wish every Liberian would see it for what it is, because it has penetrated the society. We have made progress. If not, we would not be talking about revenue that increases from US\$80 million to over US\$650 million. But there are still leakages. There are, no doubt, people in high places that engage in impropriety; there are people all over the place that engage in impropriety. We have established integrity institutions to do that; we have established systems; we have put in structures, new laws – whether it's Financial Management Law, whether it's the Public Procurement Law. Today you see a lot of notices in the papers about people tendering, something that didn't happen in this country before. But the problem still has

to be fought at all levels in government. The other day, the Ministry of Finance – as much as it's trying to establish systems – faced a question in which people were doing bogus, fake revenue receipts, fake driver's license, fake birth certificate receipts. Whether it's at the World Trade Center or some other small place, and it just takes the revenue. We took a big hit. The whole thing about the PUPs [Private Use Permits] in the forestry sector, the Ministry of Finance took a big hit on that. We should all keep trying to work at it. Now, we do have a weakness in prosecution. We think, on the prevention side, we've done a lot. Prosecution, we still need to do more. I'm glad the new Chief Justice [Francis Korkpor, Sr.] has promised to do it, and we have a new Solicitor General now, a young lady who is really determined that she's going to improve the performance on the prosecution side. We are working at it, and I hope everybody would... It doesn't help if people begin to give false accusation of others. When you lie on people about things that you have no facts and no proof of, because what it does is make people just feel that there's nothing happening in this fight, and there is.

DG Nmah: I was going to say that yet critics keep pointing fingers at you, the government, branding the government as the most corrupt. Some think, in fact, that corruption has won the war against your administration.

President Sirleaf: That's nonsense! That's nonsense about pointing finger at being the most corrupt. You just look at the record, I've just told you about that. We've come a long way; there are problems, and I'm the first to admit it, and I've said that. But you're not helping us when you begin to say things that are clearly wrong, things that are clearly erroneous. You don't make it good for us, because it makes people think so. You go and put the wrong views in the public's mind, and that encourages them to do the very thing we are trying to fight. Criticize, yes, but criticize factually. Come join us in trying to find the solution. Give us some of your ideas of how we can fight corruption. Be a partner to us. That's the kind of good citizens that we're looking for.

DG Nmah: As a leader, how does that make you feel, because sometimes these groups that will do these perception indexes on corruption, they don't pick up the facts, they just pick up what people put out there. Do you think it damages the image of the country? Do you feel that hit? If so, what will you say to Liberians in that drive and what harm it has on the country's image?

President Sirleaf: It harms the country, and it also harms them, because in harming the country it gives the wrong perception of those who do not know the facts. Look at the Global Corruption Perception Index. Liberia has improved. Look at Transparency International. The Vice President [Joseph N. Boakai, Sr.] represented me at their last annual meeting where Liberia was showcased as having made the requirements under the LEITI [Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative]. I know one is going to talk about that... we'll come to that and I'll deal with that. But, generally, everyone recognizes that there's been a lot of progress in this war. But you hurt the very people you're trying to protect. You hurt them when you have false accusations because it stops the person out there in Singapore, or in Tokyo, or in Johannesburg who wants to make an investment here that will create the jobs that will help the people. You get them thinking, 'O, I'd better not go there if someone is going to steal my money.' So you

need to be positive and supportive and collaborative in this fight, because this fight is not just in the Executive Branch. If you want to be frank, you know where it is, and you know it's all over, and it must be a collective will to improve the image of our country. To recognize the wrongs, yes we must; but also recognize the progress, and recognize the rights.

DG Nmah: Most of the time you hear them say that, with reference to the former Auditor General's audit reports, they believe that maybe there was a personal beef or maybe exposed too many officials of government, so government doesn't want to prosecute or do things about those audit reports. What is the status right now?

President Sirleaf: The status of those reports is that they are many. He produced a whole lot, some of them good reports, some of them questionable reports, but that's all right. We sent the whole lot of them to the Ministry of Justice, and they formed a whole team. Don't forget, our capacity to even handle some of those things is not as we would like it; it's very limited. But they formed a team, they put those audit reports into three categories: those for which they felt the evidence was strong and prosecution was possible; those they felt needed additional information; and those they felt really could not be used for prosecution because the evidence was so weak. Those reports have now been handed over to the new Solicitor General – because the old one did not act fast enough. The Legislature also gets copies of those reports, as the GAC [General Auditing Commission] reports to them directly. They told me they are going to be having some public hearings on some of those reports. So, even there progress is made; maybe not as fast as people want, but progress is being made, and I suspect that we will see the Ministry of Justice begin to bring some people to justice in a very short period of time.

DG Nmah: In the prosecutorial process and the fight against corruption, there's also concern within the Ministry of Justice itself about the legal team, getting the requisite people, the expertise, to build a legal team that will prosecute. Sometimes they talk about funding, getting good lawyers. Is government moving towards that end as government tries to see prosecution? Some of the things people say are that they think government has a good case, but when you go to the court, maybe they're not prosecuting properly.

President Sirleaf: Well, they try their best, but you've got problems. They don't have the capacity, and government pay does not allow us to get the kinds of high-level, like the private lawyers. Even now, the Ministry of Justice is trying to recruit some private lawyers to help out with some cases. But in the Ministry of Justice, they are stretched thin; not only do they deal with corruption cases, they deal with criminal cases, they deal with investigations, they deal with justice cases, they deal with cross-border issues, and they just keep trying to do the best they can. I wish we had some patriotic citizens, lawyers, who would say they are willing to come and help the government; I want to be able to help them prosecute this. Some of those young graduates can offer their service and say, I want to come and join the Solicitor General and be on the prosecution team, but, of course, you also have to have the expertise, because most times, our lawyers are going against powerful, well-experienced lawyers in the private sector. Our whole justice system is patterned after the U.S., that says you are innocent until

proven guilty in a court of law. So, a very good and smart defense lawyer can keep a case in court for months, questioning this, examining this. Our jury system... and I'm so glad and thank the Legislature, they have just passed the new Jury Act. So now we are not going to have professional jurors; now we'll be able to go in the public and say we want this particular person – a real peer system where people can go there and will have knowledge of the facts and will be able to use sound judgment as they make a decision regarding a case.

