



## **ONE Members Act, IMF Responds and Liberia Wins**

*After 18 months, IMF finally honors commitment to provide \$800+ million in debt relief to Liberia*

**Washington, DC** – After members of the ONE Campaign inundated the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with more than 25,000 emails demanding action on a long-held commitment, IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn announced late yesterday that the IMF will provide debt relief to Liberia. After committing to provide debt relief to Liberia 18 months ago, the IMF is finally providing approximately \$840 million in relief.

The bulk of the \$800 million debt was accumulated by Dictator Samuel Kanyon Doe, whose repressive regime tore Liberia apart. Now, Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and the Liberian government are working hard to revive the Liberian economy and meet the tough accountability and economic benchmarks the IMF demands.

"Post-conflict, President Johnson-Sirleaf has led her nation in fulfilling its obligations in order that it may receive debt relief," said Kimberly Cadena, ONE Campaign spokesperson. "This help for Liberia will mean that the funds originally budgeted to pay off the previous corrupt dictator's debt now will put children in school, provide clean water and spur development. Debt relief means a new start for a nation that has done a great deal to overcome a tragic past."

Debt relief is a powerful tool to alleviate conditions of extreme poverty and global disease. Mozambique used its savings from debt relief to vaccinate half a million children against tetanus, whooping cough and diphtheria, and to build and wire schools for electricity. Ghana is using its savings from debt relief in the energy and water sectors, for the rehabilitation of essential major highways and feeder roads in the main agricultural areas, as well as in education, health and development of information and communication technology. Uganda is using its savings from debt relief to improve energy infrastructure to ease acute electricity shortages, as well as increase primary education, malaria control, health care and water infrastructure (specifically targeting the poor and under-served villages).

Founded by freed American slaves, Liberia was the first republic in modern Africa. Tragically, in the last 30 years, the people of Liberia have suffered through a military dictatorship and two civil wars that killed more than 270,000 people. Today, Liberia is on the right path. In 2006, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf became the first African woman to be elected a head of state. She is an expert on development -- she worked for the World Bank and UN Development Program -- and on Liberia's recent troubled history, having been jailed twice and driven into exile for opposing a repressive government.

**ONE** is a new effort by Americans to rally Americans -- ONE by ONE -- to fight the emergency of global AIDS and extreme poverty. ONE is a coalition of millions of people and more than 150 of the nation's leading relief, humanitarian and advocacy organizations. **For more information, please visit: [ONE.org](http://ONE.org).**