

A
PROCLAMATION
BY THE PRESIDENT

WHEREAS, in May 1990, the Twenty-fifth Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the Sixteenth Meeting of African Ministers responsible for Economic Planning and Development, adopted 18 November as African Statistics Day to be celebrated each year in order to "increase public awareness of the important role statistics play in all aspects of our social and economic life"; and

WHEREAS the theme for the celebrations 2007 is: **"Improving Employment and Related Indicators to Better Inform Labour Policies and Programmes in Africa" - and the theme for Liberia is "The Importance of Collecting Employment and Related Data Through National Population and Housing Census for Labour Policies and Programs"**; and

WHEREAS, this theme is derived from the Conclusions of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) in 2006 and in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in 2007. The 2006 Conference affirmed the centrality of employment and its primary role in poverty reduction and national development, while the 2007 Conference recognized the slow progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is therefore crucial to raise awareness of data producers, users, suppliers and the population at large about the importance of having better statistics to monitor implementation of job creation policies and programmes in the country as well as the MDGs, and to provide up-to-date information on employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS the 2006 Conference of African Ministers of Finance noted with concern that employment has not been embedded in national development strategies, which is commonly referred to as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in many African countries. And in order to create jobs in Africa, employment should be mainstreamed into

national development agenda, and African countries should explicitly commit themselves to incorporating employment objectives and targets in their national development strategies and policies. In Liberia, this incorporation is taking place in the Poverty Reduction Strategy as a result of widespread stakeholder consultation and through the Labour and Employment Sub-Committee chaired by the Ministry of Labour through the Economic Revitalisation Cluster; and

WHEREAS, the special needs of vulnerable groups in society were also recognized, including increasing employment opportunities for women, youth, the disabled and internally displaced persons, as well as refugees; and

WHEREAS, despite the strong commitment of the international community to end gender discrimination and the major advances made in this domain, some forms of discrimination are still persisting, as there remains gender gaps in employment and wages, as well as occupational segregation between men and women. Therefore, these marginalized groups are not contributing to increased productivity and employment-led growth, as reported in the recent ILO report: "*Equality at Work*" - which *Tackled the Challenges* and highlighted the fact that a key measure for women's improvement is the availability of good quality jobs for women in the legislative, senior official or managerial positions, which will inevitably reduce discriminatory barriers. According to the report, women still represent a distinct minority in such positions worldwide, holding only 28 percent of these senior jobs, in spite of an uneven progress across the regions; and

Whereas, in Liberia, progress is made in the Government and in the various counties, much is remained to be done at the middle management and entrepreneurial levels in business, agriculture and small-scale enterprises; and

WHEREAS, in Africa child labour is very widespread, particularly in agriculture, live stock, herding and mining. According to estimates by the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), in some cases, children begin work as young as five year. As a result, children under 10 years account for 20 percent of child labour in some rural areas. This means that a large percentage of children are not attending school, which is the building block of their future. Therefore, it is

essential and imperative that Programmes in social protection and empowerment are implemented; and

WHEREAS currently, African countries are faced with massive levels of migration. Forecasts show that the number of migrants crossing borders in search of employment and human security is expected to increase rapidly in the coming decades due to the failure of globalization to provide jobs and economic opportunities to the growing labour force in Africa. Sub-regional programmes to address youth and gender issues are needed and can be addressed through the Manu River Union Youth and Employment (UNDP/UNIDO/ILO initiative).

WHEREAS, the above highlight the need for National Statistical Systems in Africa to increase availability of accurate, timely and policy-relevant data on employment and related indicators. This will entail, inter alia, building consensus on concepts and definitions related to employment; carefully defining and refining methods for collecting data on each category of employment; measuring and profiling the informal sector, which covers a wide range of labour market activities and provides many job opportunities, and proactively applying such data for employment and livelihood purposes.

WHEREAS, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) will partner with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the International Labour Organization, the Regional Economic Communities and other key stakeholders, to support country employment generation strategies and programmes in Africa by assisting countries to compile and provide quality data on employment, in compliance with the methodologies, standards, recommendations and guidelines developed by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians and the 1993 System of National Accounts. This will be done under the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF), a blueprint adopted by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in April 2007 for moving forward statistical capacity building in Africa in a coherent and comprehensive manner. In Liberia, the Government is planning to develop our statistical capacity and to extend it by means of a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) covering all statistical activities in the country.

WHEREAS, in Liberia, where 14 years of war have eroded our statistical ability and we need to double our efforts, and as this program is the first of its kind to be undertaken in the history of the Republic of Liberia, and in recognition of the importance statistics play in all aspects of our economic and social life:

Now, therefore, I, ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF, President of the Republic of Liberia, by virtue of the authority in me vested, do hereby proclaim **Friday, November 23, 2007** as "**AFRICAN STATISTICS DAY**" to be observed throughout the Republic as a working holiday.

Further, I do appeal to all patriots and every loyal citizen, as well as foreign residents within our territorial confines to observe the day as such, and I do request all local Government officials to support the African Statistics Day authorities to fully participate in this noble and large-scale undertaking, given the advantages and usefulness of the Statistics Day to the overall national socio-economic development of our country.

The African Statistics Day shall be conducted and directed by the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) in the most expeditious manner, and I hereby call upon all patriots and every loyal citizen, as well as foreign residents within our territorial confines, all local Government officials to support the African Statistics Day Authority, and to cooperate with the Liberia institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services to plan and execute programs befitting the occasion.

GIVING UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, IN THE CITY OF MONROVIA, THIS 19TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 2007, AND OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC, THE 161ST.

ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

BY ORDER OF THE PRESIDENT



WILLIAM V.S. BULL, SR.

ACTING MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS