

Special Remarks by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
At the 163rd Celebration of National Flag Day  
Monrovia City Hall, Tuesday, August 24, 2010

Our Guest Speaker [Rev. Emmanuel Z. Bowier, who delivered the National Flag Day Oration], I've decided that I would put him and Father Tikpor [the Right Monsignor Dr. Robert Tikpor, 163<sup>rd</sup> Independence Day National Orator] in one room together, and ask them to come up with what is the history of our country.

I want to make three points. First, to say how very proud we are, all of us who stood there today and watched as you went by, parading and doing the "Eyes Right." It brought to memory a time when we were like you, when we, too, marched in front of the Centennial Pavilion, and gave our "Eyes Right." And so it pleased me when I saw you. I want to say to you, you looked great.

The second point is to talk about – and it has been said by all those who spoke – is how important it is to get an education. The value of education in your life is something that nobody can take from you. If you want to be whatever you want to be, place emphasis on getting that knowledge, that education, that will enable you to achieve your objectives.

We cannot, we cannot allow you to fail the WAEC exams again. That means that you have to take the responsibility, you and your parents, to take advantage

of the opportunity that's being afforded you. We know we have many problems to address to provide quality education – better facilities, more qualified teachers, better instruction materials – and we are going to try to do that. But you also need to do your part.

Your part is to study; to stay out of the video shops; to stop drinking “slide.” You all know what they call “slide”? It's the thing you put in the drink and say you're “sliding” – because that will not take you there.

Please study. Please strive for excellence. Please be the best you can be, in whatever you want to be. That's all you have to do.

The third thing is to respect authority. Too many times the young people express their dissatisfaction, their disappointment, their anger in such a manner that shows indiscipline and disrespect. We need to go back to some of those old-fashioned values: honesty, hard work, discipline. Those are the things that make a great nation and a great people. And I know today, as you go about studying and playing, you do so in an environment of peace. We hope you will use this peace that has been granted to you to show that you can make for yourself a better life, so that we can hand over to you the authority of this government and you can become the great leaders of tomorrow that we know you want to be.

Thank you.