

6 March 2007  
MR/E10/07



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## ***UNU Will Host Lecture by Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf***

**Event:** Lecture by H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia  
**Topic:** “The Role of Women in African Development”  
**Date/Time:** 13 March 2007 (Tuesday), 15:00–16:30  
**Venue:** U Thant International Conference Hall, UN House, Tokyo  
**Organizer:** United Nations University

- On 13 March, UNU will host a lecture by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia. President Sirleaf will focus her lecture on how women contribute to African development, and how the mainstreaming of gender equity can further enhance the abilities of communities to support local and national progress.
- In recent years, the Japanese government has made aid for African nations and support for Africa's development a major part of its international policy. The Japanese public's perception of Africa, however, is shaped mainly by news reports of conflict, poverty, and humanitarian crises.
- To better inform public knowledge about the everyday reality of life in Africa, UNU in Tokyo has been providing a platform for eminent African leaders to speak on topics of current interest. To name but a few, African speakers at UNU in 2006 included Festus G. Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana; Alpha Oumar Konare, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union and former President of Mali; Getrude Mongella, President of the Pan-African Parliament; and Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda.
- President Sirleaf's lecture will be followed by comments from Prof. Francisco Komlavi Seddoh, Adviser to the Rector on African Issues, UNU, and Professor and Honorary Rector, University of Lomé (Togo), and by a question and answer session moderated by UNU Rector Hans van Ginkel.
- For those unable to attend, this event will be “webcast” live (and archived) online at <http://c3.unu.edu/unuvideo/?122>.
- Simultaneous Japanese-English interpretation will be provided.

### ***About the speaker***

- With her election as President of the Republic of Liberia in January 2006, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became Africa's first democratically elected female head of state.
- President Sirleaf holds a Master of Public Administration degree from Harvard University (USA). After graduation she returned to Liberia, where she worked in the Ministry of Finance.
- With the overthrow of the government of Liberia by Samuel Doe in 1980, she went into exile in Kenya, where she worked for the Citibank group, and later moved to the USA.
- She returned to Liberia in 1997, working as an economist for the Citibank group and the World Bank. She first supported the rebellion against President Samuel Doe, and went on opposing Charles Taylor when she ran against him in the 1997 presidential elections. Following Taylor's resignation and exile in 2003, she played a substantive role in the transitional government, and was elected as Liberia's President in November 2005.
- As President, she has worked actively to reduce corruption, boost private investment and build support from international donors, as well as to further empower women in all aspects of Liberian life.

Media representatives are cordially invited to attend this seminar. To confirm your attendance, please contact Naoko Yano, UNU Office of Communications (tel: 03-5467-1311; e-mail: [media@unu.edu](mailto:media@unu.edu)).