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## UNDP, Gender Ministry Sign Agreement

**The Analyst** (Monrovia)

NEWS

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The Ministry of Gender and Development and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have signed an agreement with six civil society organizations in Liberia for the smooth implementation of a project titled: "Giving women a voice and leadership role in decision-making and peace building in Liberia".

The signing ceremony was held at the Gender and Development Ministry.

Gender Minister Varbah Gayflor signed for her ministry while UNDP Deputy Resident Representative for Programme, Maria-Threase Keating signed on behalf of the UNDP.

The six CSOs include Search for Common Ground, Center for the Promotion of Democracy, Liberia Democratic Institute, Young Women Christian Association of Liberia, Women and Children Development Association of Liberia and the National Youth Movement for Transparent Elections.

The project, which supports the national women empowerment agenda is being spearheaded by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and focuses on giving women access to micro finance facilities to help spur their contribution in national development.

The project will also contribute to the government efforts as reflected in the interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the focus toward the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Maria-Theresa Keating said activities under the current phase of the project will strive to ensure that the issue of gender mainstreaming as well as the empowerment of women remains high on the agenda of all Liberia institutions and that women's voices at the local level are respected and valued as an integral part of local development".

She said the activities would also promote gender responsive programming and create awareness on problems faced by women in society and issues of the girl child.

She said the project has a current funding of \$350,000 USD, which was made possible through the UNDP Democracy Governance Thematic Trust Fund in New York and UNDP Liberia resources.

The project will be implemented throughout Liberia. Speaking earlier, Gender and Development Minister Varbah Gayflor spoke highly of the engagement with UNDP in the realization of this phase of the project.

She said the project reinforces her ministry's commitment to the empowerment of women and children across the country. She challenged the six implementing partners to live up to the terms of the agreement and to prove that Liberians are capable of effective management of projects.

### US-Based Liberians Gear Up For July 26

The embassy of the Republic of Liberia, Washington DC, has announced the schedule of events for the observation of Liberia's 160th Independence Anniversary in the Americas.

The embassy says it is collaborating with the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA) in this year's July 26 celebration to encourage all Liberians in the Diaspora participate in events that befit the celebration.

According to a release from the Liberian embassy, signed by the Minister counselor for Public Affairs, Samuel Abu, the week-long celebration begins on Saturday, July 21, 2007, with an all day affair of festivities at the Chancery of the embassy in Washington DC.

This event, which is free and open to all Liberians and Friends of Liberia, will feature Liberia's Cultural Ambassador Julie Endee and the Crusaders for Peace, Liberia's Moga Band, lots of more cultural performances and masked dancers, Arts and Crafts exhibition, Fashion Show, Food Sale, and many others.

The activities will continue on Sunday, July 22, with an Intercessory and Thanksgiving Service, to hail and give praises to the Almighty for the country and its leaders. The praise and thanksgiving Service takes place at the University Baptist Church, in College Park, Maryland, at 3:30 PM.

The embassy release further states that on Tuesday, the embassy in collaboration with the Library of Congress on Capitol Hill will host a symposium with the general Theme: "Liberian-American Relations; Past, Present & Future".

Main Speakers at this event will include; Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr., Former LNTG Council Chairman Wilton Sankawulo, Liberian historian, Dr. David Smith, Former ELTV Action News Anchor, Attorney Kwame Clement, Dr. Patrick Burrowe, Ambassador Charles Minor & Ambassador Alice Dear.

The release also says the activities will come to a close on Saturday, July 28, 2007; with another all day affair hosted by the Liberian Community of the Washington DC, Metro Area.

According to the release, the events will begin in the morning with a basketball tournament organized by the friends of the Liberian Basketball Federation (LBF), from the states of Maryland, North Carolina, Minnesota, New Jersey, Georgia, Pennsylvania and New York.

All roads will in the afternoon of that day, lead to the Largo High School Sports ground in Maryland where the Liberian Lone Star (USA) will take on their Sierra Leonean Counterparts Leone Star (USA), in what is expected to be a highly competitive soccer match.

The day will be climaxed by the Independence Day Dinner and Ball for the Liberian Community at the New International Mirage Hall in Hyattsville, Maryland.

Meanwhile, Liberia's Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Charles Minor has called on all Liberians in the United States to remain law abiding and peaceful as they celebrate the 160th independence anniversary.

He said this is the period that Liberians in the Diaspora should reflect soberly on the history of their country, and to continue to hold together for unity, dignity and respect.

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