



Video statement by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf President of Liberia

This video statement was sent to participants in the UNIFEM-EC conference *Fight against cervical cancer: challenges and opportunities for women's health*, held 27-28 September, 2007 at the Palais d'Egmont in Brussels.

Following are excerpts from President Johnson Sirleaf's statement. The full statement will be available for viewing online soon.

“Cervical cancer is an insidious disease that effects women in the prime of their lives. It is the leading cause of cancer death among women in developing countries...And yet, with good screening and follow up treatment, the disease is totally preventable...There also are two new vaccines.

My message to you today is to be visionary. Let us not get bogged down in bureaucracy and bottlenecks at this stage...We should use this process to improve women's health and to involve all key actors...I would like to see healthy and educated women, at all levels of society, making decisions about their lives and the health of our country.

In Liberia, we now have a strong immunization program for children under five...we also vaccinate in schools, providing the platform for a pre-teen health package...If we think big, opportunities abound and creativity is enhanced.

The international community has already shown its commitment to health for all by creating various mechanisms to ensure that new health technologies reach those who need them, not only those who can afford them...I know that you share my vision that in the near future women around the world will not need to worry about themselves or their daughters who are vulnerable to this disease.

Today I would like to add my voice to those demanding that cervical cancer prevention gets the international political recognition it deserves. I feel that we are at the threshold of a new era of cervical cancer prevention. Let us now make this rhetoric into reality.”

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
September 2007