

Upcoming elections will signal Liberia on 'irreversible course' towards democracy, President Sirleaf tells UN

19 September 2017 – Addressing the United Nations General Assembly just 22 days ahead of historic elections in Liberia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf today said the polls will signal the “irreversible course” that the country has embarked upon to consolidate its young, post-conflict democracy.

As she recalled that 11 years ago, in September of 2006, she had addressed the Assembly as the newly elected President of Liberia and the first woman to be democratically elected as head of State on the African continent, Ms. Johnson Sirleaf said the coming elections, which will mark the end of her time in office, will pave the way for the next generations of Liberians to lead the country in to the future.

“The [legislative and presidential polls] will mark the first time in 73 years that political power will be handed over peacefully, and democratically, from one elected leader to another,” she said, adding: Democracy is on the march in Liberia and, I believe, on an irreversible path forward on the African continent.”

She said she had assumed office after 25 years of development reversal which was further compounded by a 15-year civil war. “We have made great progress and laid the foundation for the next democratic government. We have reshaped the Armed Forces of Liberia and the Liberia National Police, professionalized our customs and immigration services and small Liberian Coast Guard.”

Further, previously dysfunctional public institutions now have the capacity to respond to the needs of our citizens through decentralized county service centers with ownership by strong local governments. “And from the tragedy of the health crisis, we are strengthening our healthcare systems, prioritizing prevention and delivering capacity at the community level,” said Ms. Johnson Sirleaf, underscoring that Liberia has enjoyed the benefit of multilateralism through full support provided by the UN, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States ([ECOWAS](#)).

“Liberia’s transformation was powered by a world community that made a shared commitment to deliver peace to a country, and a subregion, beset by civil conflict and cross border destabilization,” she said, noting that the UN and its partner nations were of “one mind,” and from that global unity, a new Liberian democratic state was born.

“Liberia is a post conflict success story. It is your post conflict success story,” stated Ms. Johnson Sirleaf, urging the UN and its Member States to continue to lead, to spread the values of democracy, human rights, and good governance while strengthening solidarity for economic transformation and social resilience. Such leadership should extend to full implementation of

the [2030 Agenda](#) and the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), as well as on UN reform, including of the Security Council.

[Full statement available here](#)

All nations should embrace their sovereignty, US President tells world leaders at UN Assembly

19 September 2017 – Noting that the present world is one that offers both immense promise and great peril, the President of the United States told global leaders at the United Nations that it was “entirely up to us” to either lift the world to new heights, or let it fall into a valley of disrepair.

“To overcome the perils of the present and to achieve the promise of the future, we must begin with the wisdom of the past,” Donald Trump said today at the general debate of the 72nd session of General Assembly.

“Our success depends on a coalition of strong and independent nations that embrace their sovereignty to promote security, prosperity, and peace for themselves and for the world.”

Noting that the US would remain a “great friend” to the world, and especially to its allies, the President underscored that his country can no longer be taken advantage of, and that he would defend US interests above all else.

“But in fulfilling our obligations to our own nations, we also realize that it’s in everyone’s interest to seek a future where all nations can be sovereign, prosperous, and secure,” he noted.

He also called for greater reforms at the UN, urging the Organization to focus more on results, rather than bureaucracy and processes. He also called for more fair cost sharing among UN Member States.

Turning to the crisis emanating from the nuclear weapons programme of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), Mr. Trump underscored if the US is forced to defend itself or its allies, “we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea.” Recalling recent resolutions adopted unanimously by the Security Council, he urged that country to pursue the path of denuclearization.

In his remarks, he also criticized the Iranian Government and called on the country’s leadership to halt its support of terrorists, begin serving its people, and respect the sovereign rights of its neighbours. He also noted the

need for de-escalation of the conflict in Syria, as well as on sanctions imposed by the US on Cuba and Venezuela.

Also in his remarks, the President spoke of economic progress made by the United States since his election as well as the progress it has made in terms of healthcare, women's empowerment and military strength.

International solidarity key to address global challenges, urges Nigerian President Buhari

19 September 2017 – Highlighting the importance of international cooperation to address many pressing challenges around the globe, Muhammadu Buhari, the President of Nigeria, urged world leaders to sustain such collaboration, particularly in instances where there resources are insufficient and capacity weak at the national level.

