

The Initiative for Inclusive Security

A Program of Hunt Alternatives Fund

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Ambassador Swanee Hunt Leads Team of Experts to Liberia

Invited by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to Help Empower Women in New Democracy

MONROVIA, LIBERIA – Rebuilding Liberia after the country was torn apart by 14 years of civil war will be impossible if women are not included in the process. During her inaugural address almost one year ago, the first democratically elected African woman president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, declared “our administration shall empower Liberian women in all areas of our national life.”

[The Initiative for Inclusive Security](#) will support the President’s declaration by leading a two-day consultation, *Consolidating Peace: The Critical Role of Women in Rebuilding Liberia*, in Monrovia at President Johnson Sirleaf’s invitation. The consultation will be part of a visit from December 8-13 led by Ambassador Swanee Hunt, chair of The Initiative for Inclusive Security, and undertaken in partnership with the Women and Public Policy Program of Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. Building on an earlier visit Ambassador Hunt led in April 2006, this trip will convene a diverse group of leaders to analyze the role of women in reconstruction, and formulate an agenda to enhance women’s participation in stabilizing Liberia.

Ambassador Hunt and Inclusive Security will join Liberian women leaders to deliver this new agenda to policymakers at the United Nations, World Bank, US government, and other donors. The delegation will further consult with President Johnson Sirleaf and members of her cabinet regarding opportunities to bring more women into the rebuilding process.

“Rather than tip-toeing around the charged issue of gender, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is stamping the world with her own brand of leadership based on equality,” **said Ambassador Hunt**. “‘Ma Ellen’ is changing the way Liberians, and the rest of us, view women and leadership. Meeting the president’s goals will require all of Liberia’s human resources: not just the men. I feel honored to join in her mission to empower and elevate Liberian women, helping her country incorporate the potential of more than half its citizenry.”

Members of the media are invited to attend the following events at which Ambassador Hunt and President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf will be attending or speaking. Ambassador Hunt is also available for individual interviews or other media opportunities during her stay in Liberia. Please contact Katie Elbert for more information (contact info above).

- **Friday, December 8:** Members of the press are invited to Roberts International Airport for a press conference upon the arrival of Ambassador Hunt and the delegation.
- **Sunday, December 10:** Ambassador Hunt and members of the delegation will spend the day with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.
- **Tuesday, December 12:** Ambassador Hunt will host a press conference at the University of Liberia where she will present a scholarship award, and the delegation will give a donation of much needed books to the library. Members of the delegation may also visit one of Liberia’s markets, where women play a critical role in the country’s food sector.

Liberian women, including President Johnson Sirleaf, have been part of Inclusive Security’s [Women Waging Peace Network](#) since its creation in 1999. The consultation in Monrovia, like other efforts around the world, will build on Inclusive Security’s past work and complement the important efforts of other local, regional, and international organizations to strengthen the voices of women peace builders in Liberia.

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 450 women experts with over 3,000 policy shapers to collaborate on fresh, workable solutions to long-standing conflicts across the globe. For more information visit www.InclusiveSecurity.org.