

Statement By His Excellency Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr.,
President of The Republic of Liberia
at the Opening of the 2024 Korea - Africa Summit

Seoul, South Korea

Tuesday, 4 June, 2024

Excellency Yoon Suk Yeol, President of the Korean Republic, esteemed fellow Heads of State and Representatives of Government, Business Leaders, Civil Society Organizations, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to join you at this momentous and auspicious gathering bringing together leaders of the African continent and their South Korean counterparts in a historic summit that will potentially impact about 20% of the world's population.

It is an honor to join my colleagues in thanking the government and people of the Republic of Korea for hosting this summit and for extending to us the wonderful hospitality the Korean people are known for.

The Republic of Korea has been a true friend and partner, one that we can learn from, and has so much to offer Africa in the continent's quest for a transformative future.

As we wait with bated breath about the outcome of the 2024 Korea - Africa Summit, the first of its kind, the theme of this gathering - "The Future We Make Together: Shared Growth, Sustainability, and Solidarity" - must remind us that

the future we want for our people and the world cannot just be hoped for or dreamed of or even guaranteed. It is one only achieved through concerted and deliberate actions.

The twin processes of globalization and technological advancement have spurred growth and economic development globally. But while they both have ushered the twenty-first century with remarkable feats of human development, such impact on the world populations, especially in Africa, has been unequal.

This is why "shared growth" as part of the theme of this summit should express our collective desire that growth must come with development, prosperity must be inclusive to benefit all people, and that dividends of development should not be the exclusive preserve for a privileged few.

Shared growth and a shared future must also be pursued in tandem with Agenda 2063, the pan-African effort to promote collective prosperity, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the World Sustainable Development Goals.

Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

We seek an outcome from this summit that allows the application of what we have collectively been endowed with to increase prosperity and improve the livelihoods of our people.

However, we must equally recognize that sustainability should undergird the drive for development. Resources are not infinite; therefore, the judicious use or exploitation of our collective natural wealth must always be considered in maintaining a sustainable earth for future generations.

This means achieving a sustainable future by accepting options or alternatives that do not leave the earth depleted but also safeguard the environment.

As one of the custodians of the equatorial rainforest, Liberia intends to promote a sustainable future by leveraging this natural asset to contribute to the fight against climate change.

Excellencies,

Those attending this summit represent about a fifth of the world's population, and as a community, we have a critical mass in solidarity that should enable us to confront and address the challenges facing our common world.

In the context of South-South cooperation, the nations gathered here have in many respects shared experiences and a common objective to improve the social and economic conditions of their populations.

This summit should further foster South-South cooperation to address mutual developmental issues in the global south.

No nation can address the myriad of complex global challenges alone. It is by standing together in solidarity that we can bring our collective efforts to bear tackling climate change, disease, hunger, poverty, and the many problems that plague us collectively.

As we look forward to the deliberations of this first and historic Korea - Africa Summit, we must remember that the future is not guaranteed; we must determine it by deliberately taking actions that will leverage our potential to achieve common goals and foster a better future for our people, a transformed, equitable and sustainable future.

We can achieve this in firm partnership with the proud people of Korea who have taught us the importance of human capital - their greatest resource - in transforming the future of any nation.

Thank you.