

**SPECIAL REMARKS**

**BY**

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

**ON THE OCCASION MARKING  
THE  
OFFICIAL LAUNCH  
OF THE  
BICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION  
OF THE  
FOUNDING  
OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA  
1822 TO 2022**

**"National Unity and Reconciliation"**

**THE SAMUEL KANYON DOE SPORTS COMPLEX  
PAYNESVILLE, MONTSERRADO COUNTY  
FEBRUARY 14, 2022**

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

**Her Excellency Chief Dr. Jewel Howard-Taylor;  
Vice President of the Republic of Liberia;**

**His Excellency Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of  
Gambia**

**His Excellency Mohamed Bazoum, President of the  
Republic of Niger**

**His Excellency Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic  
of Sierra Leone**

**His Excellency Faure Gnassingbe, President of the  
Republic of Togo**

**His Excellency Yemi Osinbajo, Vice President of the  
Federal Republic of Nigeria**

**Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Former  
President of the Republic of Liberia;**

**Ambassador Joseph N. Boakai,  
Former Vice President of the Republic of Liberia;**

**Honorable Dr. Bhofal Chambers, Speaker,  
and Members of the House of Representatives;**

**Honorable Albert T. Chie, President Pro-Tempore,  
and Members of the Liberian Senate;**

**His Honor Francis S. Korkpor, Chief Justice,  
and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of Liberia,  
and Members of the Judiciary;**

**Honorable Dana Banks, Special Assistant to the President  
and Senior Director for Africa at the National Security  
Council and Head of a Special Delegation representing Mr.  
Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States of**

**America, to the Bicentennial Celebrations, and Members of the delegation;**

**The Dean and Members of the Cabinet;**

**The Chief of Staff and the Gallant Men and Women of the Armed Forces of Liberia, and other Members of the Security Apparatus;**

**Former Officials of Government;**

**The Doyen and Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps;**

**The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General;**

**Heads of International Organizations;**

**Heads and Members of Political Parties;**

**Heads and Members of Civil Society Organizations;**

**Presidents, Chairpersons, and Members of Youth and Student Groups;**

**Presidents and Chairpersons of Women's Organizations;**

**Members of the Business Community, especially Market Women and Men;**

**Yana Boys and Girls; Bus and Taxi drivers; Keh-Keh and Pen-Pen riders; and Wheelbarrow operators;**

**Disadvantaged and Physically Challenged Citizens;**

**Heads and Members of Religious Institutions, Prelates, and Members of the Clergy;**

**Chief Zanzan Karwor, Chairman of the Council of Chiefs of Liberia, and other Chiefs, Elders, and Traditional Leaders;**

**Heads of Educational and Banking Institutions;**

**Members of the Fourth Estate;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**Fellow Liberians;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

I stand here before you today as a proud Liberian. I am happy to have this golden opportunity to serve our country at this particular time as President of the oldest African Republic, standing on the shoulders of all of my predecessors who have led Liberia throughout these past 200 years. This is the legacy that has been passed on to me to maintain and sustain, this shared heritage of millions of people over the years, and over the world, who proudly and uniquely call themselves “Liberians”

Our shared history is uncommonly unique and exceptional. Today we celebrate 200 years since we first began the journey to become a sovereign state, eventually to become the first African country to be established as an independent Nation. Such a unique occasion should give us reason to reflect on where and how far we have come as a People. Let me use this occasion to thank the Almighty God for his blessings and mercy in bringing us thus far as a resilient, committed, reconciled and peaceful nation.

As we recollect, review and re-examine these first two hundred years, we cannot help but wonder what motivated our forefathers to break the chains of bondage and slavery in order to seek a land where they could experience the benefits of freedom irrespective of color, creed or religion.

This converging of people from various backgrounds and localities eventually led to the founding of the country that we all now know and love as the Republic of Liberia.

