

**STATEMENT BY  
HIS EXCELLENCY JOSEPH NYUMA BOAKAI, SR.  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA  
TO THE  
79<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK.**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2024**

**H.E. Philemon Yangon, President of the 79th Session of the  
United Nations General Assembly;**

**H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United  
Nations**

**Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;**

**Ambassadors;**

**Heads of Delegations and Esteemed Delegates;**

**Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen:**

I am honored to address the 79th Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly for the first time as President on behalf of the Government and People of Liberia after a smooth back-to-back democratic transition.

Liberia congratulates His Excellency Philemon Yangon on his election as President of the Seventy-ninth (79th) Session of the United Nations General Assembly. You can be assured of Liberia's support as you steer the affairs of General Assembly.

I extol His Excellency, Dennis Francis, for his astute leadership during his presidency of the Seventy-eighth (78th) Session of the General Assembly and commend his determination to inspire and rekindle hope globally.

I deeply thank Secretary-General ANTÓNIO GUTERRES for the remarkable and visionary leadership he continues to provide in pursuit of our collective mandate.

**MR. PRESIDENT, EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND  
GENTLEMEN;**

In the summer of 1945, Liberia joined other nations in San Francisco as one of the original signatories to the United Nations Charter.

On that fateful day, the world, having suffered the scourge of war, was full of hope and determined to reverse the past.

Nearly eighty years on, and reflecting on the Preamble of the United Nations Charter, which declares our commitment to 'promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,' we ask the question: has our reaffirmation of "faith ... in the dignity and worth of the human person ..." made eight decades ago been realized?

We must admit that the world has changed and the frontiers that we now embrace are different. Innate greed, insensitivity to the poor, the international drug epidemic, money launderings, dynamics of climate change and the impact of social media must compel us to rethink our approach to global peace and security. Our beloved United Nations must undergo the institutional and philosophical reflections required to respond to this new age.

As we assemble under the theme, 'Unity in Diversity for the Advancement of Peace, Sustainable Development, and Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere.' It is important to recognize the shared values and collective efforts that come from our unity within diversity.

We must acknowledge these as essential for advancing peace, sustainable development, and the inherent dignity of every human being worldwide. By doing so, we can build a better world where no one is left behind. Like many nations gathered at this assembly, Liberia re-commits to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Since the end of the country's conflict, we have strived to follow a development path that will lead to building a capable state. Twelve years ago, we dared to dream of a future within the realm of possibility, harboring core national aspiration to transform the future. Named Liberia Rising or Vision 2030, it has been the driving force behind all our planning efforts. The building blocks and tenets of Vision 2030 are significantly aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Our Government's ARREST Agenda is a comprehensive approach developed to address the economic and social needs of millions of Liberians, especially the youth, who account for sixty percent of the population. With an emphasis on agriculture, roads and infrastructure development, justice and the rule of law, education, sanitation, health, and tourism, the agenda has mainstreamed the SDGs and is designed to take Liberia to the "finish" line of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The fight against poverty and the promotion of human dignity is a steadfast commitment. Despite our progress, poverty remains a significant challenge, with over half of our population living below the poverty line.

The Sustainable Development Goals aim to eradicate poverty in all its forms by 2030, ensure social protection for the poor and vulnerable, and improve access to essential services. Liberia is dedicated to assessing the levels and causes of poverty and implementing strategies to reduce it and promote shared prosperity.

My Government also acknowledges the pressing need to address maternal and newborn mortality by implementing robust monitoring and evaluation of health services in the country to accelerate the reduction of maternal and newborn mortality.

We are particularly pleased with the United Nations H6 Joint Mission to Liberia earlier this year, which concluded with a commitment to combat the high burden of increasing newborn deaths.

We welcome the UN General Assembly's decision to declare July 25th as the International Day of Women and Girls of African descent this year. This significant milestone acknowledges that women and girls of African descent have unique challenges and that the global fight against slavery and racism is necessary to achieve gender equality.

Liberia credits its credentials by producing the first woman President of the UN General Assembly, Angie Brooks Randolph, and the first female President of Africa, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Liberia has witnessed and continues to witness the immense contributions of women and girls of African descent to politics, culture and in every area of societal development.

## **EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN;**

Liberia has enjoyed uninterrupted peace for almost two decades following 14 years of civil conflict. During this time, we have held four democratic elections, with last year's election marking the fourth since the return to democratic order in 2006.

In January of this year, Liberia achieved a historic milestone by peacefully transitioning from one democratic government to another. This progress is significant because, before the 2018 transition, the last democratic transition occurred in 1944, about 74 years earlier.

