

Statement by
HER EXCELLENCY ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF
President of the Republic of Liberia
At the Summit of the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)
Beijing, Peoples Republic of China
November 5, 2006

Excellency President Hu Jintao and Chair of the Forum;
Excellency Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Co-Chair of the Forum;
Excellencies, Heads of State and Governments;
Excellency the Chairman and Members of the African Union;
Excellency, the Chairman and Members of ECOWAS;
Excellencies Ambassadors;

On behalf of the people of Liberia, I wish to thank His Excellency President Hu of the People's Republic of China, and to say how pleased we are for the opportunity to participate in this historic event.

We are also grateful for the very warm welcome and hospitality we have received here in Beijing and in the Provinces that we have visited since our arrival. The government and People of Liberia would like to give recognition to the growing bonds of friendship between China and Liberia and to the increasing level of assistance which our country receives in support of our development agenda. The areas of cooperation include agriculture, infrastructure, medical services, education, communications and debt relief. We look forward to expansion to other areas such as joint cooperation in exploration of our natural resources – minerals, forestry and hydrocarbon.

We note additionally the support from China in the processes in the Security Council that has led to the lifting of certain sanctions on our country and for the important role played by Chinese contingents in the United Nations peacekeeping force which provides stability to our country as we embark upon the restructuring and professionalization of our own security forces.

Mr. Chairman, around this table can be found the best and the brightest, the old and the young, the experienced and the untried of African leaders – all collectively representing the hope and the future for Africa's development, for Africa's economic and political independence. We have and indeed we must take primary responsibility for Africa's development, giving due recognition to NEPAD which calls not only for a compact between Africa and its external partners but also a compact between African governments and their people in terms of the exchange of all tenets of good governance, accountability, transparency, respect for basic freedoms and human rights, participation and efficiency in the allocation of resources.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Colleagues, although destroyed and weakened by years of conflict, Liberia does not come to the table seeking a handout. We do not ask for assistance based on humanitarian grounds.

We bring to the table the potential for substantial returns in the exploitation of our natural resources. We bring to the table a desire for strategic partnership based upon mutuality in interest and in benefits. We bring to the table the search for an effective response to our efforts and our commitment to work toward a new world economic order that ensures more balance in the use of

global resources, more equity in the benefits from international trade and globalization, more value added to our primary commodities, more respect for the integrity of home grown prescription to national malaise, more urgency in responses to the needs of post conflict countries. China has gone a long way in responding to these requirements.

The framework for cooperation in the several substantial areas of specific support as advanced yesterday morning in the statement of President Hu, will undoubtedly lead to a consolidation of the progress already made and an enhancement in the strategic partnership between China and Africa. We thank you for this. The details as carried in the draft Beijing Action Plan 2007/2009 will provide a good basis for the alignment of national policies and programs consistent with these partnership goals and objectives.

Finally, let me use the occasion of the presence of so many of our African brothers and leaders to say a big thank you from the Liberian people for the moral, technical, advisory and financial support which our country continues to receive from you. This support has enabled us to take the important first steps in the healing of the deep wounds of war and the renewal of our nation.

Mr. Chairman, Liberia congratulates you on the success of this Summit and commends Egypt for its agreement to host the next Forum Summit in Egypt in 2009.

I thank you.