

REMARKS

BY

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

AND

VISITOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA

AT THE CEREMONY MARKING THE INAUGURATION

OF

DR. JULIUS JULUKUN SARWOLO NELSON JR.

AS

THE 15TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA

FENDALL CAMPUS

UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA

NOVEMBER 28, 2019

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

Madam Jewel Howard Taylor, Vice President of the Republic of Liberia;

The Speaker, and Members of the House of Representatives;

The President Pro-Tempore and Members of the Liberian Senate;

The Chief Justice and Justices of the Supreme Court of Liberia;

The President and Members of the Board of Trustees of the University of Liberia;

Dr. Julius Julukun Sarwolo Nelson, President of the University of Liberia;

Former Presidents of the University of Liberia, here present;

The Dean and Members of the Cabinet;

Other Officials of Government, here present;

The Doyen and Members of the Diplomatic Corp;

Heads of Colleges and Universities;

Members of the Faculty, Senate and Council of the University of Liberia;

The President and Members of the Student Union;

The President and Members of the Alumni Association;

Officiating Prelates and Clergy;

Special Guests and their Spouses;

Students;

Members of the Fourth Estate;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

First of all, let me extend my official and personal congratulations to you, Dr. Julius Julukon Sarwolo Nelson Jr. (your names are also plenty, too), for your induction and installation today as the 15th President of the University of Liberia.

As you have been entrusted today with the gavel of authority of this venerable Institution, I urge you to use it with wisdom, in order to fulfill the vision which you have just outlined in your Inaugural Address.

In my dual capacities as President of Liberia and Visitor to the University, I promise my fullest support to you and your team, as you now embark upon this journey of leadership and service.

Mr. President, you bring a lot of experience to this new position, having served for more than 12 years at the University in various positions of trust and responsibility. Many of those years were spent in Student Affairs, where you dealt with student issues.

I expect that your experience and expertise in this area will now become a very useful asset, as you engage the students of the University in order to address the various issues which are of pressing concern to them.

So, let me say to the students, you now have somebody who understands where you come from. ***AM I CORRECT?***

GOODLUCK MY BROTHER!

Dr. Nelson, you also served as a member of the faculty. So, you come with the experience of someone who spent time in the classroom. You are therefore very aware of the issues that members of the faculty of this University have to deal with.

So, members of the UL Faculty, Dr. Nelson is also your man, too.
AM I CORRECT?

GOODLUCK MY BROTHER!

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Even as you inaugurate a new President today, I also want to express my thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, Dr. Ophelia Inez Weeks, the 14th President, for her leadership. Please join me in thanking her ***loudly!!***

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The University of Liberia is a well-respected institution in our nation and around the world. It has trained the vast majority of Liberian professionals working in this country and around the world today. I pledge today, that my Administration will do all that is necessary to maintain this reputation and support your accomplishments, so that you will continue to grow from strength to strength.

I would also like to congratulate the University on the occasion of its 100th Centennial Commencement this year. I am informed that the largest class in the history of the University will graduate on December 12th. Let me say congratulations in advance to all of the prospective Graduates. I look forward to being in attendance at the Commencement Ceremonies next month.

Mr. Chairman of the UL Board of Trustees, Dr. Nelson, and the entire University of Liberia family, let me remind you that this is my fourth visit here since I became Visitor of the University.

The first time that I visited was to dedicate the automated registration system which my Government provided to mitigate the problems and delays that students were encountering during the registration process. Today, students do not have to form queues just to register for classes. So, we solved a major problem, which was a source of much confusion on your campus.

With that, I thought everything on campus was all right. But as it turned out, it was not the case.

So, I visited the second time. I came because students informed me that, although they were enjoying the new automated system, they were out of school because they could not afford to pay their tuition fees. So, I came to help solve that problem, and announced a Free-Tuition Policy for all public universities in Liberia. Today, because of that policy, I am informed that enrollment at the University of Liberia has increased to nearly 19,000 students, an increase of 7,000 over the 12,000 students that were enrolled before the policy came into effect.

Then I made my third visit. This time it was different. I had come to fulfill my role as Visitor of the University of Liberia by attending the 99th Commencement Convocation. During that commencement, as you will recall, I was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree, thereby making me an alumnus of the University of Liberia.

Today is my fourth visit in less than two years. I am here to attend my first inauguration of a new president of the University. I hope and I trust that this will not only be the first, but also the last time that I will have to attend another inauguration of a new president for the rest of my tenure as Visitor.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Last week, we received the sad news that the University had lost one of its largest benefactors, in person of Ambassador David A. Straz Jr, an American philanthropist. I am informed that Mr. Straz donated \$1.5 Million Dollars of his own money to renovate and refurbish the David A. Straz-Sinje Technical and Vocational College of the University of Liberia.

As Visitor and President, I extend my deepest condolences to Ambassador Straz' family for this loss, as well as to the family of the University.

I want to encourage all of you to emulate the generosity and commitment of Ambassador Straz by supporting this institution to allow it to fulfil its mandate as Liberia's Highest Institution of Learning.

There is no better time to do this than in this Centennial Year, as the University celebrates the first 100 years of providing quality higher education in Liberia. And as it embarks upon the second century of its existence, let us all pray for its continued growth, development, and success throughout the next millennium.

I thank you.