

REMARKS

BY

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

VISITOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA

AT THE 100th COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA

FENDALL CAMPUS

UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA

DECEMBER 11, 2019

His Excellency Dr. Julius Maade Wonie Bio, President of the Republic of Liberia, and Commencement Speaker;

Madam Jewel Howard Taylor, Vice President of the Republic of Liberia;

The Speaker, and Members of the House of Representatives;

The President Pro-Tempore and Members of the Liberian Senate;

The Chief Justice and Justices of the Supreme Court of Liberia;

The President and Members of the Board of Trustees of the University of Liberia;

Dr. Julius Julukun Sarwolo Nelson, President of the University of Liberia;

Former Presidents of the University of Liberia, here present;

The Dean and Members of the Cabinet;

Other Officials of Government, here present;

The Doyen and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Heads of Colleges and Universities;

Members of the Faculty, Senate and Council of the University of Liberia;

The President and Members of the Student Union;

The President and Members of the Alumni Association;

Officiating Prelates and Clergy;

Special Guests and their Spouses;

Students;

Members of the Fourth Estate;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Before I begin, I would like to say a warm and brotherly welcome to my colleague, His Excellency Dr. Julius Maade Bio, President of our Sister Republic of Sierra Leone, and to thank him wholeheartedly for accepting your invitation to serve as the Commencement Speaker on this historic occasion of the Centennial Anniversary of this venerable Institution.

I also want to thank you, President Bio, for your eloquent and thoughtful Commencement Address. It was deeply instructive and profoundly inspirational, and has given all of us the insight and courage to address the challenges which face us, and reasons to hope for a brighter future for all. Once again, my Dear Brother, please accept our sentiments of highest personal esteem and gratitude.

I must also congratulate you on the conferment of an Honorary Doctorate Degree upon you today, in a Special Convocation. I was fortunate to receive a similar honor last year, and the thought does not escape me that this makes the two of us Honorary Alumni of the University. Therefore, as faithful alumni, we must do all that we can to continue to support the work of our Alma Mater.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

It gives me great pleasure to be here today to join you all in celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the University of Liberia, and to mark this important milestone in the life of the University.

Indeed, it is a source of great honor and pride for me, that these historic Centennial Commencement Ceremonies are taking place during my tenure as Visitor to the University and President of Liberia.

We feel proud of this first century of success for our highest institution of learning in Liberia. And now, as you begin the second century of your existence, we wish you continued growth, development, and

success.

You must endeavor to continue to provide quality higher education that will be relevant to the specific requirements of our national economy, and yet produce globally competitive graduates that have the capacity to cope with the challenges of the modern world.

Dr. Nelson, you were newly-inducted as the 15th President of the University of Liberia just a few days ago. This is your challenge. And it is equally the challenge of your distinguished faculty and staff.

AND NOW, TO THE GRADUATES, MEMBERS OF THE CENTENNIAL CLASS OF 2019!!

You have fought a good fight, and today is your day of victory. You have run a long and hard race, and today all of you have reached the finish line as winners. Today marks the successful end of your undergraduate studies, and the completion of the current phase for those who received their graduate degrees. To each and every one of you, I extend my personal congratulations.

But this ending is not an end in itself. Rather, this ending provides the opportunity for a new beginning. We have learned today that you are the largest graduating class in the 100-year history of this Institution. The world awaits you, in your numbers.

During your sojourn through these hallowed halls of academe, you did not only acquire an education, but you also learned complex skills, intellectual agility, creativity, and acquired a capacity for innovation.

You must therefore come into the world, using these skills, not as job seekers, but as job creators. You must deploy these skills as entrepreneurs, and innovators.

For you, members of this special graduating class, you must not depend on a job market, that in practical terms can never absorb all of you. Rather, you must seek to create opportunities in the space of your chosen specializations, to carve out a niche for yourself, where you can not only become self-employed, but where you will eventually create employment for others, who have not been as fortunate as yourself in acquiring these skill-sets.

We look forward to feeling the positive impact you are going to make in our Nation and in the world at large, in the very near future. Welcome to the Real World. And Congratulations once again.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

In this moment of great joy and celebration, we must not forget to show our appreciation to the parents, guardians, and other relatives who had the vision to send their children and wards to this University, and who had the determination, resilience and fortitude to make the sacrifices that were necessary to sustain their wards and children here, until their goals were realized and their dreams came through. Let us give them a big hand of applause!!! We thank you, dear parents, guardians, and sponsors, from the bottom of our hearts.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I strongly believe that education is the key that can unlock the full potential of a nation and its people. It is a force that can change our common destiny for the better, and propel a country to progress and prosperity.

For this reason, many of you will know that I have provided scholarships for many thousands of Liberians over many years, even long before I assumed this High Office. Incidentally, many hundreds of those beneficiaries hold degrees from this University.

My Administration will continue to invest in quality education for sustainable national development.

I share the view of our distinguished Commencement Speaker, President Julius Maada Bio, when he stated recently at the launching of Sierra Leone's Free Education Program:

QUOTE " Human capital is the most valuable resource in any nation. By investing in the education of our children, we are investing in the future of our nation." UNQUOTE

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

For as long as I am the Visitor to the University of Liberia, and President of Liberia, I pledge my fullest support, and that of my Government, to the growth and success of this Institution.

I thank you.