DG Nmah: But, Madam President, administratively, do you also take action? Maybe the evidence may not be big, but in your mind you believe there's something wrong; have you reprimanded, dismissed, and if they come to you or it comes to your attention, what do you do administratively?

President Sirleaf: Plenty! I have fired a lot of people. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Finance told me the other day, he was so discouraged. He said, 'Look, I fired somebody because it was clear the person had violated the public trust.' He said, 'They went and cleared the person, and now the person is suing me for 2 million dollars in wrongful dismissal.' Ah, how we will deal with something like that? No, but I do fire people. If you look at the list, from way back, even in the first term, I fired a lot of people. Now to prosecute, you have to have evidence. That's the issue, and without the evidence, when it goes to the Ministry of Justice, and it takes a long time for them to investigate, sometimes even our investigative capabilities are very low; sometimes those investigating can also be compromised. That's part of the difficulties we face in our system. But I take those actions. You may have heard, just the other day – on Friday – we closed down the Birth Certificates office. We did because it was brought to my attention that people were issuing false birth certificates. People are giving citizenship to people who just come into the country and they just go and give some money to somebody, and they make them a Liberian citizen. Eh, man, that one there that's too much!

DG Nmah: That's not the end of the program because we're still on The Super Morning Show with Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and we say thanks to Fabric Radio and Radio LIB for relaying this program; Truth FM, Love FM, Radio Monrovia, and a host of Community Radios across the country. Especially to our UNMIL Radio partners, thank you very much for carrying it across the country. And we're also across the world, as I said, on Radio LIB and www.globalafricradio.com, our partners that bring the State Radio every morning, every day to you, Monday to Friday, and in the evening on "The Bumper Show" with Smith and Patrick; also, you can listen to them on globalafricradio across the world.

Madam President, I want us to stay a little bit on this fight against corruption because most Liberians are concerned. The Moore Stephens Report says 66 out of 68 concessions non-compliant; only 2 compliant. That's a worry...

President Sirleaf: Wait a minute. Be very clear. This was not a financial audit; it was a process audit. It was an audit to see whether you filed the right paper; whether the board made the right resolution; whether the resolution was put in the proper place; whether the particular law on procurement or the record showed that they really met those requirements. Financial audits are done also, but that

particular one was not. And don't forget that out of the 68, thirty-something had to do with the forestry sector, and the forestry sector, we had already shut down it down. We are going to lose millions of dollars because we shut the forestry down, because people were violating the concession agreement by going through the backdoor, through the private permit system that allowed private people who had forest trees on their land to be able to exploit for their goods. Those ones the government did not require them to pay taxes or to pay the logging fees. Some of those companies went in the back, they signed with some of the chiefs and community leaders or individual people. When that was brought to our attention by Global Witness, we immediately shut it down. We formed an investigating group, headed by Dorbor Jallah; they made a report, but now to prosecute those people, we have to go through the judicial system, and that's what the Ministry of Justice is doing. Some people were fired as a result of that, they were dismissed until the investigation; some may well be prosecuted because of that. But, again, that audit report was a process audit. For us, it was good; it tells us the places where we did not pay due attention, and that's going to be a wake-up call for all of us, not only in the natural resource sector, but in other sectors where people just don't pay attention to making sure they put proper records on file, that proper approvals are in place. I'm glad for that audit that will help us to become better.

DG Nmah: However, some people believe that we should cancel those 66 agreements. I heard one of the opposition politicians say, look, that when you came to power in 2006, you cancelled agreements – and I heard our Boss Lady's Press Secretary robustly countering that – but can you demonstrate the same and cancel all those agreements?

President Sirleaf: You don't cancel concession agreements based on process audits. When the investigations that are now going on are concluded, and they find that any concession betrayed the trust, did not meet the financial requirement of their audit, you can be assured that we will, through the legal process, take action against them. When we cancelled those agreements in 2006, don't forget that none of them were compliant, none of them had paid revenues. Liberia had been under sanctions in the forestry sector. So for years those people had not worked, and it was easier for us to do it. Today, we believe in the rule of law; if they violated it and the investigations show it, we will go through the rule of law and do the proper cancellation. But you're not going to go and cancel on the basis of a process audit.

DG Nmah: Madam President, finally on this issue of fighting corruption, putting these checks and systems in place, are we also looking at capacity, especially in government, where these kinds of transactions happen, and concession agreements where people don't follow processes. They may be (1) people may think they are corruption – people passing behind doors – but also people look at capacity, those who are supposed to follow documents probably don't know how to do it, and people think that maybe the remuneration that people get is a recipe for corruption.

President Sirleaf: Quite frankly, sometimes it's a capacity problem. Many people do not understand our procurement laws, for example, and sometimes, unwittingly, they violate them. International bidding, to

be able to understand this procurement system – we’re just trying to upgrade Procurement Officers; we’re trying to upgrade Comptrollers. We’ve now established a full Internal Auditing System that will provide the basis to correct these things before the General Auditing Commission comes with a post-audit. There are training programs that are going on for people to understand the laws, so that they don’t unwillingly violate them. Sometimes, without intention, they just don’t know what they laws are. We all have to continue to work at that, and continue to correct those deficiencies, continue to improve our performance in financial management.

DG Nmah: We’re still on The Super Morning Show with Her Excellency, Madam President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, right here on ELBC, relayed live on Fabric 101, Truth FM, Love FM, Radio Monrovia, the host of Community Radios across the country, and UNMIL Radio, taking it across the country, and across the world on www.globalafricradio.com. My name is Darryl.

