

Speech before the Muslim Community

April 30, 2016

Protocol:

It is with mixed feelings that I address you today; feelings of joy for all of the time we have shared together as a community over the last ten years, and feelings of sorrow at my departure from you all to take up my new post at the World Bank in Nairobi, Kenya.

I am here today with my family: my wife, Mrs. Hawah Konneh; and my children, Ahamed, Aisha and Mohamed, whose prayers and encouragement – along with all of your support – have kept me strong in the midst of many trials, especially in as challenging a capacity as I have served over the last eight years.

I want to thank my family, once again, in this public manner for their love, support, and faith in me. And I want to offer the same thanks to this community of faithful Muslims who have upheld with me the five pillars of Islam:

- Belief in one God, and in Mohammed as his Prophet;
- The five daily prayers;
- The Zakat, offering of our substance and resources to poor and less fortunate;
- Our pilgrimage to the Hajj, for those who can afford to do so; and
- Our observance of the 30 days Ramadan.

These five pillars form the foundation for the man that I am and the life that I lead. They guide the way I lead with my family; my interactions with my colleagues and superiors professionally; and, most importantly, they guide me in the exercise of my faith so that I can continue to live each day with accountability to the higher power that we all serve.

I can appreciate how this may seem hard to believe for those who feel that they must see in order to believe. But, I sincerely hope that those skeptics who call for evidence will remember that faith, by its very definition, is belief in what and whom we cannot see.

Indeed, God himself operates in secret. When he provides for our wants and our needs, he does not get on radio to announce his latest action. Yes, some will see the evidence, but not all, and not right away. That fact demonstrates the humility of God, because he does not need to be seen in order to feel important or impactful. He just is. It is that same humility that I hope to emulate.

I have, therefore, very much appreciated the grace of those of our leaders who have reached out to me and received my support in various forms. They did not broadcast it or spread it wide, when I did. They respected my desire to remain a silent but faithful and productive member of our Muslim community, and have continued to pray for me and support me in turn.

So, although I have heard my critics say that I am out of touch with my community, what I see here today is far different from that. I see a community that's proud of one of its own, and I hope that that is indeed true, and that I haven't in any way let you down.

In the words of Abraham Lincoln: *“Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed by my fellow human beings, by rendering myself worthy of their esteem.”*

Indeed, I can say sincerely that I have made every effort to love and serve my country and my fellow man – inside and outside of this community – with humility and honor. While I make no claim to perfection, I will maintain that I have kept my highest commitment to my God and to myself, which is to comport myself personally and professionally in such a way as to bring honor to God, to my family, my community and my country.

In so doing, I hope that when Liberia looks back at my performance, and at the great mentoring and experience to which I have submitted myself under President Sirleaf's tutorship, this community and this country will consider my work well done and my life well lived.

And one day, whenever this country calls me back to serve, that I will be ready and willing to do so with as much passion and integrity as I have before, knowing that this is the only country I have. And I hope that, if indeed I am so call, that my community will be there to support and strengthen me, and to choose to have faith in me, and to believe the best for me, even when they cannot yet see.

As I leave you in the flesh tomorrow, I commit to you my heart; and I assure you of my continued service to this great community and to this great nation. I will never be too far away to support you and, because there is no distance in the spirit, I know that your prayers and good wishes will find me wherever I am.

Thank you.