

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have been assigned the task of giving the vote of thanks at the end of this 30th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), a duty and responsibility that I am honored to accept.

As you are aware, this is my first time attending a summit of the African Union, having been inaugurated as Liberia's 24th President less than a week ago, and I am humbled and delighted to be here amongst my Colleagues in this new capacity.

I regard each and every one of you as a "Big Brother", and look forward to our future bi-lateral interactions in the interest of Liberia, as well as at regional and other multi-lateral conferences in the interest of Africa, our beloved continent.

My one regret is that I was unable to come earlier, or stay longer, due to pressing duties of State, because I am sure that I and my government would have benefitted immensely from the discussion under this most important theme of the conference: "Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation".

Corruption is a plague, a cancer that seems to present itself in all of our countries, and manifests itself in many forms throughout our bodies politic. It saps our energy, hinders our progress and development, and makes it difficult for our people to reach their true and fullest potential. It is also a major threat to the peace and security of our countries and their respective regional economic communities.

I am convinced that the discussions which took place during this 30th Summit, will have strengthened our resolve and political will to tackle the challenge of corruption with all our resources and bring it under control, particularly through institutional transformation. The declaration of 2018 as “The Anti-corruption Year” by this Conference will certainly serve to increase national, regional, and continental awareness of this menace, and improve our chances of total eradication.

And now, Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen, on behalf of all of my fellow attendees, I would like to say a grateful thank-you to the organizers of the Summit, for a job well done.

I would also like to thank the Government of Ethiopia for the excellent arrangements that were made for our safety and comfort. *Finally, on behalf of all of us, I say heartfelt congratulations to our newly elected Chairperson, to whom we offer all of our support and cooperation as he embarks upon his leadership of this Organization that is so very important to improving the quality of life and safety of our people on the continent of Africa.*

Once again, thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen, and Good Bye.