Columbia Strengthens Ties in Ghana

BY KATHERINE MOORE

Columbia President Lee C. Bollinger traveled to Ghana, West Africa, last week to explore ways to enhance collaborative efforts already under way in the region. Through Columbia’s Earth Institute, its Mailman School of Public Health, Business School and other schools and disciplines, as well as through its affiliate Teachers College, the University has thriving programs and alliances in the country.

The Ghanaian Times, in an article about Bollinger’s visit, noted Ghanaian President John Agyekum Kufuor was optimistic that Columbia could help Ghana. “We are determined to establish ourselves as a model of a good democratic state,” said the country’s head of state.

The trip follows on the heels of President Kufuor’s successful visit to the University in September during the United Nations General Assembly. In Accra, Ghana’s capital, Bollinger met with President Kufuor, U.S. Ambassador Mary Carlin Yates, Ghanaian Minister of Energy Paa Kwesi Nduom and Minister of State for Tertiary Education Elizabeth Ohene. He also traveled to Kumasi, in the Ashanti region, for an audience with the Asantehene, Oumfuu Osei Tutu II.

“Columbia University, working with the United Nations and other international organizations, has long-standing research and service programs in Ghana,” said President Bollinger. “Many distinguished Columbia faculty have worked, and have plans for working, closely with Ghanaians on critical issues of global concern, from improving healthcare delivery to environmental conservation and economic development alternatives.”

Bollinger discussed higher education issues of mutual interest and ways to maximize (Continued on Page 10)

Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland, Joins Columbia Faculty

BY KATHERINE MOORE

I’ve always recognized the importance of standing up to bullies, addressing shortcomings and being outspoken—an awkward voice,” Mary Robinson once said. Now, the first woman president of Ireland and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is joining the Columbia faculty, to the ultimate benefit of international studies programs and students throughout the University.

Robinson steps onto campus this week as professor of practice in the Department of International and Public Affairs and will teach a course on human rights and globalization. She has spent her career advancing human rights and the principles of inclusiveness in her native Ireland as well as through-out the world,” said Lee C. Bollinger, president of Columbia University, in announcing the appointment on Jan. 13. “With her extensive diplomatic experience and years of work on ethical globalization, she will be a tremendous resource and an inspiration as we continue to build on programs of international education.”

“I am excited by the strong links I am now making with Columbia University,” said Robinson. “I recall with pleasure the occasion when I received an honorary doctorate some years ago in the company of Harry Belafonte, who promptly stole the show! Now I return to university teaching, which I did part-time for over 20 years at Trinity College, Dublin, and I look forward to interaction with students from different schools and faculties.”

Robinson served as president of Ireland from 1990 to 1997, elevating the Irish presidency from a largely ceremonial role to a powerful office for effecting change both within Ireland and internationally. She is credited for greatly improving the situation of marginalized groups within her country as well as drawing attention to global crises and the needs of developing nations. During her tenure as United Nations high commissioner for human rights (1997-2002), Robinson was instrumental in integrating human rights concerns throughout all U.N. activities, personally visiting regions of civil conflict, including Sierra Leone, Chechnya and the former Yugoslavia, and focusing international attention on East Timor.

“We are thrilled to welcome Mary to our faculty,” said School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) Dean Lisa Anderson. “Human rights issues always have been a cornerstone of SIPA’s international affairs programs, and students from different schools and faculties.”

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