

WELCOME REMARKS BY

H.E. MRS. ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA AND
CHAIRPERSON OF THE ECOWAS AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF
STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

**AT THE FIFTY-FIRST ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS
AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

FARMINGTON HOTEL, HARBEL

MARGIBI COUNTY, LIBERIA

JUNE 4, 2017

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government of the ECOWAS Authority;
Honorable Chair and Members of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers and other Ministers;
Your Excellency Mr. Marcel de Souza, President of the ECOWAS Commission;
Your Excellency Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of the State of Israel;
Your Excellency Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of Nigeria;
Your Excellency, Mr. Moussa Mahammat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission;
Your Excellency Madam Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the European Commission;
Your Excellency Dr. Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for West Africa;
Mr. Litse, The Director General of West Africa representing the African Development Bank President, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, Mr. Vice President, Honorable Speaker of the Houses;
Your Honor, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia;
Officials of the Government of Liberia;
Political and Business leaders of Liberia;
Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps;
Representatives of Civil Society;
Commissioners and Heads of ECOWAS Institutions;
Members of the Press;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me offer a special welcome to Prime Minister Netanyahu of the State of Israel who, in response to the invitation of the 50th Session of the ECOWAS Authority, has joined us after many hours of flight. Your presence is very highly appreciated and underscores the historic nature of this gathering.

I also welcome, in a special manner, the Vice President of the European Union, who is also attending a meeting of the Authority for the first time.

Although the African Union and the United Nations are always represented at meetings of the Authority, I must nevertheless give them special recognition because of the complementarity which exists between our organizations.

The people of Liberia are honoured by your presence. Since the convening of the 16th Summit of the Organization of African Unity in 1979, Liberia has not hosted a Summit of this magnitude. This meeting marks a turning point in the post conflict recovery and reconstruction.

This meeting hold a special meaning for us for another reason. We can recall today the pivotal role of ECOWAS in the restoration of peace following the protracted civil crisis in Liberia. Many ECOWAS citizens made the ultimate sacrifice with their lives for the uninterrupted peace which we continue to enjoy.

Today, our organization continues its mission of promoting peace even as it faces challenges linked to the spread of terrorism. Terrorist attacks are engendering instability in a number of our member states, and we know that terrorism constitutes a growing threat for all of us. The most recent manifestation of this menace was the attack perpetrated against the people of Niger resulting in the loss of lives. We must work in concert across borders and oceans to end this threat.

May I therefore ask you to rise and join me a moment of silence to the memory of all of the innocent souls and gallant citizens of ECOWAS whose lives have been shortening brutally by conflict and terrorism. (SILENCE) May their souls rest in perfect peace.

I welcome all of you again and wish you a perfect stay in Liberia, however short.