Let’s shift a little bit, to our natural resources. There’ve been some issues about Wologisi. We hear Indian company, we hear Chinese interests, and some say bids are not out, but proposals are in. Is the government giving out Wologisi?

President Sirleaf: Ultimately, yes, but Chinese-o, Indian-o, American-o, South African-o, all of them, Liberian-o, let me put them there too, because they have a right, they can all make their bids. We have not even put it out for bid, and don’t forget that we have committed ourselves, before we do anything, we will hold consultations with the people concerned, we will hold consultations with the leaders concerned. All of that is not taking place, so people just talk, talk, talk, talk, talk – talk when you don’t even take time to get the facts. Wologisi, yes I’m quite sure that we want Wologisi developed because we want to be able to improve Lofa County; we want to be able to create jobs in Lofa County; we want to be able to do that, but it’s going to follow the law; it’s going to follow the process that we have established for investment, and we haven’t reached there yet.

DG Nmah: But there are some people, Madam President, who also say that, look, we talk about the country and the people benefiting, and the government says yes, US\$16 billion investment in our country; some people believe that they bring \$16 billion here. But people say, well, when do we begin to reap the benefits of the \$16 billion investment in the agriculture sector, in this other sector, and yet people say they don’t see any of those things coming to fruition.

President Sirleaf: Because some of them don’t want see. Look, when you go right now, if you go to ArcelorMittal, yes, they haven’t reached the stage where they have reached their maximum potential in employment, but there’s employment. They were not operating at all before; the first shipment of iron ore in 20 years came in the last three years. When you go to Putu that’s getting started, and the jobs that are being created..., yes, they haven’t reached the place where it’s the full potential, but jobs are being created, and I want to thank those of Grand Gedeh who have formed a little committee to work

positively with the people of Putu so that those operations can start, and they can pave that road from Zwedru to Greenville. Go to the port, look at the transformation of the port. That's part of the investment. China Union – the old Bong Mines – on July 30th, we are going there for people to see the operation that's starting because exports from there will start next year. Even the place where we're having trouble, with the agriculture concessions, Sime Darby and Golden Veroleum, even if you go there – yes, we'll sort the problems, we'll work with the communities, no doubt, but they are creating jobs. The new concessions of today, they're not going to ship raw materials; they are going to set up factories to produce the oil here. When you sign an investment, you don't get a check for \$16 billion to the country; some of those investments are 10-year investments, some are 20-year investments.

DG Nmah: Madam President, that's why I want to take time to let the people you lead understand, because you hear this: \$16 billion came into the country, and you hear it from the top level of politicians, down to the grassroots. \$16 billion came into the country. Did we get \$16 billion?

President Sirleaf: In investment commitment, yes.

DG Nmah: What does that mean?

President Sirleaf: It means the people say over a 20-year period, I will develop so much land; I will create so much employment; I will put so much money, year by year by year, to be able to achieve those. And so the process has started, people are beginning to benefit. Every year you add to it, put some more on it, every year you create more jobs, every year you open more roads, every year you do something. The \$16 billion just says to our country, this is our long-term program. Even if you're in your private business, and you go to the bank, and you say, well, I will borrow \$100,000 to be able to do my project. You're not coming to take that \$100,000 and right away produce all of the things you want to produce; you will start to build it up. You buy some things, you sell it; you buy some more. If you're building your house, and you borrow money from the bank, you don't go and the next day the house is all built. All of those things take time. But the results, like I say, beginning to show; those jobs are being created.

People always forget where we came from, where we started. They want more, and I, too, want more. Sometimes I, too, get frustrated because I say we're too slow, we're too slow. We could move faster; we could even move faster if the citizens were helping to cooperate. Take Western Cluster, in Bomi, my own county. We signed that concession agreement ever since -- \$800+ million; they can't start. You know why they can't start? Because for the railroad to bring the ore down, people have built all along the sides of the rail. If we go to say we want to move them, that will be big trouble. We're very sensitive to the people, so we can't say let's just go and move them. We can't do that, so we go and talk to them, we try to make relocation, we try to settle with them. But, as a result, those people should have started their operation one year ago. They have not started, they cannot provide jobs, they cannot fix the railroad to be able to bring the ore. They even said we'll bring the things in on trucks, just so we can't humbug the people too much. Bringing it trucks will not work because that will spoil our roads. So we're

thinking all kinds of ways to make adjustment to make this commitment go. Citizens must help. They cannot help to obstruct the things that will bring them long-term benefits. That's why I said I'm glad about the committee at Putu, being headed by George Boley; I thank all of them for coming together and helping us. All of the citizens must help to make it easy for this investment to take place, because that's how they will benefit.

DG Nmah: Because if the companies go away, then we are at zero, because sometimes you can tell that some of these things frustrate some of the companies. If they're supposed to start since two years ago, and the people are not helping, they may likely go away or it may also send a signal to other companies that want to come to Liberia, that you just get ready for a long hustle.

President Sirleaf: That's very true. As a matter of fact, sometimes I hear people say, ah, Liberia's becoming "investment unfriendly." That means when they come, people hassle them, they hustle them, they take so long to get things done; they go to this place, people give them the runaround. They are doing it to you – you, the people out there, because those benefits are for you. You have to help work with your government to make it easy for investors to feel friendly. We're not saying investors must take advantage of the people; we recognize that some of the investors here have to change their ways. We were just talking the other day, when we see some of the wages that are being paid are unacceptably low, and we are going to come down hard on them and say, you cannot do this; you must pay wages that are consistent with the skills, wages that compare with others. The Ministry of Labour has clear instructions on that; the Cabinet will be discussing that; we will work with the concessions. We've got what we call the Liberia Development Alliance (LDA). We'll be having a meeting; it brings together the government, our partners and the private sector to look at our *Agenda for Transformation*, to look where some of these things need to be corrected and improved, how we can together agree on those changes. And I'm sure that when you work with the private sector in that way, you will find them to collaborate, just like Firestone collaborated when we renegotiated their agreement; ArcelorMittal collaborated when we renewed their agreement. What you don't want is these people that, all the time, just write stories about them, that just tell lies on them, that just criticize them, that just obstruct. People go and say we striking. And the new thing, again, they say they bringing Country Devil. What Country Devil now? They say the people must not work because they didn't do something.

