

## **Speech: Delivered by the Vice President of Liberia on behalf of The President of the Republic of Liberia on October 5, 2012 at CRC Symposia**

Let me extend thanks for this invitation to us to be part of this Consultative and Interactive Forum, engaging political parties, civil society organizations, stakeholders and partners.

The President, Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, will have me convey to you warmest greetings and good wishes for productive interactions with the stakeholders here assembled.

I do not doubt that you are very conscious of the herculean responsibility you have been given. With the caliber of citizen you are, manifested in the character and reputation that each of you has built for yourself over the years, we are convinced the Liberian people are looking up to quality of work that will defy suspicion and second guessing.

We were all witnesses of the rancor that accompanied this nation's most recent attempt at revising our organic law. Received by a huge overcast of apprehension, the lack of trust, and weighed down by deep suspicion, many of our compatriots failed to grasp the very genuine intentions that brought forth the concrete efforts at our first process to amend our Constitution.

Some of you may recall that nearly all of the Talk Shows had their telephone line buzzing with so many of our people clamoring to make their views heard. Many so easily found themselves paralyzed in their analysis of conspiracy theories, leaving very little room for camaraderie in the art of comparing notes on national issues.

Be it as it was, we managed to emerge out of that not-so-pleasant exercise, with our body polity intact and our hopes still high. Also, nearly a year has elapsed since, and we all have cooled our heads and recollected ourselves. And even now, we can see that even long after that, there are still reverberations of the popular yearning for a more sober re-look at our Constitution.

It has been well established and there is no doubt in our mind, that the Liberian Constitution is an outstanding document worthy of serving as the road map for any nation. But the reality is that times and conditions are compelling us to take a closer look at our current realities vis-à-vis our organic law. The aspiration of our people, we have reasoned, is that with the elections, and the accompanying effects, behind us, we will now, more than ever before, find even more justifiable reason to sit and reason together as a people with a common destiny.

That is why, in her Annual Message delivered before the 53<sup>rd</sup> Legislature last January, our President saw it her national duty to rekindle the hopes of the Liberian people in the democratic course this nation has embarked upon.

And that accounts for why the President underscored the need for us to construct the pillars on which our new found peace and stability stand on a solid foundation grounded in our unshakable commitment to protecting and upholding our democratic principles, rather than solely relying on our armed forces.

President Sirleaf thus declared, and I quote, “This is why, in the years ahead, we want Liberia to become one of Africa’s strongest democracies. To begin with, we will bring all voices together in a National Forum to reform our Constitution and reconcile our politics.”

True to this optimistic desire of hers, the President in late August this year took the courageous step of enthusiastically announcing the constitution of this honorable committee.

***After the speech by the Vice President, he launched the Constitution Review Committee (CRC) on behalf of Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia and plainly declared the Session of the Interactive Forum formally opened.***