



"Rape Cases Must Claim the Attention of All"

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President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf says the increase in rape cases in the country is a major concern which must claim the attention of all women groups in the country, particularly the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL).

The Association, the President said, must take a stronger role in making its presence felt in rape cases in the country. Women lawyers President, Johnson-Sirleaf noted, must reach out to victims of rape and identify with them. The President assured the women that government would support any campaign aimed at curtailing rape in the society.

The Liberian President was speaking Tuesday at a local hotel in Monrovia when she addressed participants attending a workshop under the auspices of the Hunt Alternative Fund. The two-day workshop is intended to enhance the leadership skills of women.

A visiting female Senator from Rwanda, Aloysie Inyumba, who also addressed the participants, highlighted her country's experience and urged Liberian women to remain resolute in their drive to address issues affecting the welfare of women in the country. The Rwandan Senator, who is in the country as guest of President Ellen-Johnson-Sirleaf, Monday, delivered a goodwill message to the Liberian leader from President Paul Kigame.

Meanwhile, the workshop, under the Initiative for Inclusive Security, is recommending the promotion of women issues in the areas of security sector reform, Education, Crime and Justice, Health, Economic Empowerment, Community Development, and Social Support. The participants, among other recommendations, called for an increase for women in security sector reform, by engaging women-led civil society organizations in transforming public perception of the military and police, further disarmament, and recruiting women for the armed forces and police.

The women are also calling for the promotion of girls' education through scholarships focused particularly on increasing the number of women educators, trainers and agricultural extension workers.

The Hunt Fund is headed by the American Billionaire and Philanthropist, Ambassador Swanee Hunt, who is also the Director of Women in Public Policy at Harvard University in the United States.

In a related development, the American Philanthropist has announced the arrival in Liberia of over three-thousand books to be donated to the University of Liberia. Ambassador Hunt further stated that an additional four-thousand books are being shipped to Liberia from the University of Denver.

Making the disclosure Tuesday at the University of Liberia, Madam Swanee thanked President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf through whose persuasion the consignment was made possible. The American educator also thanked others who provided financial and organizational support in arranging for the books, including Representatives of other American Institutions, Lina Nealon, Sarah Kovner and Michelle Hovey.

The three thousand books came from the Harvard Littauer Library of Economics and Labor while the remaining three hundred came from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Also, the Hunt Alternative Fund says it would provide support to five women to attend the University of Liberia at a total cost of \$30,000.00 (thirty-thousand dollars) for four years. The Funding, Ambassador Hunt said, would cover tuition, transportation, room, board and books.

President Johnson-Sirleaf, who paid a surprise visit at the University to grace the occasion, was greeted by the Institution's President, Dr. Alhassan Conte and Faculty, as well as a cheering crowd of enthusiastic University students, some of whom shook hands with the President as she made her way to the Auditorium

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