

**REMARKS**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. GEORGE MANNEH WEAH  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

**AT**

**THE AFRICAN AND DIASPORA YOUNG LEADERS FORUM  
UNITED STATES - AFRICA LEADERS' SUMMIT**

**WASHINGTON D.C., UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**DECEMBER 13, 2022**

***Your Excellency Madam Clar Marie Weah,  
First Lady of the Republic of Liberia;***

***The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.,  
President of the United States of America  
and Host of the United States-Africa Leaders' Summit;***

***Excellencies and Colleagues;***

***My esteemed Young African Leaders;***

***Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:***

I bring you warm greetings and best wishes from the friendly people of the Republic of Liberia. It is indeed an honor to join my colleagues from Africa to participate in this year's US-Africa Leaders' Summit.

On behalf of the Government and People of Liberia, and in my own name, I would like to extend heartfelt appreciation to The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States of America, and the Government and People of the United States, for the invitation to be in attendance and participate in this important Summit here in Washington DC.

**EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

Liberia has a long and historic relationship with the United States, which has led us to having common positions on issues such as democracy, human rights, global peace and security. We hold the view that this Summit will strengthen our partnership and increase our commitment to foster stronger cooperation in seeking the broad interest of our respective countries in particular, and the world at large.

This Summit should also reinforce our continued true partnership and friendship with the United States. This should enable us to re-define and reset our urgent priorities in economic, social, and political engagements that will serve as the reinforcement of our genuine commitment to democracy, human rights, transparency and good governance.

Liberia believes that such engagements between Africa and the United States will improve and strengthen bilateral and multilateral relationships, foster peace and security on the continent of Africa.

**DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

With millions of African descendants and immigrants in the diaspora, there is no doubt that this is a vast reservoir of talent, training, expertise, and financial capacity which must and should be utilized to enhance the advancement and development of our Continent.

This collaborative effort will serve as the bridge connecting Africans in the diaspora back to their collective roots and cultural identities. It is therefore incumbent upon us as leaders to recognize and acknowledge the significance of these many millions of our compatriots living in the diaspora communities, whose contributions are pivotal to the growth and development of our continent.

Although physically separated from the motherland, they have a major influence on the socio-economic, cultural, and political landscape of their respective countries, which should not be overlooked or under-estimated.

In recognition of the value of our Liberian diaspora community, at the inception of my administration nearly five (5) years ago, I embarked upon the process of removing restrictive laws to encourage the Liberian diaspora to contribute more to the development of our country.

Today, I am pleased to inform you that, in July of this year, I signed into law an Act authorizing dual citizenship and allowing women to pass citizenship to their children. By so doing, my administration has now removed all legal barriers which had prevented natural-born Liberians from rightfully resuming citizenship of the land of their ancestors. ***ONCE A LIBERIAN, ALWAYS A LIBERIAN!***

This is a demonstration of my Government's commitment to ensure that our diaspora is not left out in the national reconstruction and development of Liberia. We consider the Liberian diaspora community as a valuable asset to our nation's growth and development, and their full participation is an important part of the nation-building process.

**EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

Africa's future ought to be bright. We have the potential to turn around the grim outlook of the continent that is presented in the news daily. With more than 60 percent of Africans being young people, we have the demographic dividend capable of making our region responsive to the needs of its people.

The role young people and the general African diaspora must play in addressing the needs of the continent must be through, innovation, investment and knowledge transfer.

It is often said in Africa that young people are our future leaders. But I have observed that not much opportunities are created to allow them to reach their full potential. This has made a growing number of them to seek opportunities here in the West, where they have acquired quality education and useful skills in order to contribute to the development and advancement of society. I believe that young people are capable of conquering the world if given a place to stand.

From a poor and humble background growing up in the slums of Gibraltar in Liberia, I managed through hard work, discipline and determination to climb to the top of my career as a professional footballer.

While pursuing my professional career in the diaspora myself, I took back many investments to my home country, Liberia, Zanzibar, Cote D'Ivoire and other parts of Africa. I invested in many businesses and I invested in human capital by supporting many young people in acquiring education to enable them advance their lives and have a livelihood.



And so today I say to the youth of Africa, you can also succeed in your chosen fields of endeavor, if you are prepared to be diligent, disciplined, and determined.

African governments must also create the enabling environment and the requisite framework that will allow our young people in the diaspora contribute, through their education and innovation, to the transformation of our beloved continent.

Our brothers and sisters in the diaspora are indispensable partners in the development aspirations of our various countries. We must welcome them. We must embrace them. We must recognize them. Africans in the diaspora and Africans in Africa are one people.

We can succeed if we allow peace to reign. And, we can succeed if we lay the framework for our young people to have a smooth transition in the democratic process.

There is no doubt in my mind that the young population of Africa has a significant role in whichever direction Africa takes.

So my distinguished African diaspora brothers and sisters, I would like to invite you to join us in helping to build a New Africa where peace, unity, democracy, human rights, comprehensive freedom, tolerance, togetherness, cooperation, reconciliation, equal opportunity for all so that growth and sustainable development will be the cornerstone and foundation for the future of Africa.

May God bless Africa!

May God bless Liberia!

May God bless the United States of America!

May God bless us all!

I thank you!