

Highlights of the President's Daily Activities

Wednesday, October 1, 2014

- President Sirleaf today held a meeting with a delegation of the Health Education and Relief through Teaching (HEARTT) Foundation and its collaborating partner, AmeriCares. The delegation included Heartt Foundation's interim executive director Masmina Sirleaf, the director of Emergency Response, AmeriCare Garrett Ingoglia, and assessment team member Brian Hoyer.

HEARTT Foundation's interim executive director Masmina Sirleaf, informed the Liberian leader that the visit was aimed at briefing her about HEARTT and AmeriCares' intervention in West Africa and Liberia in particular in light of the outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus disease now ravaging the sub-region.

For her part, President Sirleaf welcomed HEARTT and AmeriCares to Liberia and recognized their local partners, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and the Monrovia Rotary Club. She reflected that she has followed HEARTT's work in Liberia long before the start of her administration and described their work as "a good example of Liberians helping Liberia".

President Sirleaf also recognized that the group has been a major contributor to Liberia's healthcare services which ensured that doctors performed critical free operations at the JFK Medical Center. "Even though the voluntary doctors left Liberia due to the Ebola outbreak, we are happy to know that HEARTT, AmeriCares and their local partners are still here providing and distributing essentially needed medical supplies and protective equipment to Ebola Treatment Centers and other regular health facilities," she pointed out.

- President Sirleaf also met with the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Ebola Response. Mr. Anthony Banbury, who is resident in Accra, Ghana, was accompanied to President Sirleaf's Foreign Ministry office by the head of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Ms. Karen Langren.

Mr. Bonbury informed President Sirleaf that the new UN agency, UN Mission on Ebola Response, as part of its terms of reference, will fill in gaps in the Ebola fight in consultation with the national strategy in order to prevent any form of duplication of an already existing strategy. He promised President Sirleaf that the UN Ebola fight would be integrated into the country's national plan and strategy and agreed with the President of Liberian ownership with full partners' participation tapping on their expertise.

In response, President Sirleaf welcomed the creation of the UN Ebola Response office in Accra and encouraged the office to promote information exchange on the virus among affected countries. Besides, he urged the agency to support government in strengthening its rural outreach initiatives. She named bad roads and under reporting on the status of Ebola in the rural settings which has prevented government from moving in those areas to arrest any further spread.

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf today met with United States Government delegation led by Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Lumpkin. Other members of the delegation included United States Agency for International Development (USAID) assistant administrator, Nancy Linborg; DART team leader, William Berger; Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Thomas Kenyon; policy advisor, Denise Marsh; USAID mission director, John Mark Winfield; and economic officer, Eric Johnson. They were accompanied by US Ambassador Deborah Malac.

During the meeting, the US Assistant Secretary of Defense told the Liberian leader that the delegation's presence in Monrovia was in further demonstration of the United States Government's commitment to help Liberia fight the deadly virus and will remain closely engaged as all fight together in eradicating the disease.

He said United States sees the eradication of the Ebola virus disease as paramount and urgent and will work with the Liberian authorities in achieving this goal. Mr. Linborg hailed President Sirleaf's international engagement since the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic in Liberia.

Briefing the delegation earlier, President Sirleaf said government in collaboration with national and international partners has now formulated a common strategy which is working well. She however informed the US delegation that Liberia would love to take ownership of the process with support of the international community which she said will go a long way in future eventualities particularly in health care delivery.

President Sirleaf said Liberia has begun to see progress with the support of the international community and is eager to see stabilization of the situation thereby resuscitating the economy that has been hardly hit by the epidemic.

Finance and Development Planning Minister-designate Amara Konneh and Defense Minister Brownie Samukai, respectively briefed the delegation on the economic outlook and Armed Force of Liberia (AFL) involvement in the Ebola fight.

Minister Konneh thanked the US Government for the US\$5 million dollar budget support as health workers' incentives but pleaded for more budgetary support as that amount would only take the health workers' incentive payment up to January 2015.