

**Introduction by
Dr. John O. Kakonge
UN Resident Coordinator**

**8 June 2000
YMCA, Monrovia**

Honorable Chairperson, Minister Amelia Ward

Distinguished Keynote Speaker and Discussants

Honorable Ministers

Officials of Government Present

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Colleagues of the UN System in Liberia

Representatives of NGOs

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

As you are aware, in March 1999 the UN System in Liberia began a series of discussions on pertinent development issues through a development forum. The purpose of this forum is to share and exchange ideas and to identify best practices in all areas of development. I believe this will contribute towards strengthening cooperation between the stakeholders including Government, UN agencies, donors, NGOs, academia, the private sector and civil society organizations.

During 1999, the forum addressed the four topics of:

- Regional Cooperation: A Myth or a Reality
- International Development Cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges and Opportunities Since 1960
- Engendering Development: The Liberian Perspective
- Education for All: Making the Right a Reality

Given the increasing number of fora being established, the UN System felt the need to change the name of this forum for the year 2000 to reflect the objectives of the meeting, which are to encourage all stakeholders to work together in partnership and to embrace them in a continuing dialogue on the post-conflict reconstruction and development of the country. Hence the new name “Development Dialogue”.

The theme for today’s Development Dialogue is “Partnership in the 21st Century: How to Make it Work Better”. We are honored to have with us Honorable Amelia Ward, who has graciously consented to serve as Chairperson for the session. She has worked for most of her career in the area of development and is considered as a guru in development issues. We are also honored to have Cllr. David Jallah, Dean of the Arthur Grimes Law School at the University of Liberia, as keynote speaker, and Prof. Belleh from Subah Belleh Associates and Mr. Reinhard Tiezte, Country Representative for the Lutheran World Federation as discussants.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for taking time out from your busy schedules to participate in this Dialogue as we deliberate on the issue of partnership in the 21st century.

Thank you.