

REMARKS

BY

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

AT

THE OFFICIAL DEDICATION

OF

THE EMIRATES HOSPITAL

BOPOLU EXECUTIVE GROUNDS
GBARPOLU COUNTY
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

DECEMBER 28, 2022

Members of the 54th Legislature;

The Dean and Members of the Cabinet;

Other Officials of Government, here present;

The Doyen and Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps;

His Excellency Sheikh Shakhboot Nahyan Al Nahyan,
Minister of State, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, United Arab
Emirates;

His Excellency Dr. Aysha Sultan Aldhaheri,
Executive Director, Military Health Services, UAE Army
United Arab Emirates;

The General Manager and Staff,
The Emirates Hospital;

The Chief Medical Officer, Doctors, and Nurses,
United Emirates Hospital;

Traditional Leaders, Chiefs, and Elders;

Members of the Clergy, here present;

Political and Business Leaders;

Members of the Fourth Estate;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

Greeting in Arabic

I am delighted to be here today to witness the Official Dedication of the Emirates Hospital here in Bopulu City, Gbarpolu County.

I am told that this modern, state-of-the-art medical facility covers more than 52,000 (fifty-two thousand) square feet, and is almost entirely powered by solar energy. I am further informed that it contains a 100-bed capacity for inpatients, several operating theatres, a modern laboratory, an intensive care unit (ICU), various specialized departments and many more facilities that set it apart from other hospitals in the country.

Today, therefore, marks an important milestone for the people of this region. It is a well-known fact that, historically, Gbarpolu County has been one of the Counties with limited access to health care. The construction and commissioning of the Emirates Hospital here today will not only help the people of Gbarpolu to have access to quality health care, but will enable the surrounding counties (Bomi,

Grand Cape Mount, and Bong), as well as some parts of Lower Lofa, to benefit from better health care.

It may even encourage some citizens of Sierra Leone, who are close to the Liberian border in Kongba District, to seek medical care here at this hospital. Additionally, Gbarpolu County hosts other foreign nationals who are involved in the gold and diamond industries located here, and they too will also be able to seek world-class medical care at this well-equipped facility.

FELLOW CITIZENS, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

At this juncture, I want to inform you that the project selection, groundbreaking, and construction of this facility can all be traced back to the selfless decision I made many years ago when, at the pinnacle of my soccer career, I made a decision to leave Europe and play for a relatively unknown team in the UAE, called AL JAZEERA.

That move, you must know, was one based on the budding friendship I shared at the time with the then Crown Prince, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who this year became President of the United Arab Emirates. It was also based on the love that was shown to me by the Emirati citizens on the pitch. Leaving Europe at a time when my services were still being sought by many of the world's top clubs was no small feat. But sometimes in life, it is important to put people and friendship above material gain. I am glad that I did that at that time, and I am also glad to see that that act of friendship is today yielding dividends for my country.

I therefore want to express, in this public manner, my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, for this profound act of humanitarian generosity to the People of Liberia.

I would also like to thank him for the very high level of representation that he has sent to grace this occasion on his Government's behalf, led by His Excellency Sheikh Shakhboot Nahyan Al Nahyan, Minister of State, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates, and including Her Excellency Dr. Aysha Sultan Aldhaferi, Executive Director of the Military Health Services of the UAE Army, among others. Your Excellencies, thank you for coming to Liberia to share this historic moment with us. You are very welcome!

Greeting in Arabic

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The inauguration of the Emirates Hospital today is a further manifestation of my Government's commitment to improving the quality of health services in Liberia by expanding health coverage to our rural population. This now brings to a total of three entirely new hospitals that have been built and opened during my Administration, namely: Gbandeya Hospital, Rivercess; 14 Military Hospital, Margibi; and now Emirates Hospital, Gbarpolu.

When I stopped here more than a year ago during my County Tour, it was easy to spot the historical deficit that Gbarpolu County has suffered in infrastructure and healthcare. It was therefore never a difficult decision to choose Gbarpolu as the location for this hospital complex. It is my hope that we can now have an adequate number of trained staff to man this excellent facility.

I would also like to thank the Management and Staff of Intbox Global Building Contracting LLC, Dubai, UAE, the construction company that built this facility in only 14 months from groundbreaking, in spite of the challenges brought about by

the Covid-19 pandemic, and its sub-contractor, Horizon Construction Company of Equatorial Guinea.

FELLOW CITIZENS, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Improving healthcare delivery has always been foundational to the Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development. This is why there have been consistent increases and add-ons to the operational budgets for already-existing hospitals, in order to provide the equipment and trained staff required for the delivery of critically-needed services.

As we strive to improve the health sector by training healthcare workers both at home and abroad, and by providing free medical education in public health training institutions, such as the Medical School and the School of Pharmacy, my Government is committed to creating access to health infrastructures by constructing more new health facilities in under-served communities.

You will therefore be pleased to know that my Government is currently finalizing talks with our good friends in the United Arab Emirates for additional structures of this nature, to be built in other parts of the country. The goal is to ensure access and affordability, as we exert more effort to improve quality healthcare

This is another demonstration of the commitment we have always voiced to help to improve the living condition of our people, regardless which part of the country they may be.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, and our friends from the UAE may God bless the works of our hand and save the State.

I thank you.