

REMARKS

BY

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

AT THE

OPENING OF A TEMPORARY QUALITY CONTROL LABORATORY

AND

LAYING OF CORNERSTONE OF A QUALITY CONTROL LABORATORY COMPLEX

BY

THE LIBERIA MEDICINES AND HEALTH PRODUCTS REGULATORY AUTHORITY

KING'S FARM
LOWER CAREYSBURG
MONTERRADO COUNTY, LIBERIA

MAY 13, 2022

The Speaker, President Pro-Tempore, and Members of the 54th Legislature;

The Dean and Members of the Cabinet;

The Doyen and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

The Superintendent of Montserrado County;

The Mayor of Careysburg;

Other Officials of Government, here present;

The Chairman and Members of the Board of Directors of the Liberia Medicines and Health Products Regulatory Authority;

The Managing Director and Staff of the Liberia Medicines and Health Products Regulatory

Authority;

Our International Partners, USAID, the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the West Africa Health Organization; and Global Fund;

Members of the Fourth Estate;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for inviting me here today to grace this occasion marking the dedication of a very important facility that will contribute to the general health of the nation.

This newly-constructed temporary Quality Control Laboratory will enable you to begin full testing of medicines in Liberia in your own purpose-built facilities, since the time when your Laboratory, which used to be located in the JFK Medical Center, was gutted by fire in 2017.

You have informed me that during all these five years, you have been operating in rented premises, where the work space was not sufficient as required by international standards for quality management systems and medicines regulations.

I am therefore particularly proud to learn that you have taken the initiative to build this temporary Quality Control Laboratory, which has been funded 100% by the fees that you have collected locally. This is indeed commendable.

I am even more pleased to be informed that, from the same local revenue collected, together with some support from Government, you have been able to complete the construction of the foundation of an ultra-modern laboratory complex here at King's Town in Careysburg, which will ensure that all medicines and health products, including cosmetics, coming into this country are tested for their compliance with internationally-accepted standards of quality.

You have invited me to lay the first block today on the foundation for this new facility. I would like to encourage and challenge you to dedicate all your efforts, and mobilize all the resources which may be at your disposal, to complete this new permanent Quality Control Laboratory Complex within the next 12 months.

After many years of struggling to operate in rented premises that were inadequate for your requirements, you deserve to be in your own buildings. In this regard, I want to assure you that you can count on my staunch support in this worthy endeavor, because we appreciate the work that you continue to do in the interest of the Liberian people.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Health is an essential part of the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development. Without a healthy nation, whatever initiative we embark upon will amount to nothing. I therefore want to assure you today that the dedication of this laboratory has my fullest backing and commendation. It is vital to have a system for inspecting the quality of medical drugs on the Liberian market.

In the past we have been confronted with many incidents of the abundance of fake drugs and other health products. I therefore urge the Liberia Medicine and Health Product Regulatory Authority to continue on the path of enforcing existing laws and regulations aimed at protecting the general public from dangerous and fake medical products.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The commitment of my Administration to a healthy nation remains unwavering. That is why since I assumed the Presidency, we have continued to improve and equip Liberia's largest referral hospital, the John F. Kennedy Medical Center, as well as undertaken the construction of several new health facilities throughout the country. We have also ensured the training of health workers and have incorporated additional medical staffs on the government payroll, while upgrading their salaries.

You can be assured that these efforts will continue despite limited resources and competing priorities. My Administration remains committed to the goal of making Liberia a center of excellence in the health sector, thereby reducing our reliance on other nations for solutions. As a demonstrate of our dedication to this cause, I am pleased to inform you that there has been a progressive increment in the national budget for health. However marginal, we will continue to allot more resources annually to this cause.

At this juncture, I would like to take this opportunity to express the appreciation and gratitude of my Government for the steadfast support that the Liberia Medicines and Health Products Regulatory Authority has received from our International Partners, namely, the World Bank, the Global Fund, the World Health Organization, the West Africa Health Organization, and the USAID, through its "Promoting the Quality of Medicines Plus" Program.

We are all aware that testing of medicines is an expensive process, from the purchase and calibration of testing equipment, to the buying of chemicals, reagents, and other laboratory supplies. Not only will we continue to seek support from our donors and partners to assist with the full setup of the new laboratory systems, but we would like to call upon them to explore the possibility of sourcing funding to assist with the construction of the new buildings that are about to be built on this site.

In closing, let me say that the establishment and operation of this testing center for medicines is an important part of the health care ecosystem of this country, to which my Government attaches great importance. We will continue to strive to improve the facilities available to the citizens of this country for adequate health care, because we believe that good health is an important human right.

It is often said that a healthy nation is a wealthy nation. So while we reconstruct the systems of governance that fell apart as a result of the war, and revamp the challenging economic situation, we cannot neglect the health and well-being of our citizens in general.

It is only through our collective efforts that we can rebuild this nation.

I thank you.