

OPENING STATEMENT
By
HER EXCELLENCY ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
AT THE OPENING OF THE NATIONAL POLITICAL FORUM FOR
PEACEFUL ELECTIONS

May 31, 2017, 10:00 am
Monrovia City Hall

I wish to commend each of you for participating in the Dialogue. I believe that if there is anything all Liberians agree on it is the need to preserve the peace that enables us to be better reconcilers, a peace that provides a conducive environment for development.

More than half a century ago, seventy-three years to be exact, Liberians experienced the transition of an outgoing elected president to an incoming elected President – Edwin J. Barclay after a peaceful free and fair elections, turned over to William V. S. Tubman.

On January 16, 2018, Liberians will have the opportunity of a similar experience. This will be the defining test of our nascent democracy. This will be the trigger for continuation and strengthening of international partnerships. As I travel around the country, I see wide acclaim and high expectations for this transition and I am pleased that I am a pivotal part of it.

I had the opportunity to a telephone call with several of you on yesterday and I look forward to seeing you on Sunday at the 51st Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This grand occasion will afford you, the standard bearers of your political

parties, a unique opportunity to interact with regional and world leaders who now occupy the position in their respective countries that you now aspire to here in Liberia.

These leaders will witness the signing by you of the Farmington River Declaration, committing yourselves to peaceful elections. It is an opportunity you should all embrace to add instant legitimacy to the elections and forge for you, individually, an image of statesmanship.