DG Nmah: But, Madam President, it may sound funny, but then the investor may ask what protection they get from government? If they agree with government, I think on the other hand they expect government to give them what you said you would give for them to invest their resources. So, what are we planning to do to say, look, even though we try as a government to find a way, but it has to happen, and we have to put our foot down?

President Sirleaf: We have to work with the concessions. I'll give you the example of Firestone. You remember where the people used to live? That's part of the investment. They used to live in hovels. We said to Firestone, you've got to give us a five-year plan to transform that Plantation and get better living conditions for the workers. Go to Firestone today; see the transformation that's taking place there.

Today, Firestone students are the ones that are making the highest in the WAEC Exams. LAC will follow; Salala will follow the same pattern; COCOPA will follow. Any other rubber or agriculture concession will do the Firestone model. Those are part of the investment rewards that are taking place, that people say they don't see there. The other day, Firestone workers just completed their Collective Bargaining Agreement in which their wages were raised. They used to carry the rubber on their shoulders; that has changed now, they have to have little trailers where they can now put the container on the trailer. Those are the good things that are happening, but you know, people don't see that one. Please come with me in the countryside sometimes, so they can see what's happening outside. People always say Monrovia is not Liberia, and they're correct. Out of 4 million people, 1.5 million people are right here in Monrovia. They are making Monrovia Liberia. We are trying to make Liberia Liberia by doing things out there, so that we create the jobs out there, so people can live out there.

DG Nmah: Your Excellency, the last area we want to touch on, under our natural resources, is the oil sector. How far has NOCAL gone with this reform in the oil sector that was a topical issue all along?

President Sirleaf: My understanding is that the reform is ongoing, on two tracks. You know the Legislature has been working on reform. NOCAL itself is working on reform. The two, at some point, we think, will converge, will come together, and then the Legislature will look at it; we hope that that process will be concluded before they break for their recess, and that that reform is going to be bold, is going to lay to rest any concerns, any issues that relate to the petroleum sector.

DG Nmah: Folks, you're still tuned in to The Super Morning Show, right here on ELBC, 99.9 FM, and other frequencies across the country, and relayed live on Fabric Radio with their partner Radio LIB, Truth FM, Love FM, Radio Monrovia, a host of Community Radios across the country, and UNMIL Radio; and, of course, with our partners www.globalafricradio.com. We'll just take a short break; we'll come back, don't go away. We always keep the juicy, juicy ones for the end, so don't worry, we're still here with Madam President. We'll take a very short break, go to Aunty Miatta. As I said, we're going, Heaven knows where we're going, we'll get there. It may be hard, but we will get there....

Welcome back to The Super Morning Show this morning. Don't worry, we're running after 10 o'clock, until we exhaust most of the issues that Her Excellency, Madam President, and us can talk about. As I said, we have a lot of issues, so we're not going to be taking phone calls today, and we'd like to again acknowledge our partner stations that are relaying this program: Fabric FM, with their affiliate Radio LIB, Truth FM, Love FM, Radio Monrovia, the host of Community Radios, UNMIL Radio, thank you for taking it across the country for us; and across the world, thank you to Gerald Cummings, you've been up since 2 o'clock this morning, ensuring that this is taken across the world on www.globalafricradio.com.

Welcome back, Madam President, from that break. You know, something was going through my mind about filing your claims to the Ministry of Finance. One might say, why would you want to do that? People travel, they come back, and they just sit down and...

President Sirleaf: A leader must set the example, for goodness sake. We have travel ordinances that require people to make those reports. Of course, the travel ordinances are due in at the end of the budget year and we haven't a new one out yet. But like I say, that's my discipline; that's something I'm accustomed to doing throughout my professional life. It's a part of me. I do that to set the example; I do that because it's the right thing to do; I do that because one must be financially accountable when you use government resources. Now, should we require everybody else to do it? Yes, we should, and we will continue to try to do so. But, at least, when I am hard on people, I'll be able to say to them, you must do it because I have done it.

DG Nmah: Madam President, your critics refer to your "reversal of course" to the practice of nepotism, which you publicly criticized. How do you respond to your critics?

President Sirleaf: The Liberia of today is not the Liberia of yesterday. The capabilities we had then, we don't have now. And although we're trying to build them, and we're trying to identify them wherever they are. I'm glad that I have a son who is involved in the petroleum sector reform, whose primary objective has been to make sure that we bring into the oil sector American companies of high caliber, high capability, high resources; that have the potential, under the application of their own financially prudent laws, to operate in our oil sector, and that process is well on.

DG Nmah: But, Madam President, I'm sure, obviously, you must be concerned. There are many, many reports in the local dailies, on the radio, about members of your family...

President Sirleaf: People overplay this, and people lie. That's part of it.

DG Nmah: But people talk about your family, they talk about your sister having undue influence, your children in government...

President Sirleaf: The Liberia way is, anytime somebody runs into some problem, or they want something, they go to the family person and say, 'Eh man, talk to the President for me.' Not just my sister, they go to my friends, they go to associates, they go to people at my office who come to me and say, 'Eh, man, I just want to put in a word.' Anytime somebody does wrong, people put in a word for them. In the case of my sister, they tell her to 'talk to her for me because I need this job; or talk to her for me, I'm running after this business.' Liberia is such a close-knit place, where everybody knows everybody, and everybody is trying to intervene on somebody's behalf. But in terms of owning something, zero! I, personally, do not own a single piece of property out of this country, not a single thing. The only thing I have is my bank account, and the biggest amount in my bank account is that Nobel Prize money. And even that one will be diminished because I just committed US\$100,000 to build a girls' dormitory on Todee Mission, which is ongoing; and I just completed one in the village near my place, I just completed a new Junior High School there. People say that the family got all this money. Money where? Yes, we are professionals. Yes, most of us have worked all of our lives, and so we can take care of ourselves. My houses were built in the sixties and seventies; I have three houses here that

were built at that time through the old system where you used to borrow money through the LPA system. That's how I built them. My sister lived in New York; she worked, she's retired; she's a retired Nurse; they have their homes; her husband has retired. My sons work; they are all professionals. If we have money, the people say Robertsfield Hotel. Rubbish!

