

REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. GEORGE

MANNEH WEAH

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

AT THE

VIRTUAL SUMMIT

OF HEADS OF STATE

OF THE

WEST AFRICAN MONETARY ZONE (WAMZ)

June 23, 2020

OPENING REMARKS:

Excellencies,

I would like to thank my friend and brother, His Excellency Julius Madaa Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, for convening this Virtual Meeting of the Heads of State of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ).

Let me also seize this moment to extend a hand of solidarity and a word of sympathy to all my colleagues, the Heads of State of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ), as we battle the COVID 19 Pandemic which is causing devastation and deaths in our various countries.

As we gather today to discuss issues surrounding the implementation of the proposed ECOWAS Common Currency Program, I urge that we remain mindful of the key principles of solidarity and unity upon which ECOWAS was founded. These founding principles are to guide us as we seek to unite all our peoples and forge ahead as a sub-region towards economic growth and development.

I recognize that there are some differences that have been brought about by the approaches and decisions of some of our francophone colleagues, members of the West African Monetary Union (WAEMU), which have stalled the process of achieving a common currency for ECOWAS, the ECO.

Excellencies, my dear brothers:

The solution to these differences of views and actions cannot and will not come through confrontation.

I believe we have to continue to work in the spirit of African solidarity and West African unity to resolve these issues. It is only through informed and cordial dialogue that we will be able to harmonize the differences between ourselves and members of the francophone bloc.

I believe there is a way out through negotiations and diplomacy. We must open those channels now to de-escalate tension before it is too late.

Let me recount our recent history when my country, Liberia, benefitted from the unity of ECOWAS at the height of our civil war. It was this solidarity that brought both English-speaking and French-speaking countries under the single banner of ECOWAS to Liberia to save lives. It is this

solidarity that the great founders of ECOWAS have left with us to cherish and protect. As we meet at this highest level, we must use this legacy wisely to preserve and protect the unity of our sub-regional organization, ECOWAS.

Excellencies, I would advise that a special committee be established to discuss these issues with President Ouattara and other Heads of State.

The goal of this committee would be to prevent WAEMU from implementing its decision before end of June 2020 or anytime thereafter. This will win us some time to continue to resolve this matter and get the Eco back on course. The Special Committee should also seek audience with French President Macron.

Excellencies, I have no doubt we can go beyond this difficulty and continue to work to achieve the goal of a common currency under ECOWAS.

I thank you.