We are gradually fostering and solidifying a democratic culture, ensuring that democracy is here to stay in Liberia. Now it is time for our people to reap the democratic dividends.

The rule of law is fundamental for peace, justice, strong institutions, and dignity for the human person. Liberia is taking significant strides toward openness, transparency, and accountability by empowering and supporting transparency institutions. Our Government is committed to implementing audit recommendations by the General Audit Commission to restore public and donors' confidence in the governance system and improve regional and international cooperation.

In addition, the country has taken a major step in confronting its conflict past to ensure accountability and justice for crimes and other human rights violations committed during the war and promote healing and national reconciliation. A significant development in our transitional justice process was the signing on May 2, 2024, of Executive Order 131 to create the Office for the establishment of War and Economic Crimes Courts for Liberia, a key recommendation from the truth and reconciliation process in Liberia.

Our actions align with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Joint Follow-Up on Impunity, and Past Human Rights Violations. As we embark on this process and acknowledge the enormity of this task, my government seeks the support of the United Nations, partners, and stakeholders in the pursuit of justice for victims, peace, and reconciliation.

Liberia is facing a drug crisis that is affecting our youth and jeopardizing the country's future. This epidemic, driven by international criminal enterprises and their networks, poses a severe threat. In response, we have not only declared the drug epidemic a health emergency and a national security threat, but we have also taken steps to address this issue by establishing a dedicated national body to tackle drug abuse in Liberia. I urge the international community to join Liberia in addressing the escalating drug crisis.

## **EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN;**

The world is facing numerous crises, including global threats such as diseases, security, and climate change, as well as food and resource shortages.

Our vulnerabilities are evident, and we need to use our collective knowledge to find solutions that will preserve the planet for future generations.

Climate change is undeniably real, and its threat to our environment and way of life is becoming increasingly apparent. We must take urgent action to address this threat, including cooperative efforts to implement Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement.

Liberia, as the most forested country in West Africa with over half of its land covered by forests, plays a vital role in biodiversity and environmental sustainability. As a result, our country is taking important steps to lead the conversation on climate action.

My Government has called on our Legislature and other stakeholders to begin looking at the Paris Agreement, particularly under Article 6 to help advance actions towards establishing Liberia's Nationally Determined Contribution to combat climate change.

While we take these actions, we are mindful of the need to build capacity and invest in critical areas of our economy such as using alternative financing for investment in the blue and green economy, and technological transfer to support these climate actions.

### **EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN;**

The goals we set for ourselves and the future are better served on the foundation of peace and security. Having enjoyed peace for over two decades following a long-running conflict, we aim to promote peace and stability at home, in the region, and globally.

The threat of conflicts to our shared world underscores the importance of collaborative efforts to foster regional and global stability and peace. Therefore, we support all the UN's efforts to address peace and security issues worldwide.

Liberia is concerned about the escalating security challenges in the West African region, including terrorism and economic and political instability. These pose a significant threat to regional peace, so we urge full dialogue and cooperation among West African nations to address these issues effectively.

Meanwhile, Liberia firmly stands with the rest of West Africa in the resolve to maintain our fifty-year-old regional economic commission (ECOWAS) intact. We oppose efforts to disintegrate our union and will not accept the

region being used for proxy conflicts. We look to the AU and the UN to support us in keeping the regional body united.

Similarly, at the global level, we call for an immediate ceasefire in the Middle East to provide civilians with essential humanitarian relief. We urge both the Israelis and Palestinians to engage in negotiations toward lasting peace, including a two-state solution. Additionally, we see the ongoing conflict in Ukraine as a threat to global peace and security. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a peaceful resolution that also respects Ukraine's territorial integrity.

**MR. PRESIDENT, EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN;**

This year's assembly is a pivotal moment for Liberia's bid to ascend to the African non-permanent seat of the UN Security Council 2026. As we proudly announce our candidacy, we look forward to the support of member states to vote Liberia overwhelmingly to the non-member seat of the Security Council, where we can work with Council members to promote peace, justice, and security.

Liberia is dedicated to promoting sustainable growth and ensuring human dignity for all. Liberia is prepared to work together with the United Nations, other global allies, and the international community to accomplish the Sustainable Development Goals and establish a fair, peaceful, and sustainable world.

This commitment to unity is deeply ingrained in Liberia's history as a founding member of the United Nations and other post-war international institutions, as well as regional and sub-regional organizations. It also affirms our strong belief in multilateralism and an international rules-based world built on shared values and principles crucial to our future. This future of a more peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world must be all-encompassing, fair, and dignified for everyone worldwide.

ONE UN, ONE WORLD

Thank You!