

STATEMENT

BY

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

DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE

OF THE

SEVENTY-SEVENTH (77th) REGULAR SESSION

OF THE

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
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***His Excellency Mr. Csaba Korösi
President of the 77th United Nations General Assembly***

***His Excellency Mr. António Guterres,
Secretary-General of the United Nations***

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honored to address this 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on behalf of the Government and People of Liberia.

Let me congratulate His Excellency **Mr. Csaba Korösi** on his election as President of this 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, and assure him of Liberia's fullest support.

I would also like to commend your predecessor, His Excellency **Mr. Abdulla Shahid**, for a job well done in administering the affairs of the 76th Session of the General Assembly.

Let me also extend my profound thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his remarkable and visionary leadership.

This year's Assembly is taking place at a difficult time when, even as the world is recovering from the scourge of COVID-19, we continue to face the challenges of the war in Ukraine, climate change and its devastating effects on our environment.

Just as the Ukrainian people are enduring the harsh impact of this unwarranted military incursion, the rest of the world is feeling the harsh consequences of economic downturn caused by disruptions in global supply chains, food insecurity, and rising prices of basic goods and services.

The theme of this year's Assembly, "***A Watershed Moment: Transformative Solutions to Interlocking Challenges***", is both appropriate and meaningful. It not only reminds us about the current state of our world, and provides us the space to reflect on the multiple challenges that confront us today.

They include the health and socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the devastating effects of climate change, environmental concerns, poverty reduction, food insecurity, and gender inequality.

The challenges confronting the world today will require immediate collective global actions with the United Nations at the center of the search for solutions. In so doing, we must give special consideration to the needs of developing countries, particularly, the Least Developed Countries; in line with the Doha Program of Action for Least Developed Countries for the Decade; 2022-2031.

Working together with the United Nations family, Liberia hereby commits to protect our planet, to promote peace, prevent conflicts, to ensure sustainable financing, and to boost partnerships.

MR. PRESIDENT, EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

This commitment is reflected in the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development which embodies the expression of our shared determination to achieve peace, prosperity, national development; address extreme poverty, inequalities, regional disparities, infrastructure deficits, climate change, and equitable distribution of our national wealth.

Given Liberia's youthful population of more than sixty (60%) percent, my Government initiated a youth rehabilitation and empowerment program - **the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Disadvantaged Youth Project** between 2019 and 2021, with the subsequent launch of a 13-Million United States Dollars National Fund Drive for the rehabilitation and empowerment of at-risk youth in Liberia. We remain of the firm conviction that, when empowered, our youth can be a positive force for good.

As Liberia's Feminist-in-Chief, women empowerment and the promotion of gender equality remain key priorities of my Government. Women do not only comprise almost half of our country's population, but they also play important roles at all levels of our society, and must be given equally deserved attention, support, and a place at the leadership and governance tables in our society.

To this end, we have developed the legal framework; including the ratification of regional and international instruments to address gender inequalities which are being carried out as a result of socio-cultural perceptions, practices, and stereotypes that support male dominance and the subordination of women.

I would like to inform you that my Government, together with UN partners, is implementing the EU Spotlight Initiative to end violence and harmful traditional practices against women and girls, and promote their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Furthermore, the Government of Liberia is currently implementing a 50-Million United States Dollars ECOWAS-funded project to enhance the capacity of female entrepreneurs.

MR. PRESIDENT:

I wish to express Liberia's sincere gratitude to our local and international partners, both multilateral and bilateral, for their continued support to our national efforts in combating the pandemic.

As a result of that support, Liberia is well on its way to achieving herd immunity hopefully by the end of this year with sixty-seven (67%) percent of the population already fully vaccinated.

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

My Government continues to take actions through the formulation of new policy frameworks and strategic interventions to address the impacts of climate change and protect the environment.

Liberia commits to achieving a target of sixty-four (64%) percent reduction in carbon emission below business-as-usual by 2030.

We anticipate that the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Egypt (COP 27), will provide the opportunity to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

MR. PRESIDENT, EXCELLENCIES:

Sustainable development can take place only in a peaceful and secure environment. In fulfillment of our commitment to the maintenance of regional and global peace and security, Liberia takes pride as a troop-contributing country, with Liberian troops and other security apparatus serving in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and the United Nations Interim Security Forces for Abyei (UNISFA).

We thank the United Nations and our bilateral and multilateral partners for the support we continue to receive in facilitating our contribution to global and regional peace and security

MR. PRESIDENT, EXCELLENCIES:

I am pleased to report that the IMF's latest appraisal of the ongoing program it has with Liberia is very positive. It shows that inflation rates have been significantly reduced. There are now better prospects for economic growth compared to previous years - in spite of the negative effects of Covid-19.

Our efforts at instituting new policy measures to fight graft were also particularly commended in the report, along with our adherence to prudent fiscal management.

MR. PRESIDENT, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Democracy in Liberia also continues to grow from strength to strength. After many years of civil upheaval, Liberia is becoming a stronghold of peace and a safe haven for democracy.

This is because we have taken actions in the last few years to build and strengthen democratic institutions, such as the press and the Liberian Judiciary.

We have put forward new legislation that empower the media, while eradicating those that have tended to suppress free speech. I am proud to say that, from the beginning of my Administration to date, there is no political prisoner in Liberia.

At regional conferences of the Mano River Union and ECOWAS, which have been called to discuss efforts to restore democracy in a few trouble spots in our West African region, Liberia has constantly and consistently pleaded for a strict adherence to constitutional term limits, and for a return to democratic civilian rule in cases of military takeovers.

Liberia is expected to hold Presidential and Legislative elections in October 2023. The forthcoming elections will be crucial to consolidating our democracy.

In this regard, I wish to underscore my Government's unwavering commitment to ensuring that the enabling environment continues to exist for the conduct of peaceful, free, fair, transparent, and inclusive elections. This is in keeping with my commitment to ensure that the democratic will of the Liberian people is respected at all times.

In the run-up to the 2023 elections, it is incumbent upon all prospective candidates to avoid the incitement of violence, and any other behavior that could deprive the Liberian people of the peaceful space that they need to freely exercise their franchise, and freely express their political will in choosing their leaders. We must let the people decide, and then we must respect their decision. That is indeed the true essence of democracy.

Meanwhile, we will continue to count on the United Nations, and our various bilateral and multilateral partners, for financial, technical, and institutional capacity-building support.

MR. PRESIDENT, EXCELLENCIES:

If we must advance the common good of humanity, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, then international cooperation must be given primacy, and the principle of solidarity must have its rightful place.

We have the platform to generate the transformative solutions we seek. The world is watching, our people are watching; and we must now seize the moment; confront the challenges and collectively endeavor to lift the poor from poverty and hunger, sickness and disease, and ensure progress, development and prosperity for all.

At the same time, we must protect our planet, guarantee and maintain global peace, security, and stability.

Mr. President, we must pursue efforts to make the United Nations *more* efficient, *more* effective, *more* inclusive, *more* accountable, and *more* suited for the purpose.

I thank you.