

REMARKS BY

HIS EXCELLENCY DR. GEORGE MANNEH WEAH

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

ON THE OCCASION OF AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

11 JULY 2019

HIS EXCELLENCY ALPHA CONDE,

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA;

HER EXCELLENCY, MADAME DJENE KABA CONDE,

FIRST LADY OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA;

MEMBERS OF THE GUINEAN GOVERNMENT HERE PRESENT;

MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR CORPS;

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS;

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Your Excellency, President Conde, I bring you greetings from the friendly people of Liberia, and wish to thank you for inviting me to make this historic visit to your country.

I also bring special greeting to Her Excellency Madame Djene Kaba Conde, First Lady of the Republic of Guinea, from my wife, Her Excellency Madame Clar M. Weah, the First Lady of the Republic of Liberia, who could not be here today due to prior commitments.

On behalf of my delegation, and in my own name, I thank you for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality that you have shown to us since our arrival here today in your beautiful capital city of Conakry. We are also grateful for the excellent arrangements that you have made for our comfort and security during our stay here.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I am very happy to return today to Conakry, a city to which I have traveled so many times, and in which I have made so many friends. During my professional soccer career, I was very often in Conakry to play important matches, some in the interest of peace. Again, during my campaign, I came many times to Conakry. For me, today is like a joyous homecoming, for I consider Conakry to be like a second home to me.

We are delighted to be here, because we hold the view that Liberians and Guineans are One People. We share common borders, across which we share many of the same tribes, and many of the same cultural values.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

My visit here today is very important and significant, because it gives me an opportunity to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation that already exist between our two countries.

As I set foot on your soil today to meet with my dear brother, President Conde, and the Officials of his government, I am aware that we are following in the footsteps of another great friendship between two of our illustrious predecessors, President William V. S. Tubman and President Ahmed Sekou Toure.

The collaboration between these two leaders many years ago, produced many new ideas, policies, and programs that had far-reaching positive consequences for our region and our continent. They laid the foundations upon which the Mano River Union, ECOWAS, and the African Union were built.

We must renew, once again, that tradition of brotherly friendship. We must re-ignite and strengthen our bilateral relationship in the interest of regional peace and security. We must put back on track those things that will work to our mutual benefit, and restore the close ties that have been allowed to drift somewhat apart.

For example, today there is no direct transport between our two countries, either by air or by rail. It is now necessary, and timely, for us to re-connect our two countries, so as to facilitate the free and efficient movement of people and goods.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I cannot come to Guinea without talking about peace. Peace in our respective countries and in our region, must be maintained, at all cost. I strongly believe that the way to ensure a lasting peace is to observe the rule of law, and to embrace all the tenets of democracy, where the rights of each and every citizen are protected under the law, because our region and countries are safer when democracy is practiced.

We must continue to fight to maintain the peace that we now enjoy, because without peace, our world will be difficult.

Security in our region is of paramount importance. Together, we must form a strategic partnership to protect our porous borders, while at the same time ensuring the smooth and efficient migration of our people as they seek their livelihood through cross-border trade.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I have come to you today with a message of peace, cooperation, and regional solidarity. I seek to deepen our collaborations so that we can jointly explore new avenues for economic cooperation and growth, to the mutual benefit of our respective countries.

In so doing, we must together seek every opportunity for partnerships and joint ventures that will provide opportunities for our economies to develop, and for our people to prosper through the creation of new jobs.

That is why I am pleased to note that, after intensive discussions between me and my Colleague, President Conde, during my visit, and detailed meetings between the Ministerial and Technical Teams of both countries, the Republic of Guinea and the Republic of Liberia have reaffirmed our willingness to work in the same spirit, in unison, and to act as "one unique people" in negotiations with foreign partners for the purpose of facilitating transportation and shipment of Guinean products and natural resources through Liberia.

In order to do this, the two governments have agreed to set up a Joint Working Commission without delay.

We have also agreed to cooperate in developing transport linkages between our two countries by land, air and sea.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

In closing, let me say that I look forward to achieving very positive results from this visit, and hold very high expectations that we will open a productive new chapter in the relationship between our two countries, going forward.

Merci beaucoup.