

## Press Release

For Immediate release  
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### **Vice President Boakai Lauds FFW for Empowering Liberian Women**

MONROVIA, Wednesday, Dec 15, 2010-Liberia's Vice President Joseph N. Boakai, Sr., says the contributions of the Foundation for Women in post-war Liberia are immeasurable.

He observed that the Foundation is not only empowering women financially through microcredit, but giving them a semblance of education through adult literacy programs.

"Besides, the sisterly environment being fostered among members of the Foundation for Women will create one big family of women across the country and therefore help to strengthen the peace and ensure rapid development," Vice President Boakai observed, adding, "I assure you it will become a movement because it will empower men and women".

He made the remarks on Tuesday, December 14, at the Third Celebration and Fund Raising Rally of the Foundation for Women Liberia. The program held at the Paynesville City Hall, was attended by FFW microcredit beneficiaries from around the country.

The Liberian Vice President said it was unbelievable that the program which was launched in 2007, now covers 58 centers in nine counties, adding, "You have not only empowered women, you have even touched the lives of the disabled who are usually looked down upon as mere street beggars". "Indeed, the FFW is growing day-by-day. I would like to see the Foundation for Women's micro-loan reach all communities in Liberia," he further added.

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Vice President Boakai thanked the Founder and Executive Director of the Foundation for Women, Ms Deborah Lindholm for the initiative which, he noted, is touching the lives of not only women but the disabled as well.

Vice President Boakai challenged beneficiaries of the microloans provided by the FFW, to use the opportunity to improve their lives. He welcomed the fund raising program, noting that by raising funds to sustain the program, Liberians would be showing appreciation to the Foundation for Women U.S.A for the empowerment program.

Vice President Boakai who proxied for President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at the program, pledged US\$5,000 on behalf of Government, and assured that the Liberian Government would continue to work with the FFW and support its microcredit program.

In remarks at the program, the Founder and Executive Director of the Foundation for Women, Ms Deborah Lindholm informed the gathering that the Foundation's members in California have purchased a van for the disabled in Liberia and that the van has already been shipped and will be in Liberia in the not distant future.

Madam Lindholm who arrived in the country Sunday, pledged her organization's continued commitment to empowering Liberian women.

Also in remarks, the Chief Executive Officer of the FFW Liberia, Mrs. Emily Peal said she was delighted that since the FFW microcredit program was introduced in Liberia, it has proved to be very unique, not only because it provides microloans to its members, but also because it assists them when they are ill and empowers them to read and write. "We don't just give loans and walk away. We are concerned about whatever happens to our women," she observed.

She disclosed that the program is now in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County and Sinoe County, and that about 33,000 women and disabled persons in 58 centers in nine counties are currently benefitting from the Foundation's microcredit program.

Mrs. Peal said in the next four to five years, the FFW will cover all the 15 political sub-divisions of Liberia.

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At the ceremony, a few loan beneficiaries gave testimonies as to how the FFW microcredit program has transformed their lives for the better. One of them, Sarah Jackson of Margibi County, said she never attended school, but that due to the FFW's adult literacy program, she can now write her name and know when her name is miss pelt.

In his testimony, a disabled beneficiary said the program "Has turned our life around," adding that instead of begging at street corners to eke out a living, they now manage their own businesses.

An estimated US\$7,575.00 was raised in cash and pledges, with Vice President Boakai pledging US\$5,000 on behalf of the Liberian Government and Ambassador Dew Mason pledging US\$2,000.

During the ensuing Queen contest, more than LD52,000 and more than US\$450 was raised. The FFW representative from Margibi County won this year's FFW Liberia Queen Contest.

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