DG Nmah: People say she owns that; that she owns Comium, you own this, you have shares in everything...

****48.00 President Sirleaf: Sometimes I wonder... \$3.6 billion... Sometimes I wonder if people really know money in this place. \$3.6 billion? If we had that kind of money, we've got a little property there on Broad Street, where the Unity Party had its headquarters – that small place there – you think I wouldn't put something there? The place I was born, one lot on Benson Street, where we all lived. We're still trying to see how we'll be able to get money to fix those properties. Where? People must stop this kind of thing! It's not good to lie on somebody. I declared my assets. The only reason I haven't published it, is because there are many other people concerned who have filed jointly and have their spouses, and their spouses are really pressuring them. Confidentiality is important for them...file with their husbands. For me, I can make my Assets Declaration, and I invite anybody to go and check it out. I invite any of our partners to use any intelligence they've got, to go ahead and check it out. Because when they do, they will find out ...is exactly the truth. None of us, as professional people, we grew up in a home of high moral If any of us were to do the things people say, our mother, who's up there – she can't come down, but we would never sleep at night, because we will know that she's up there. We don't do that.

DG Nmah: I feel that passion. Apart from being the President, does it bother you and your family?

President Sirleaf: Yes, it does! How will it not bother you? You have to laugh to keep from crying.

DG Nmah: Well, folks, we're still here on The Super Morning Show, the time is 10 o'clock; we'll be running over 10 o'clock, as I said. Let's look at some other issues...

President Sirleaf: Let me just say one more thing on that one: I'm glad you can sleep well, and you can sleep safe today, because I have somebody in our Intelligence who knows that I will never condone the infringement of their rights.

DG Nmah: Madam President, many people believe that freedom of the press, and of speech, have been one of your biggest gains. However, we witnessed some disagreements recently, with claims from some media institutions that the government has hatched a plot to close some of them down. There was a

blackout on your office. What do you make of all of this? Is there a wedge now between you and the media?

President Sirleaf: Absolutely not. My talking about closing the press down is hogwash. I've said, and there will be no moving away from that, we will never take away press freedom. We will never close any media down. However, we expect the media to be responsible. We expect criticism to be factual, and our Constitution, our laws all say the freedom of the press is inviolate. But those must do so with responsibility. But you can be assured, this government has no plan, is hatching nothing, to close any press down. But let me close it by saying, I am resolved, strongly resolved, that I will not give in to blackmail. We'll work with the press that want to work with the government and be positive, without interfering with their independence and their right to be the watchdog of society. But it must be truthful and responsible. If not, we will still not infringe upon their rights, but then I don't want to deal with them. I will not give in to blackmail. Period.

DG Nmah: Are there... to also stifle them? We hear some of them say that government owes them and doesn't want to pay them, and want them to die a natural death.

President Sirleaf: Absolutely not true. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Finance just told me the other day that he tried to settle all of the press debts. Now, we have some instances where a Ministry may give a particular ad or something to one paper, have an understanding with that paper, and then that paper takes it and gives it to five or six other papers who are not authorized to do it, and they all come and claim money for that. That's how come the issue ... problems for us. so those are the kinds of things the press themselves must manage their own affairs in such a way that they do not cause the difficulties that would prevent them from making sure that they get all of that to which they are rightfully entitled.

DG Nmah: Let's go back to governance, your government. Is it true that Minister [Kofi] Woods of Public Works has resigned?

President Sirleaf: Yes, Minister Woods resigned; we discussed it; he wants to be able to revive the Justice and Peace Commission which, as you know, he worked with Bishop Francis, and he wants to make his contribution to the development of the country. And so that's positive, it's alright.

DG Nmah: Some people say he's frustrated with government and the work and everything.

President Sirleaf: People can say whatever they want; I don't care what you say. If he had not resigned, they would be on his case too... don't do those roads good; what happened to all the money and all of that. People here talk plenty. Minister Woods has served his country well; he and I have talked; he will

continue to serve in whatever capacity he determines to make sure he remains a good citizen, making a contribution to the development of our country. Please accept it for what it is.

DG Nmah: Alright, Madam President. There are other issues. Coming on to the reports of the Roberts International Airport, there's something like a near Doomsday prophecy. I heard the Acting Managing Director say that, in fact, Liberia is rated almost zero when it comes to safety at RIA. Coupled with all of the issues that come up about RIA, you returned from Equatorial Guinea with some very, very good and heartening news, and then some other things have come up. The condition and the state right now. Are we ...? That's the major gateway to our international world. Are we in trouble with the runway, with everything going wrong?

President Sirleaf: I'm laughing when you say the "Acting Director." If it's so, then I think he's packing his bags. Let me put it this way: the runway needs some serious work, and we recognize that, and we're making arrangements to start that work right after the rainy season. We got two or three proposals that we are looking at in that regard. Meanwhile, Mr. [Archie] Williams who's holding over, when I arrived, the other day, he walked me from the Nigerian plane, where I went to Nigeria, and he said, 'Oh, I've got good news.' And he said that ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization, just gave us a good report that the airport is now making a lot of progress, etc. We have problems at the airport. We've got people there who are not trained. We've had three incidents with Air France, with somebody who hit the people's plane because he doesn't know how to drive the step. So, Williams himself says, 'What we will do?' and I say, you've got to give everybody test, put some people in training. All of them went there just to get a job; nobody put them through any training, and that's a highly technical facility. You've got to operate at a technical level. So, the Air France people have just been good; they wrote a letter and said, 'Look, I require you to show me your training program; I require you to make your people take test; I require you to do this, I require you to do that. It cost US\$500,000 for the damage our people caused.