Today, as descendants of these diverse groups of people, we are all citizens of Liberia, with a common national identity. This commemoration must therefore bring us closer together, and strengthen our national unity, even as we recognize and celebrate our diversity.

I believe that our Founding Fathers were in search of a Land of Liberty and Freedom, which would serve as a home and a safe haven for all its citizens, regardless of tribe or creed or religion,

and as a place where they could exercise and enjoy their inherent and inalienable human rights without obstruction.

Wherever their souls may lie today in peaceful repose, I believe that our forefathers can look down on today's Liberia with pride and satisfaction, seeing that their dreams have not only been realized, but that their vision has also been sustained.

**DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

The official theme for these Bicentennial Celebrations, as selected by the National Bicentennial Steering Committee, is “National Unity and Reconciliation”.

National Unity and Reconciliation is the foundation upon which we must build the New Liberia. It must become the imperative agenda of all current and future national development policies. The projects and programs emanating from these policies should focus on eliminating all forms of discrimination and exclusion in

Liberia. This is our only option for survival and continuity as a holistic and inclusive body politic, even as we strive to recover from the devastation and division that characterized our recent civil conflict.

We must focus on promoting unity amongst all Liberians, wherever they may reside, and encourage all to make meaningful contributions to the nation-building tasks of our country.

Redefining Liberia’s identity and building a shared sense of nationalism should be at the center of continued reconciliation

in Liberia. The model for genuine National Unity and Reconciliation in Liberia is inspired and founded on positive cultural values, citizenship building, good governance, economic empowerment, and the rule of law.

Let us therefore continue to embrace the tenets of National Unity as we move forward – together – towards becoming a reconciled and democratic nation, whose citizens are at peace with themselves, their neighbors, and the world.

As Liberians from diverse ethnic groups, religious beliefs and regions, we must continue to co-exist peacefully as one united Liberian Nation in accordance with our Constitution. We, as Liberians, can only promote National Unity and Reconciliation by living together in peace and harmony.

We can also promote National Unity and Reconciliation through exercising tolerance by accepting each other's way of life. In a country such as ours, Liberia, there are so many people with different cultures and traditions, which influence their ideologies about life and about how to approach things. We must accept and accord every person the respect he or she deserves in matters relating to differences in ideologies and understanding.

Another major tool in promoting National Unity and Reconciliation is patriotism. This indeed is the bedrock of our national foundation, because when there is love for one's nation, such love will engender a spirit of brotherhood, sisterhood and fraternity among us as citizens of Liberia, our common country.

Let us therefore vigorously denounce and combat acts, writings and utterances which are intended to promote any kind of discrimination, intolerance or lack of justice, all of which are counter-productive to the achievement of National Unity and Reconciliation.

Fellow Liberians, in fostering genuine National Unity and Reconciliation, we must let go of the past, embrace the present within the context of our diversities, and give birth to the future with Unity, Peace, Reconciliation and Sustainable Development as our imperative agenda.

As President and Chief Executive of our sweet land of liberty, Liberia, I want to call on ALL LIBERIANS to champion the

cause of national unity and to reconcile our differences for Liberia's growth and development. Let us reinforce and strengthen the common heritage that unites all of us, both the descendants of the indigenous people and the descendants of the settlers. We are One People, with One Destiny.

Whatever our differences, we are Liberians first! As Liberia is the only country that we have, we must do all in our powers to keep it safe, not only for our citizens and foreign residents, but for all who would visit us as friends of Liberia, for work, for play, for business, for investment, and for learning.

So let us fight discrimination in every phase and form of our socio-economic cohabitation and collaborations as Liberians, both at home and in the diaspora. Let us fight intolerance and impatience with one another. Let us fight hatred and malice. These are all negative vices that detract from our higher purpose of oneness and national coherence. Because there is so much more that unites us than that which may tend to divide us, let us celebrate the complexities of our rich diversities, and live in peace, unity, and harmony as our brother' and sisters' keepers.