Noting, in particular, the “exemplary show of solidarity” by the international community in confronting threats posed by the Boko Haram and Al Qaida terrorist groups in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin region, he urged greater cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in conflict prevention and management.

“The UN should continue to take primary leadership of the maintenance of international peace and Security by providing, in a predictable and sustainable manner, adequate funding and other enablers to regional initiatives and peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council,” said President Buhari, [addressing](#) the general debate at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly.

The President of Nigeria also noted that widening inequalities between societies and gaps between rich and poor nations contribute to increasing instability and called for a continued focus on addressing these challenges.

Further in his remarks, he also urged greater efforts for a peaceful solution to the nuclear weapons development programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and noted that his country proposed a Security-Council led UN delegation, which should include members from all regions, to urgently engage with the country's leadership.

He also called on all UN Member States to ratify, without delay, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which will open for signature tomorrow.

In conclusion, President Buhari reiterated his country's commitment to

continue to support the UN in all its efforts, including the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

[Full statement available here](#)

'We need more diplomacy, more negotiating' Brazilian President tells UN Assembly

19 September 2017 – The President of Brazil, the first Head of State traditionally to address the annual United Nations General Assembly's general debate, pledged today that his country will sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons – reiterating that the nuclear powers undertake additional disarmament.

"Brazil was among the drafters of the Treaty. It will be a historical moment," President Michel Temer said. "We must acknowledge that there are still issues in the agenda of peace and security that give rise to serious apprehension," he added, noting the recent nuclear and missile tests on the Korean Peninsula, which Brazil condemns "with the utmost vehemence."

In an address that covered a wide range of issues, including trade, development, conflicts and the refugee crisis, Mr. Temer told the Assembly that while Organization's aspirations have not been entirely fulfilled, the UN has represented the prospect for a more just world – one of peace and prosperity, saying "We need more diplomacy, more negotiating, [...] we need the UN more than before."

Maintaining the importance of multilateralism, the Brazilian President advocated for an expanded Security Council aligned with the reality of the twenty-first century, "to listen to the will of the overwhelming majority of the Assembly."

Turning to the [2030 Agenda](#), Mr. Temer said: "Brazil's commitment to sustainable development is a deep-rooted one. It permeates our public policies and our actions abroad." He pointed to the country's contributions, including its commitment to the [Paris Agreement](#), and highlighted that Brazil is at the forefront of a low carbon economy in which clean and renewable energy accounts for more than 40 per cent of its energy matrix – three times more of the world's average. "We are leaders in hydropower and bioenergy," he stressed.

Noting that Brazil has the largest tropical forest on the planet, he announced that the country's efforts in combatting deforestation have resulted in a more than 20 per cent reduction in the Amazonian region, saying

“We are back on the right track and on this track we shall remain.”

Also in South America, Mr. Temer pointed to the deteriorating human rights situation in Venezuela, saying that Brazil stands with the Venezuela people and “have welcomed thousands of migrants and refugees” from that country.

[Full statement available here](#)

DR Congo: UN agency urges Government to protect refugees after tragic killings

19 September 2017 – The United Nations refugee agency is urging the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to ensure protection for refugees and asylum-seekers following last week’s shooting incident in Kamanyola in which at least 39 people were killed and 94 injured.

“This is a devastating tragedy. It should never have happened,” said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi.

According to a [press release](#) from the Office of the High Commissioner (UNHCR), Mr. Grandi welcomed the announcement from Congolese officials to launch an inquiry into the incident and called for it to be detailed.

The incident took place on 15 September after Congolese soldiers fired live rounds at Burundian protestors in the eastern part of the country, many of whom UNHCR believes were refugees and asylum-seekers. The protest, reported to be initially peaceful, allegedly started after a small group of Burundians were detained by Congolese authorities, creating fears they were going to be deported to Burundi.

The dead included Burundian men, women and one child. The incident also resulted in the death of one Congolese soldier, with six others wounded.

“We need to establish facts and determine responsibility and make sure that such an incident never happens again,” Mr. Grandi said.

UNHCR immediately deployed a team to the area on Saturday where it is working with the medical staff of a partner organization in the local hospital to provide life-saving medical assistance to the injured.

The UNHCR team on the ground reports a tense situation with over 2,400 Burundians seeking protection next to the UN peacekeeping mission’s small base in Kamanyola.

DRC hosts more than 43,700 refugees who have arrived from Burundi since 2015.