Now, Equatorial Guinea. Look, I got a message from one of our Ambassadors who's accredited, to say... The President came here, I think it was in 2009. That experience he had, if I tell you it, you will fall down on the ground laughing. He traveled the road, because we were having the "26" in Gbarnga, and he traveled on that road through Firestone Plantation, on that bumpy road. He went there; the man stayed in the Presidential Palace the whole while because we did not have the kind of comfort he was used to. And so, when he was ready to go, he said he wanted to take the helicopter; the helicopter broke down. So, this experience stayed with him, and the message he sent to our ambassador in Ghana was, 'Go and carry the message to my sister that I would like to do something for her country; I'm doing something for a few other African countries, I want to do something for her.' That's why we made the quick trip. What was signed was a political commitment. In fact, he asked, 'what area you want me to help with?' Our people looked at it here, and said there are two areas: we need some housing, and we need Robertsfield. So, we went there with those two things. They signed a political commitment that we will try to help you in those areas. Ah, man! Political commitment, no terms and conditions, no financial arrangements, no technical agreement yet – all of that is supposed to come later. Then we come here,

and people talking, talking, talking, talking. They go beyond questioning the agreement, which they can look at, to begin to impugn the character of the people over there, just like they did to Tony Blair when he came here. What's wrong with us? People who come to try to be helpful, we find a way to malign them. As a result, they were supposed to send a team, one week ago, to come and look at the housing project. That team has not come. Have we lost that opportunity? Maybe.

DG Nmah: Are we going to lose out on RIA?

President Sirleaf: I don't know. But let me tell you on RIA. We've got several proposals. We're working with an American firm, we're working with a Turkish firm, we're working with a South African firm. This other one hasn't even come to that level of presentation. We are going to take a look at all the proposals. We will take the proposal that's best for Liberia, to get us the best deal in the shortest period of time, so that Airport can come up to standard. I am going to do it, to do it, and to do other things I'm supposed to do, because if I don't do it, the same people criticizing now, will be the same people, when I leave office, who will say, 'you were there for 12 years and you didn't do anything to that airport, you didn't do anything to the house. I will do it, as long as I'm there; that the national interest is protected, and that we have complied with our laws and regulations. Period.

DG Nmah: That should send somebecause I was going to ask about the Ministerial Complex. Some well-meaning Liberians also are concerned about this. I remember some saying to me that, look, we frustrated the effort of the Ducor to get people to move until the whole thing na go away. When they say we will build Ministerial Complex, they complaining, complaining, and that will go away....the airport coming, people started talking about money laundering, it will go away. So, now you're resolved to do it, what's about the Ministerial Complex?

President Sirleaf: Those are some of the things I say we will do. It took us a while to get True Whig Party; we got it now. We will put out an EOI [Expression of Interest] through a public-private partnership [PPP] to develop that True Whig Party Building. The Ducor thing is ...resolved, because we're going to do that. The Ministerial Complex has taken us some time, because we had to deal with private property owners –to identify those owners, to reach agreement and compensate them for their land. That process is now concluded.

DG Nmah: Are we resolved on where now?

President Sirleaf: It's going to be where we say it was going to be, but people, not taking time to know the facts, begin to spread false information. The Complex is not going on Peace Island. There's a big divide between the place that's out toward the road, and Peace Island, which is at the back. I hope that we can get better housing for the people on Peace Island, and can work out something for them later. I hope that some of the people on Peace Island will be the same people that will work on the Ministerial Complex that will give them jobs.

DG Nmah: Maybe the Equatorial Guinea housing project could go to Peace Island...

President Sirleaf: Yes, maybe, but they will not put it on Peace Island because that's private land. But, the people who say, 'Oh, 200,000 people, 20,000 people will be displaced, dislocated. Because the Complex is going on the front part, it will take three years to complete that Ministerial Complex, and three years is enough time, if you want to help people to relocate; those who want to stay there, what we can do to improve it, there's a whole lot of scope for that. But the Ministerial Complex will be built. It will be built.

DG Nmah: Is there any hope, still, for the Ducor?

President Sirleaf: I just told you that I've been having trouble with my Church. They will pray for me, but they will work with me, for the good of the country and the good of the Church. So, we're trying to reach arrangements with the United Methodist Church and the J.J. Roberts Foundation. But, at the same time, I think we have a couple of good proposals on the Ducor. I think a group from South Africa is just recently in town, looking at the possibility, and that's also good for the country. If we get the Ducor functioning, it's a good downtown business hotel; it will create jobs. Every time I go to some of these hotels, and I see Liberians, working at the hotels, in their smart outfits, I just feel so proud, and I say, 'just look, if we had three/four more of them, another 100, 200, 300, 400 jobs that would be created. That's the kind of vision that the Liberian people should see. Sitting in that little house you're in, and saying...if they come here, I will bring my cutlass. The same place, when we build it, that's you who will get work. So you work with us, you make it better for all of us. All we say to the Liberian people: Think ahead. See the bigger picture than just your little place where you sit. That bigger picture will also make you a bigger person and a better person.

DG Nmah: December 25, 2015. I guess you know what I'm talking about, Madam President. Hydro.

President Sirleaf: Oh, yes, it's on course. I think we finally decided that those people who've got there rubber trees – we talked about it in our last session. The project is on course; we're working with our three partners – the European Investment Bank, Norway, Germany; those agreements have been signed properly; the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) has been established; the bids for the design of the turbines have been done and are going out. Everything I know is that we're still set for December 25, 2015, for lights on. But before that, we hope that the World Bank's 10 megawatt unit, that is now reaching the same progress, will come on December 2014, and the Japanese 10 megawatt will come on December 2014. That's the target date for both of them. There's another 18 megawatt that I thought would come on mid-2014, but I'm now hearing that that might slip into end-2014 or 2015. In any case, all of those are now in the works and they're all fairly well on course to bring more electricity into Monrovia and the corridors connected to Monrovia.

