SPECIAL REMARKS by

His Excellency Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr.

President of the Republic of Liberia

at the Inaugural Meeting of the Steering Committee for the Liberia Peace, Reconciliation and Memorial Museum

Executive Pavilion, Monrovia

Monday, November 16, 2026

Excellencies; the Doyen and Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Representatives of International Organizations;

Members of the Legislature and the Judiciary;

The Dean and Members of my Cabinet;

Traditional and Religious Leaders;

Honorable Hadja Mamaka Bility, Minister of State without Portfolio and Chairperson of the Steering Committee;

Ambassador Aliou Mamadou Dia, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme and Co-Chairperson; Distinguished Members of the Steering Committee;

Our Partners and Friends from Rwanda and South Africa;

Dr. Dimitri Sanga, Director of UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa;

The Families of the victims and Survivors;

The Youth;

Members of the Press;

My Fellow Liberians:

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good Afternoon,

It is a privilege to chair this inaugural meeting, and to welcome you to the beginning of a work that will outlive us all. We gather today because Liberia has chosen to remember.

For fourteen years, our country knew war, war that took the lives of our brothers and sisters, scattered our families across the world, and wounded our common life.

We have lived in peace for more than two decades, and for that we give thanks to God and to the resilience of the Liberian people. But peace that is not built on truth is a peace that is not yet complete. A nation that does not face its past cannot fully secure its future.

On July 26 of this year, in Buchanan, we announced several national history and heritage policy initiatives, including the National Historical Recovery and Repatriation Initiative and the revival of the National History Project, both recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

A Presidential Committee to advise on the implementation of these priorities will be announced in the coming days. As I stated then, during our Independence day celebration, it was a nation–building imperative to preserve and interpret the history that defines our identity. Liberia must recover its history; the whole of it, so our children may know who they are and where they come from. For too long, that call waited. What we initiate today will also answer that call.

On Friday, we signed the Project Charter for this Museum, the Chairperson, the Co-Chairperson and I. The Charter is the founding document of this Institution. It sets out its purpose, its governance and its program of work. It is a promise, written down and signed, that the memory of our past will be preserved, that the truth will be told, and that reconciliation will be pursued, not in words alone, but in a national institution that will stand for generations.

This Museum will not be a building alone. It will be a home for our archives and our testimonies for the documents, the photographs and the voices of those who lived through our history, so that they are never lost. It will be a place of learning, where our young people, scholars and others come to understand what happened and why. It will be a place of memorial, where we honor those we lost. And it will be a place of reconciliation, where Liberians of every county, every faith and every background can meet the truth together and choose, together, the future.

On the banners of this meeting are five words: Remember, Understand, Learn, Reconcile, Prevent. Those five words are the journey this Museum will take our nation on. We remember, so that the dead are not forgotten. We understand, so that we know how we came to war. We learn, so that we do not repeat it. We reconcile, so that we may live together in peace. And we prevent, so that no generation of Liberians ever again endures what ours endured.

Let me say this plainly: this Museum belongs first to the victims and survivors of our conflict, and to their families. Nothing about them must be done without them. Their voices must be heard in the rooms of the Museum, their stories must be told in the halls, and their dignity must be honored in everything we build. If we fail them, we fail the purpose of this Museum.

We do not walk this road alone. Our brothers and sisters from Rwanda and South Africa have walked it before us, and they have come to share what they have learned. UNESCO brings the wisdom of the world in preserving memory and heritage. The United Nations and the UNDP stand with us, as they have stood with Liberia through our recovery. We welcome their experiences, and we will keep Liberian ownership of this work, for this is Liberia's story, and it must be told in Liberia's voice.

Over these three days, this Committee will take the decisions that set this work in motion: the Charter, the implementation plan, the budget, the working groups, the financing, and the first ninety days of work. I ask you to decide, not only to discuss. The Liberian people are watching, and they are waiting, not for speeches, but for action. Let us give them both: the words today, and the work tomorrow. And let us build this Museum properly on sound feasibility, on good design, on financing that is secured, so that what we begin here endures.

And let us remember for whom we build. Many of our people were born after the war or were only children when it ended. They did not choose the conflict, but they inherited its consequences. This Museum is for them, so that they may know the truth of their country, and so that they may build a Liberia more united than the one they inherited.

Let us remember our past. Let us build a united future. That is the promise of this Museum, and that is the promise I ask you to carry out of this room today.

May God bless our work, and may God bless the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of South Africa and the Republic of Liberia.

Thank you.