

**REMARKS DELIVERED BY**  
**H.E. AUGUSTINE KPEHE NGAFUAN**  
**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**  
**AT**  
**OCCASION MARKING THE OPENING OF THE**  
**WORLD BANK LIBERIA COUNTRY OFFICE**  
**OLDEST CONGO, TOWN**  
**GERMANY COUMPOUND**  
**JUNE 16, 2014**

Mr. Yusupha Crookes, Country Director, World Bank Liberia Country Office;

Madam Inguna Dobraja,

World Bank Liberia Country Manager;

Honorable Amara Konneh,

Minister of Finance Republic of Liberia;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Representatives of International Organization;

Executives and Representatives of Banking Institutions:

Communicating progress in our society can sometimes be a difficult challenge, especially in a largely unsophisticated society such as ours. In such an environment indicators such as GDP growth or some other complex indicators do not avail much in driving home the point to John Q. Public that progress is being made. But interestingly our people react more positively to tangibles such as construction and pavement of roads, the construction of hospitals, clinics, schools, office buildings, etc. This explains why the Liberian people in their generality were elated when they witnessed nearly two weeks ago the dedication of the new NASSCORP building at ELWA Junction and reacted similarly to scores of previous dedication ceremonies that have seen new and glistening structures sprout up on Tubman Boulevard, an area once known for its ram-shackle, bullet-ridden, and paint-starved structures.

Today we come to cut the ribbons to the new facility that will house the country offices of the World Bank in Liberia. Ribbons are usually not cut to retrogression; they are cut to signify progress and forward march. In this case, the progress of transitioning from a smaller and cramped facility at Mamba Point to a bigger and better facility in Oldest Congo Town.

So on behalf of H. E. Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia who could not attend this ceremony due to prior competing engagement, I bring you warm greetings and extend the fullest appreciation and congratulations of the Government and people of Liberia to the Country Manager of the World Bank, Mrs. Inguna Dabraja, and through her, to the Country Director as well as the entire Management of the World Bank for this significant development.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This ceremony is significant in many respects. Firstly, the establishment of a new and better Office Complex in Liberia by the World Bank represents a huge vote of confidence in Liberia's future. By this you the WB has joined others including the British Government that last year reopened its Embassy in Liberia with resident Ambassador after almost two-decade of closure as well as Sweden, Qatar and Brazil, among others.

Secondly, the movement of the World Bank's Country Office from Mamba Point, which during the height of the our civil conflict became the exclusive diplomatic enclave to Oldest Congo Town, far away from the city center testifies to the ever deepening stability and security that Liberia has been experiencing for a little more than ten consecutive years. That diplomatic missions and international organizations can choose to have their offices in areas like Sinkor, Congo Town and elsewhere is a strong testimony has been made in bringing peace and stability to Liberia.

Madam Country Manager, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

It will be absolutely impossible to talk about Liberia's progress under this regime without dedicating at least a chapter to the critical and pivotal contribution of the World Bank. The World Bank has been with us from the very beginning and has remained a friend indeed to Liberia through thick and thin. In those difficult years at the inception of this regime, the World Bank assisted us through many and various interventions aimed at building the capacity of the government and responding to the ever growing aspirations of the Liberian people. The World Bank was the biggest partner that assisted us in crafting our development frameworks - the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (iPRS), the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), and the recent *Vision 2030* and its five-year slice – the *Agenda for Transformation (AFT)*. Besides helping to craft our development frameworks, the World Bank has been one of our biggest donors, funding critical interventions in practically all sectors of our country. Moreover, the

Bank was a key player followed by the IMF in driving Liberia through the HIPC debt relief process which eventually saw Liberia being unshackled from nearly US\$ 5 billion debt burden. Furthermore, the Bank contributed half of the funds which enabled the Liberian Government to clear commercial debts of over a US\$ 1 billion through commercial debt buy-back scheme.

The Bank has contributed to the rebuilding of critical infrastructure including the paving of Monrovia's streets, support to the Monrovia City Corporation under the Emergency Monrovia Urban Sanitation project (EMUS), which provided solid waste services and increased the volume of waste collected and disposed daily.

As a former Minister of Finance who co-chaired the Liberia Reconstruction Trust Fund (LRTF), a multi-donor trust fund, along with the former Country Manager of the World Bank, Dr. Ohene Owusu Nyanin, I would be remiss if I did not recognize the magnificent role the World Bank has played in administering the LRTF that has attracted huge amounts of donor funding to finance Liberia's infrastructure program. The Monrovia-Buchanan highway, perhaps the best highway in Liberia at this point; the pavement of the Monrovia-Ganta highway, which is underway, and a host of other projects have been financed from the LRTF. These infrastructural projects are not only bringing ease of transportation and a sense of decency but

have also helped to jumpstart the country's social and economic development and create the basis for economic expansion.

In the area of economic governance, the Bank has played a towering role aimed principally at building the capacity of public financial management. Notable among the many interventions of the Bank in this area include sponsorship to the Public Financial Management Unit (PFMU) at the Ministry of Finance, the Financial Management Training Program (FMTP), a customized master-degree program under the quadripartite sponsorship of the World Bank, the Ministry of Finance, the Civil Service Agency, and the University of Liberia aimed at producing quality manpower to render financial management services across the public sector. and the automation of public financial management processes, especially the introduction of the much-touted Integrated Financial Management System (IFMIS) in government.

I can never exhaust the list of positive contributions of the World Bank to Liberia's development, for it is endless. Since Liberia's reengagement with the World Bank Group after nearly two decades of sanctions, the confidence and mutual trust that characterize our relationship continue to wax stronger.

Madam Country Manager, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Madam Country Manger,

Looking into the future and now that you have a bigger and better working environment, we trust that the scope, scale, and quality of World Bank engagements in Liberia will continue to grow to the benefit of the Liberian people.

Before I conclude, I would like to me congratulate the distinguished and farsighted leadership of Dr. Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank Group, who has dedicated himself to working for international development and endeavoring to transform the lives of under-served people worldwide. Let me as well congratulate you Madam Country Manager and your predecessor Dr. Ohene Owusu Nyanin with whom I enjoyed very close professional relationship while I served as Minister of Finance as well as all of the hardworking staff of the World Bank Country Office.

May God bless the entire World Bank family for the numerous contributions to Liberia's development. I thank you.

## **CUTTING OF RIBBON**

Madam Country Manager, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of H.E. Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia and the government and people of the Republic Liberia I cut these ribbons to the World Bank's new Country Office as a testament to the World Bank Group's vote of confidence in Liberia's post-conflict recovery process and

entertain high optimism for our continued and increased future partnership.

Thank You.