DG Nmah: Madame, finally on the infrastructure, and then we'll probably move to some international issues. Do you get updates on the Redlight to Gbarnga roadwork that's going on?

President Sirleaf: Yes. The Redlight to Gbarnga is under way. It again took a long time to get started because of these Relocation Action Plans (RAPs) that were not anticipated in the cost of the project. This has also affected the Ministry of Finance's ability to finance many things that people are complaining about, because they had to pay for all those structures – some of them illegal structures – that were on the road, because a World Bank requirement is that we must make sure we compensate these people. It has cost the government, on the Buchanan highway, US\$3 million; the Gbarnga to Redlight has cost another US\$6 million. These were monies that were not anticipated in the budget. As a result, instead of the project starting last dry season, around October/November, it did not start until around March of this year, they started to do some clearing. They are working, but now it's the rainy season, and you know we can only build roads six months a year. And so, they have to slow down, and stop; they're still working on bridges, and they will restart in the dry season, and I hope that it will be at an accelerated rate. Their equipment is in place, all of their machinery in place, just for the rains to stop. At the same time, the contract has been signed for the Gbarnga to Ganta, and they, too, are doing preliminary work until the dry season. And let me just say to people: We now are finishing the feasibility study for Gbarnga to Konia, and Konia to Mendicorma, through the Kuwait Fund. Please get your structures out of the way. Please, please. I'm going up there myself, pretty soon; we'll take pictures. If I see any new structures after that, then don't look for money.

DG Nmah: You're still tuned to The Super Morning Show edition, this 1st day of July, 2013, right here on the State Radio, ELBC 99.9 FM, and other frequencies across the country. Thanks to UNMIL who's also relaying this program across the country; Fabric Radio, Truth FM, Love FM, and Radio Monrovia and or Community Radio affiliates across the country; and live, around the world, on www.globalafricradio.com.

Internationally, Madam President, President Barack Obama is visiting for the second time in Africa, very soon wrapping up his last leg in Tanzania. Liberia and American have had these strong ties, and probably may be his last, as President. People wonder that by not coming to Liberia, is there a strained relations between Liberia and America?

President Sirleaf: Absolutely, not! I understand, anyway, that the U.S. Embassy has made that very clear in a statement. It would be exceptional if a small country like Liberia received two American Presidents in the course of three years or four years. That would be exceptional. And in this particular case, because a President has been here, and there are many African countries that have to receive it, Liberia-America relationship is, as far as I know, on an all-time high. I also believe that sometimes we stop people from coming here, too, by the things we do, the things we say, the confusion we make. So, I would like to encourage President Obama to come; and if the people want to see him, and want him to come, then, I hope they will have a positive attitude. I hope they will begin to show their country in a good light, and not a bad light. I hope they would recognize the good things that are happening, what

other people see outside, when they come here, and they go back, and they say, 'O, my goodness, Liberian people are so resilient, so strong, making so much progress.' Then I come here and I hear what's going on, on the radio, and I say, O, my God, is there a different world? We all got different eyes? We all got different tools of assessment? Why do we like to cry ourselves down? Go to Ghana; Ghana's got problems, Nigeria's got problems, Sierra Leone's got problems, America has problems. But you just go to America and try to talk bad about it. They will talk about their problems among themselves, and they will find solutions. But they will never talk it to others and say anything bad about their country. Come on. Liberian people got to learn the art of positive thinking. They've got to like their country; they've got to like their people. They've got to want to uplift themselves and everything around them. They've got to want their country to succeed, without undermining the right to criticize, or the right to have a difference of opinion. That you can have; that you must have in a democratic society. But you must also stand by your country. That's what patriotism is all about. That's what citizenship responsibility is all about. That's what progress is all about. Prosperity comes through the collective effort of all the citizens; it is not forced by government. It is claimed by its own people.

DG Nmah: Commander-in-Chief. A platoon of your troops is in Mali. How are they faring? Have you gotten any update? I hear today it's going to be the changeover to the UN forces; have you gotten any update?

President Sirleaf: Very much so. Our troops are there; they've been assigned to a small area slightly northwest of Timbuktu. As you know, they are part of the Nigerian contingent; they're not there on their own, but they are there. When I was in Nigeria the other day, I thanked President [Goodluck] Jonathan for the Nigerians agreeing to receive them, and to work with them. Our troops went through a training where an American team that came out to assess them told me that they were top-rate, they were well-trained, they were battle-ready. We're proud of them. They're there, and it's a great thing for Liberia to be a part of a peacekeeping force as a means of giving back to all of those who stood by us in our days of trouble.

DG Nmah: Democracy Sustainability Bill – one of the newest kids on the block, passed by the Legislature. What's your position on it?

President Sirleaf: I believe that some work is going on, on that Bill, to make sure that it meets best practices, to make sure that it meets international standards. I think there's still some work being done by the Legislature. I, too, have asked some of our Ambassadors to give me lists of political support bills that pertain in other countries, just to make sure that we conform to that. So, that process is not yet completed; the process is on, and I'm sure in the end we will do all we can to sustain democracy.

DG Nmah: Madam President, reconciliation. You started with the handshake. I saw my General, Tanyonoh, and her very good friend, the Representative, embrace. Reconciliation, how far have we gone? Let me ask you, first, do you still make the quarterly report on the implementation of the TRC Report to the Legislature?

President Sirleaf: No, because it was very clear that once the Independent National Human Rights Commission took office and became functional, they are supposed to now take charge of implementation. However, we know we've had some trouble at the INCHR, and we're trying to reorganize and reform them. But some work has been done on all of the recommendations in the TRC Report. I will be speaking to that, July 26, on the progress that has been made and how we go forward. But I'm very pleased that... You know, sometimes when you talk about reconciliation, all people can think about is TRC Report; and with the TRC Report, all they can think about are two things: the lustration and the war crimes court – that's all. But there're over 150 recommendations in that Report. A lot of those recommendations have being implemented. But we're going to get all the facts and we're going to inform the public on that.

