

**STATEMENT BY HER EXCELLENCY ELLEN JOHNSON-SIRLEAF ON BEHALF OF
THE PRESIDENTS OF THE MRU NATIONS AT THE IINTERNATIONAL EBOLA
CONFERENCE, FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 2015 – NEW YORK**

- **His Excellence Ban Ki Moon, SG. UN**
His Excellency President Alpha Conde
- **His Excellency, President Ernest Bai Koroma**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

On behave of the Heads of States of the Mano River Union; I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for this innovative initiative and great efforts you made to organize this conference which is the conclusion of conferences of Brussels and Washington.

We, the Heads of States of Mano River Union, wish to thank the International Community for giving us this opportunity to share the experiences of our three Ebola-affected nations: Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia and our hopes for socioeconomic recovery both as individual Mano River Union (MRU) nation states, and collectively as a sub-region, with this important group of world institutional leaders.

Each of our countries faced significant economic challenges in 2014 and continues to do so as a result of sharp decline in global prices of our key exports.

With the onslaught of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemic, the challenge quickly became a national and sub-regional crisis of unprecedented proportions. Our health systems collapsed, contractors, consultants, and investors left our countries; farms and markets ceased; trade and travel contracted; fiscal balances weakened; revenue declined; and expenditure increased largely on health operations. Moreover, our economies contracted and projected growth declined from 4.5% to 1.3% in Guinea; 11.3% to 6% in Sierra Leone and 5.9 % to 0.4% in Liberia.

As national governments and as a sub-region, we took the challenge head on – making difficult decisions that ran contrary to long standing tradition, mobilizing the international community to recognize the disease as a global threat, organizing our best technical professionals to oversee our respective disease management systems, and importantly empowering our communities who were determined to protect their lives and their livelihoods.

Today, we take pride in that Ebola cases in our different countries have declined compared to where we were several months ago.

We would like to thank all of you in this meeting and the others around the world who stood with us as strong bilateral and multilateral partners in the success that we have attained in this fight so far - the size, timeliness and innovative nature of your supports to our nations and sub-region have been truly unprecedented and made the difference in the effectiveness of our response.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The impact of Ebola on our economies have been profound – declines in growth, public revenues, private consumptions, investment, employment, agriculture production and productivity.

The most important long term response to Ebola therefore rest in plans and strategies for economic recovery.

On the 3rd Extraordinary Summit of the Mano River Union held in Conakry on the 28th of June 2015 on the Sub-regional Post Ebola Socio-Economic Recovery Program, we adopted the priorities and costs of the sub-regional and Ebola-Recovery Program, as well as the Institutional and Financing Framework to ensure effective implementation with a view to returning the worst affected Member States to normalcy and resilience.

The sub-regional plan is clustered into two levels: level one is estimated at US\$1.76 billion, focusing on (i) health, water, sanitation and hygiene; (ii) governance, peace and security; (iii) agriculture, fisheries and food security; (iv) gender, youth and social protection; (v) programme management and monitoring, and vi) private sector development. As for the level two was estimated at US\$2.24 billion focusing on (i) sub-regional roads ;(ii) energy access; and (iii) information and communication technology.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As for the Institutional and Financing Framework to ensure effective implementation, we have decided to establish a single Mano River Union Consolidated Ebola Recovery Trust Fund (CERTF), with allocation and disbursement arrangements to be determined by the MRU in consultation with Partners;

We urge our partners to adhere to the principles of the New Deal and the Mutual Accountability Framework.

We renewed our call on the International Community for the cancellation of the debt of 3.16 billion and the direct budget support to the affected countries.

Finally, we re-echoed our call on the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the United Nations System to support the establishment of a Special Delivery Unit within the MRU

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Ladies and gentlemen,

In the spirit of your continuous support for the implementation of both national and sub-regional plans, we wish to inform you that the gap of financing is estimated at **7.2** billion US dollars. In which **4** billion will finance the sub regional plan.

There is no doubt that the resources required are significant. We believe however that this can be achieved through existing bilateral and multilateral commitments supplemented by the allocation of additional resources.

Is this asking too much? We say no because, a strong Mano River Union can be a formidable force for recovery and resilience in the sub-region; a productive, progressive and peaceful Mano River Union which would result from your support will attract private sector investment and capital in our natural resource with ensuring sustainability in our effort and positive impact on regional stability and world trade.

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Is this asking too much? We say no because, a strong Mano River Union can be a formidable force for recovery and resilience in the sub-region; a productive, progressive and peaceful Mano River Union which would result from your support will attract private sector investment and capital in our natural resource with ensuring sustainability in our effort and positive impact on regional stability and world trade.

For that, we ask you, our partners, to join us in developing the detailed framework plan for implementation arrangements of the plans with the respect of priorities in the national and sub-regional plans. On our part, we commit to more efficient allocation of our own resources to a conducive environment for the private sector, to full accountability and to democracy and the rule of law.

WE THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY DURING THESE VERY DIFFICULT TIMES.