

REMARKS

BY

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

AT THE 2022 BICENTENNIAL EDITION

OF

THE NATIONAL KUKATORNON PEACE FESTIVAL

EJS MINISTERIAL COMPLEX

AUGUST 18, 2022

***Her Excellency Chief Dr. Jewel Howard Taylor,
Vice President of the Republic of Liberia;***

***Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf,
Former President of the Republic of Liberia;***

***Mr. Speaker and Honorable Members of the House of
Representatives, here present;***

***Mr. President Pro-Tempore and Honorable Members of the
Liberian Senate, here present;***

The Dean and Members of the Cabinet;

Officials of Government;

The Doyen and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

The Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Liberia;

***Our Special Guests of the Mano River Union Women's
Conference***

Bishops, Prelates and Members of the Clergy;

Chiefs and Traditional Leaders;

Our Development Partners;

Political and Business Leaders;

Marketers, Students;

Members of the Fourth Estate;

My Fellow Citizens;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have come to realize that the month of August holds something special and positive for Liberia's peace. For example, it was on August 24, 1990 that the gallant men of ECOMOG landed on Liberian soil to begin a long and costly process of peace enforcement, peace monitoring and peacekeeping. Again, the first of a series of fourteen (14) peace accords was signed on August 7, 1990. Then came the Abuja accords, which were signed on August 19, 1995 and August 17, 1996 respectively. And the final agreement was signed on August 18, 2003. Isn't that remarkable?

And so once again, on this 18th day of August, 2022, it gives me great pleasure to join Ambassador Julie Endee and her able team, to mark 18 years since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of Accra. The theme of this celebration, **"Let's Maintain the Peace"**, is appropriately in place. It is a binding duty and obligation on us all, fellow Liberians, to maintain the peace that we have promised to the world and to ourselves.

At this juncture, let me congratulate Ambassador Julie Endee and all those who have supported her planning and execution of this elaborate program. I also want to use this opportunity to welcome guests who have traveled from abroad to honor the invitation to grace this occasion with their presence.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

My entry in public service began with the position of Peace Ambassador. While in this capacity, I focused much more on ensuring that nothing interrupts the peace we Liberians, our neighbors and partners have suffered to achieve. I am happy that I served in that capacity, because the experience from there has strengthened me to be tolerant and respectful to others when their grievances are expressed. It is out of these experiences that I have developed the firm believe that an open and tolerant society is an essential element of peace and stability.

It is often said, and quite correctly, that experience is the best teacher. The experience we Liberians got during the long and bloody civil war in our country is more than a teacher - it is a ***professor!!*** We have to forever memorize and remember the lessons of pains, deaths, separations, and displacement.

Certainly, we shall never forget the lessons of conversion from honor to destitution; from a respected nation-state to an unwanted pariah state. We suffered in the wilderness of chaos and destruction for 14 terrible years. Now it is expected of us to demonstrate that we are a nation of respect, dignity and integrity.

Maintaining eighteen years of unbroken peace is a huge achievement, for which we must applaud ourselves. But going forward on the peace path is a challenge all of us have to take together. In this light, I urge you, my fellow citizens, to join me in making Liberia a place of peace before any other consideration. We cannot have sustainable development, nor can we enjoy our pluralistic democracy, in a chaotic environment.

The material and human cost of our civil war was huge - billions of dollars and thousands of human lives. Millions suffered psychological trauma as a result of fourteen years of calamity. Because our peace has now been achieved after this massive expenditure of blood and treasure, we must now handle it with care.

MY FELLOW CITIZENS, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

On behalf of the Liberian nation, let me now pay homage to the member states of ECOWAS, the AU, the EU, the UN, the International Contact Group on Liberia, as well as Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Joaquin Chissano of Mozambique, John Kufuor of Ghana, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria for their direct and personal roles in facilitating peace in Liberia.

We would also like to recognize the heroic exploits of the commanders and men of ECOMOG and UNMIL for keeping our peace. We should also make special mention of former President Abdusalami Abubakar of Nigeria, who served as the chief facilitator of our peace, and Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, who left no stone unturned to deliver peace to Liberia. My own brother President Nana Akufo Addo of Ghana, then as Foreign Minister of Ghana, did all within his authority to lead us to peace.

I say thanks to all of you!

I also say thanks to the people of Liberia!

And finally, I say thanks to God Almighty for giving Liberia peace!

Long live Liberia, Happy Land!! May God bless us all.

I thank you.