DG Nmah: Former City Mayor, Mary Broh. I heard that some people on the Bye-Pass were going to get some T-shirts to stand and ask her to come back. There's been this clamor. Is there going to be a reconsideration?

President Sirleaf: Mary is a good person. She did well for the City; she served well. I hope she will continue to serve.

DG Nmah: In that same capacity?

President Sirleaf: I hope so. I hope so.

DG Nmah: Well, we're about wrapping it up with Madam President. There are some who say that, well, four years down the line is quite some long time; some people believe that you're not going to end this term.

President Sirleaf: Let them sit down there! You think all of the work I've been doing to make sure the roads get built – from Redlight to Gbarnga, from Gbarnga to Ganta, from Ganta to Zwedru, from Zwedru to Harper, from Gbarnga to Konia], from Konia to Mendicorma, to Vahun, to Belleh Yallah; to bring the lights; to bring all those things there. I finish working hard, and the real thing coming now, you think somebody else coming to say, 'O, I the one who...I worked for it!

DG Nmah: (laughing) Madam President, I have not seen this part of you...this has taken me off. This is the humorous part of you. Are you serious?

President Sirleaf: Somebody else will come now, when I finish doing all that thing, and they will come and say, 'O, you know, I built that road to Gbarnga.' Yes, you didn't build that road; that me who did it.

DG Nmah: Maybe 2015 you'll say, 'OK, I've done this, let somebody else end it?'

President Sirleaf: I will finish doing my work. We'll have a good election in 2017; we'll try to make it free, transparent, credible, whatever; Liberian people's choice will be respected. I will take all those new roads and all the lights in Monrovia, then I will give it to that person who the Liberian people want, and say, you take it from here.

DG Nmah: You look energized. I'm sure most of the time when you hear it, that gives you more energy to move forward. But, Madam President, coming up in the next few months, what are some of the plans and the agenda? We're starting July 1; I'm sure August we can get on our next conversation, but in the next few months, what should Liberians be looking up to from their President? What going to be happening on your plate?

President Sirleaf: Oh, good things, and I want Liberians to join in celebrating the Independence Day, on July 26. It's being celebrated in three counties, as everybody knows: Bomi, Gbarpolu and Grand Cape Mount; some things are going on in all of those places. Many people say, 'O, not much,' but when we bring the celebration to these places, we do not say that the place will be transformed, and all of a sudden it will be a modern place. But you will see new things – some roads, new buildings, private people who are doing their own things to uplift their county. We're going to start very early because it's going to be a long thing. The Buchanan road is not a part of the celebration, but it's time for us to dedicate the Buchanan road – that very high-class road that goes straight into Buchanan City and on. We hope to dedicate it sometime this month, as a kick-off. We're gonna to go to Belle Yallah, and this time we will not walk, we're driving to Belle Yallah.

It's not part of those three counties, but I'm going to go to Vahun before the "26". We will reach the Sierra Leone border; that's a road that has never been made. Vahun did not even connect with Liberia; they used to do all their transactions with Sierra Leone. But Vahun road is finished; we're going to go to Vahun. And then, we'll be dedicating one of the first mini-hydros in the Bolahun area. We will go to Vahun, and coming back, we will go to Bolahun Mission; the hydro is somewhere in that area. All of that will be part of between now and the end of July.

July 30 is when we will go to Bong Mines and see the operations there, when China Union will show us how they're ready now to start their exports of iron ore. So this July month is going to be full of good things, and I would like to invite as many citizens as can to be a part of this. Get outside of Monrovia join us in some of these places, and see the things we do.

Sometimes people say, 'O, you're heartless!' How can people say that? Heartless? Think again. Go talk to the people who work with me. Go talk to the people in the village. Go talk to the people when I travel. Go talk to the many students that I'm supporting. And I'm so glad that one of them – people remember Bobby Tapson, the journalist who died. Bobby Tapson was his name; he used to write during the

campaign of 2005. He died in 2006. His son was just about eight years old. I'm glad to say that next year, he will be coming out of Ricks, with my support. Let the journalists know I take good care of good journalists.

DG Nmah: Madam President, I think we have come a long way. Liberians across the country, we'd like to thank all of you. But before you go, Liberians across the country, now Liberians across the world – those in the United States had to be woken up this morning to listen to you. We will be back next month, but as you leave today, getting prepared, what is the message you will leave on their minds as we get towards the celebration of the "26"?

President Sirleaf: That it's a time for celebration: celebrate your country; celebrate your own contribution to the development of your country; celebrate the progress, recognize the challenges; be a part of identifying the solution to the problem, the approaches to meet the challenges. Re-sensitize and renew your sense of patriotism and responsibility. Love your country. That's required, that's fundamental to progress. To all of our citizens, join us in nation-building. Join us in the processes of change. Make a little bit of sacrifice, for the good of yourself and the good of your country.

DG Nmah: Thank you very much, Madam President, for finding time to join us on The Super Morning Show this morning. Let me thank everybody for making this program a success: our producer, and to Sorbor George, who's been sitting in; my name is Darryl; God willing, I'll be here on Friday to serve you breakfast again. Till I see you again, thanks to Fabric Radio, Truth FM, Love FM, Radio Monrovia, our Community Radio partners across the country, especially to UNMIL Radio; and to you, Gerald Cummings, all the way in Minnesota, thank you very much for bringing this across the world on globalafriCRadio.com; we appreciate your partnership, and we're gonna be here to stay, every day, wherever you are, across the world, just tune in to globalafriCRadio and you will hear LBS live every time during the day. Thank you, and till we see again, Shalom, Peace and Life to you!