

# Liberia hopes to light up with west African power project

MONROVIA: Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has signed a treaty which will connect her electricity-deprived nation to a planned regional power grid by 2016, her office said on Friday, 26 October 2012.

"President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has signed the treaty paving the way for the connection of Liberia to the West African Power Pool (WAPP)," read a statement, describing the project as the "outcome of an important partnership".

According to the presidency, a project of "an estimated 323 million euros (\$417 million), is expected to light up Liberia from four power stations along the Liberia-Sierra Leone border."

They will be located in Yekepa, Nimba County, in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, the capital Monrovia as well as Grand Cape in Mount County. The power pool will stretch over 1,360 kilometres (845 miles) of Liberian land, providing 325 kVA (260 kW) of electricity which will benefit rural communities in the various regions.

The government will provide \$145 million (112 euros) towards the project which is expected to be fully commissioned by 2016, with funding support from the World Bank, the European Bank and the African Development Bank.

A lack of electricity is one of the west African nation's greatest challenges, as whatever infrastructure was in place was destroyed in 14 years of civil war which ended in 2003. A World Bank report in October 2011 said only 0.58 percent of residents in the capital have access to electricity, and the country has possibly the world's lowest public access to power. Public electricity is almost unheard of outside the capital.

*Source: AFP*