

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ambassador Swanee Hunt Leads Team of Experts to Liberia

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – At the invitation of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Ambassador Hunt and a team of policy experts from [The Initiative for Inclusive Security](#) made their third trip to Liberia Friday to lead a series of consultations and workshops designed to advance women’s engagement in security sector reform.

In partnership with the [Women and Public Policy Program](#) at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, Ambassador Hunt, director of WAPPP and chair of Inclusive Security, will lead discussions with ministry officials and parliamentarians about the importance of advocating for policies that incorporate the perspectives and expertise of women in governance and society.

After a devastating 14-year civil war in the West African nation, Inclusive Security has been at the forefront of efforts to build the capacity of women leaders in government and civil society, to ensure their abilities are fully leveraged in reconstruction, to promote the inclusion of women and their priorities in the design and implementation of the Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy, and to combat gender-based violence.

Refugees International’s 2004 alarming [statistics](#) cite that approximately 40 percent of women were raped during the civil war, gender-based violence remains endemic, and Liberia’s external debt is \$3.7 billion.

The country’s reconstruction and recovery process has been advanced by both Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s Oct. 4 declaration that Liberia is the fifth country to become eligible for the UN Peacebuilding Fund and President Sirleaf’s cabinet, which is now comprised of 30 percent women.

“The government’s attention to ensuring that ministry and parliament officials are focused on empowering Liberian women is a tremendous sign of progress in President Sirleaf’s first year in office,” said Ambassador Hunt. “I was pleased to be again invited by President Sirleaf to lead this consultation. Stability can only occur when women having a greater impact on discourse and decisions at all levels of government in Liberia.”

Over the past eight years, Inclusive Security has traveled to more than one dozen post-conflict nations to work with women leaders in emerging democracies.

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Editor’s Note: Media interested in interviews should contact [Lisa Marie Hennings](#), 617.995.1925.

The Initiative for Inclusive Security, a program of Hunt Alternatives Fund, advocates for the full participation of all stakeholders, especially women, in peace processes. Creating sustainable peace is achieved best by a diverse, citizen-driven approach. Of the many sectors of society currently excluded from peace processes, none is larger—or more critical to success—than women. Since 1999, Inclusive Security has connected more than 500 women experts with over 5,000 policy shapers to collaborate on fresh, workable solutions to long-standing conflicts across the globe. For more information visit www.InclusiveSecurity.org.