

**The Joint Statement between the Republic of Liberia and Japan on the Occasion of
the Visit of Liberian President H.E. Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to Japan**

1. At the invitation of H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, H.E. Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, visited Japan from August 26 to 29, 2015 in order to attend the World Assembly for Women (WAW! 2015) in Tokyo.
2. President Sirleaf and Prime Minister Abe held a bilateral meeting in Tokyo on August 27, 2015. At the beginning of the meeting, Prime Minister Abe expressed his pleasure at President Sirleaf's fifth visit to Japan as the President of Liberia. Both leaders welcomed the fact that the longstanding friendly relations and close cooperation between the two countries had been further strengthened in recent years through frequent high-level dialogues between the two countries at various bilateral and multilateral diplomatic occasions.
3. Both leaders recognized the importance of securing the participation of women in a wide range of areas in society and decided to continue making substantial efforts and promoting mutual cooperation in order to encourage women to play active roles in society. Prime Minister Abe expressed his gratitude that President Sirleaf, who is the first democratically elected female Head of State in Africa and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her contribution to peace-building and empowerment of women, accepted the Government of Japan's invitation and decided to play an important role as a keynote speaker at WAW! 2015. President Sirleaf commended Japan's domestic and international efforts for "creating a society in which all women can shine."
4. Both leaders expressed their determination to further strengthen their efforts to deepen the relationship between the two countries. They recognized that despite the challenges faced by women, they remain the bedrock of the world economy, and affirmed the commitment to strengthen cooperation and partnership for women's participation in society. Both leaders reaffirmed their determination to coordinate and cooperate especially in the following areas.

I. Rebuilding and Strengthening of Health Systems

5. Both leaders recalled the unprecedented outbreak of Ebola virus disease in West

Africa and reaffirmed the close cooperation between the two countries to tackle this threat to international security. President Sirleaf explained Liberia's efforts to date to fight against Ebola virus disease in her country, and highly valued and appreciated Japan's assistance in the fight against the Ebola virus disease. Prime Minister Abe praised President Sirleaf's leadership in ending the Ebola outbreak in Liberia.

6. Both leaders shared the view that the focus of their actions was shifting from the emergency response to the Ebola outbreak to the medium- to long-term recovery. They also recognized that the rebuilding and strengthening of health systems was an urgent issue to be tackled since the vulnerability of the existing health systems was revealed by the Ebola outbreak. President Sirleaf explained that in light of this recognition, Liberia drew up the Economic Stability and Recovery Plan (ESRP) and started scaling up the efforts for the recovery of the country. Prime Minister Abe stated that the Government of Japan would continue its assistance to the countries seriously affected by the Ebola outbreak in order to strengthen their health systems and reconstruct their societies and economies. This is consistent with Japan's global health policy including the promotion of universal health coverage (UHC) which Japan has advocated to date. Prime Minister Abe also explained that Japan's official development assistance to Liberia had already been restarted after being temporarily suspended due to the Ebola outbreak. He further explained that, in addition to the already implemented assistances totaling approximately 180 million US dollars for the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, Japan would offer assistance to Liberia including technical assistance to rebuild health systems and the Food Assistance Programme through the World Food Programme (WFP). Both leaders recognized that investing in education and health would be the key to building the capacity and resilience to withstand any large scale future health crises or epidemics, and expressed their determination to work together.

II. Consolidation of Peace

7. Both leaders recalled the severe damage caused by the Liberian Civil War which lasted for 14 years and reaffirmed close cooperation between the two countries to consolidate peace and recover from the civil war in Liberia. President Sirleaf explained Liberia's efforts for consolidating peace in her country and stabilizing the region. She also expressed gratitude for Japan's longstanding assistance for peace and reconstruction in Liberia. Prime Minister Abe commended the leadership of President Sirleaf for maintaining peace after the end of the civil war. Both leaders

shared the view that the stability of Liberia was critical to maintain and strengthen the peace and stability in West Africa, and affirmed the importance of strengthening cooperation hereafter to stabilize the whole region. They recognized the importance of strengthening Liberia's security sector in the wake of UNMIL's drawdown, and President Sirleaf called for Japan's support to capacitate Liberia's security sector.

8. Both leaders affirmed the importance of universal values shared and practiced by both countries including democracy and the rule of law. Both leaders shared the view that unilateral changes to the status quo by force cannot be tolerated. From this perspective, Prime Minister Abe explained that Japan was willing to contribute even more actively in securing peace and stability regionally and globally based on the idea of Proactive Contribution to Peace. President Sirleaf appreciated Japan's post-war contributions made as a peace-loving nation and expressed support for the idea of Proactive Contribution to Peace.

III. Strengthening of Economic Relations

9. Both leaders shared the view that private sector-led growth and job creation were essential for Liberia to recovery and growth. They also reaffirmed that both the ESRP, Liberia's recovery plan from the Ebola outbreak, and the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V), which was Japan's initiative, attached importance to the role of private sector. President Sirleaf expressed her expectation that Japanese companies would invest and expand their business in Liberia, a country rich in natural resources. Prime Minister Abe stated that Liberia has a high potential as a future destination for Japanese companies. The two leaders expressed their hopes that efforts to promote Japanese companies' operation in Liberia, which were forced to stop temporarily due to the Ebola outbreak, could be gradually resumed as the country recovered from the damages inflicted by the disease. President Sirleaf stated that infrastructural development is crucial to economic transformation and growth in Liberia, and called on the Government of Japan to continue to help Liberia in its efforts for infrastructure development.

IV. Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD)

10. Both leaders welcomed the holding of the next TICAD summit next year, for the first time in Africa and expressed their determination to further strengthen

cooperation between Liberia and Japan for the success of this meeting. Prime Minister Abe expressed that Japan would adopt unique approach to realizing human security through cooperation including quality infrastructure investment and human resource development at the next TICAD summit. President Sirleaf welcomed this idea.

V. Cooperation in the International Arena

11. Regarding the reform of the United Nations Security Council including the start of the text-based intergovernmental negotiations, both leaders shared the view to enhance cooperation for achieving concrete outcomes this year, which celebrates the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Prime Minister Abe expressed his gratitude for Liberia's support for Japan's candidature for its non-permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council.
12. Both leaders decided to strengthen cooperation in a wide range of issues in the international arena such as the sustainable use of marine resources including whales, resolution of the human rights issues in North Korea including the abductions of Japanese citizens, promotion of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and establishment of the "World Tsunami Day" at the United Nations.

Tokyo, 27 August, 2015