MY FELLOW CITIZENS, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES  
AND GENTLEMEN:

As we today embark upon the journey for the next two hundred years, let us think beyond this Bicentennial about the generations that will succeed us in the years to come, and the beautiful ones who are not yet born. How can we pave the way so that their futures may be brighter than ours, their opportunities greater than ours, their growth and development enhanced, and their prosperity assured?

Beyond the Bicentennial Celebrations, what are those things that we must do to ensure that Liberia is a better place when we leave it, than when we met it?

The answer to these questions must include, but not be limited to, a recognition of the following challenges, and a call to action to resolve them.

Let us begin with Climate Change which is a threat to our very existence, and therefore we must join the rest of the world to save our planet.

Rural-urban migration is another problem we need to fix together, because our once beautiful Capital City, Monrovia, is already overcrowded, leading to all of the problems brought on by congestion, such as lack of adequate housing, sanitation, health and educational facilities, among others. It was never designed to hold the large percentage of our population who now live in it.

We should also work together to expand development in all of its forms to the rest of the country so that our citizens do not see Monrovia as the only decent place to live and work. This should be an effective panacea to curb urban migration.

This must include the provision of affordable and reliable electricity throughout the country, which should spur industrialization and manufacturing that will create jobs and add value to our natural resources. It must also include a national road connectivity program that will enable any Liberian to travel

from counties in the east and west to counties in the north and south on all-weather roads that are safe and well maintained.

In my view, under-development anywhere, is under-development everywhere.

In order to save our present young population and future generations of youth from self-destruction, we must fashion policies to fight drugs and substance abuse. It is very concerning to me when I see the downward path in which some of our young people are heading at break-neck speed.

In this context, the problems of our disadvantaged youths cannot be ignored. It is a growing threat and must be tackled head on not by condemnation but by counseling, not by imprisonment but by rehabilitation and skills development, not by death but by giving them life and hope.

Beyond the Bicentennial, we must also develop an educational and health system that is on par with the best in the world, and make it available to everyone, so that no child is left behind. We must also revise the curriculum to provide our

young people with relevant employable skills and with computer training that will

assist us to bridge the digital divide and equip our young people to be competitive with their counterparts in the rest of the world.

It has often been said, that those who do not learn from the mistakes of the past, are likely to repeat them in the future. In view of this, I believe that there is a need to write a full and comprehensive history of Liberia, which will include the history of the people that lived here before 1822, and the true and authentic history of the last 200 years as an integrated nation, including our historic struggles to achieve the unification which we enjoy today.

I now throw out this challenge to our many gifted Liberian authors and historical scholars, to capture this rich history and have it printed in textbooks that will become part of the official curriculum of our educational system.

MY FELLOW LIBERIANS, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

As we leave this place today, and from this day forward, let us go forth in unity, and peace, and love for one another, always putting Liberia first, and defending our country's cause with unpretending valor and patriotism. For without these attributes being inculcated in our National DNA, there will be no progress, no development, no growth, and no prosperity. Once we adopt this mindset as a Nation and People, I can declare with confidence and conviction, that the future of our beloved country will be glorious and bright for all Liberians.

I would like to invite you to come and join me in helping to build a New Liberia where peace, unity, tolerance, togetherness, cooperation, reconciliation and sustainable development will be the cornerstone and foundation for the future.

Come and let us give thanks to our Almighty God for sustaining and preserving this Sweet Land of Liberty, the Republic of Liberia, by His Command.

**HAPPY BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS TO YOU ALL!!!**

I ALSO WISH YOU AND YOURS A HAPPY VALENTINE'S  
DAY!!!

LONG LIVE THE PEOPLE OF LIBERIA!!!  
LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA!!!

MAY GOD BLESS ALL OF YOU, BLESS THE WORKS OF  
OUR HANDS, AND SAVE THE STATE!!

I thank you.