

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. GEORGE MANNEH WEAH PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH
(78TH) REGULAR SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY UNITED
NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK, NEW YORK, USA

September 20, 2023

His Excellency Mr. Denis Frances,
President of the 78th United Nations General Assembly
His Excellency Mr. António Guterres,
Secretary-General of the United Nations
Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;
Ambassadors; Heads of Delegations;
Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me begin by extending sympathy to all nations experiencing loss of lives due to recent natural disasters. May the souls of all the faithfully departed rest in perfect peace.

I am honored to address this 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on behalf of the Government and People of the Republic of Liberia.

I congratulate His Excellency Mr. Denis Frances on his election as President of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, trusting that he will bring his wealth of experience to bear on the works of this august assembly. I wish to assure him of my delegation's fullest support as he steers the works of this Assembly successfully, in fulfillment of the expectation and confidence reposed in him.

Let me use this occasion to congratulate your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Csaba Korosi for the capable manner in which he administered the affairs of the 77th Session of this General Assembly.

Let me also commend His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary- General of the United Nations, for the astute manner in which he continues to administer the affairs of the United Nations in these difficult and challenging times. His

foresight, commitment and dedication have kept the United Nations firmly on course.

MR. PRESIDENT, EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES:

We have convened at a time when the world is faced with many challenges; security, social, economic, political and natural disasters. We must exert our collective efforts to confront these challenges, with a view of resolving them in order to have a safer, secured and prosperous future.

We must continue to promote global solidarity and rebuild trust in accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs, by design, require bilateral and multilateral collaborations to achieve the results we seek.

The theme of this year's debate, ***"Rebuilding Trust and Reigniting Global Solidarity: Accelerating Action on The 2030 Agenda and Its SDGs Towards Peace, Prosperity, Progress, and Sustainability For All,"*** adequately captures our current global demands.

There is a critical need to ensure that development assistance is aligned with SDG projects. That is why my delegation welcomes, and supports the Secretary-General's agenda of action to accelerate the implementation of existing agreements; including the Sustainable Development Goals, and to re-embrace global solidarity, and find new ways to work together for the common good of mankind.

As the world deals with unprecedented global political and security challenges there are growing concerns about the proliferation of non-state armed actors, threats of nuclear escalation and extreme climate conditions. These challenges continue to serve as obstacles to our quest for a safe and peaceful world.

Reaching the 2030 vision is to ensure that the journey is secured through accountability and mutual understanding. Liberia is committed to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); they are in line with our Flagship National Development Plan - the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development, which represents our resolve to achieve peace and prosperity, while addressing the structural impediments to economic growth and national development.

MR. PRESIDENT:

The slowdown in global economic growth continues to be a challenge. Over the past 12 months, Liberia has made progress in areas, ranging from health to education, gender equality, and infrastructural development. We are proud of our achievements in reducing maternal mortality rates, increasing gender parity in school enrollment, and elevating our overall health and well-being. Liberia appreciates the fact that this august body has once again directed its attention to issues of global health, as demonstrated by the number of high level meetings to keep this critical issue on our collective agenda.

MR. PRESIDENT:

We emphasize unity of purpose, as we address challenges aimed at providing basic services to all peoples. Considering that more than 60% of Liberia's population comprises of youths, the future of our nation rests on their shoulders. Understanding this immense responsibility, we are committed to continue paving the way for their growth and development.

Being cognizant that structural transformation drives prosperity, we are focused on infrastructural development with roads and energy playing a critical part. Thanks to the support of our many partners, we remain unwavering in our commitment to explore means to further the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as it represents the roadmap towards prosperity.

I support Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' proposed SDG stimulus plan, and call for the actualization of the 500 billion dollars per year in order to boost sustainable development for developing countries through tackling the high cost of debt and rising risks of debt distress; scaling-up of affordable long-term financing for development; and expanding contingency financing to countries in need.

MR. PRESIDENT:

Liberia profoundly appreciates the continued engagement and support from the United Nations System in consolidating its peace, and seeking to address emerging challenges. Liberia will continue to cooperate and collaborate with the United Nations as it continues to rebuild and strengthen its institutions and infrastructure.

Five years ago, on the occasion of my first address to this august assembly, we informed you of a peaceful democratic transition that had just taken place in Liberia.

With your support, and that of our friends, we have kept the democratic torch burning. We have maintained peace and security. We have protected human rights and the rights of the media to operate peacefully and freely. The Liberian people have enjoyed the full exercise of their constitutional rights. The country is well on course of consolidating its democratic credentials.

I am pleased to inform you again that in a few weeks, Liberians will go to the polls, in keeping with the Liberian constitution to vote in our scheduled Presidential and Legislative elections. The October polls will mark the fourth peaceful general elections in Liberia since the end of the civil war in 2003.

This 78th session is taking place at a time when my country is preparing for the first elections since the withdrawal of the UN Peacekeeping presence from Liberia. The October 10 elections is an opportunity to sustain the gains made in our reconstruction and development processes.

MR. PRESIDENT, EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The Government of Liberia has taken all necessary measures to ensure a free, fair, transparent, peaceful, inclusive and credible elections. The National Elections Commission has been strengthened to ensure that it operates without undue influence. In addition, political parties have committed themselves to a nonviolent electoral process by signing the 2023 Farmington River Declaration, which obligates all actors in the elections to continue to promote peace.

As a strong believer in democracy let me reiterate my call for the respect of constitutional governance and respect for the will of the people. While addressing the issue of elections and democracy, permit me to congratulate all democratically elected leaders around the world

MR. PRESIDENT:

Our world is also under threat from natural calamities, as seen with extreme climate conditions globally. It is therefore our collective responsibility to urgently

prioritize addressing the climate crisis as we strive to reach a target of 64 percent reduction in carbon emission. There remains a need to prioritize support to countries, including Liberia that have the capacity to use its biodiversity, in building resilience against the changing climate.

The United Nations has always been confronted with challenges, and has withstood the test of time. Hence, this too will come to pass. I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his New Agenda for Peace. Liberia is in solidarity with these bold steps needed to address the triple crises of disruption, biodiversity loss and pollution destroying our planet. Liberia is hopeful that concrete global actions towards the attainment of the goals of the Common Agenda will be achieved.

Liberia's journey is best captured in the spirit of unity, resilience, and ambition. Together, through collaboration and shared purpose, we can, and must shape a world that upholds the rights and dignity of every individual.

In alliance with our United Nations Family, Liberia remains resolute in its commitment: We pledge to protect our planet, promote peace, and prevent conflicts. We vow to ensure sustainable financing, and amplify our partnerships, reflecting our shared determination for a brighter future.

We must also accept that this can only be achieved through collaboration between and among Governments, non-government stakeholders and other partners; which will guarantee transparency, accountability, good governance, and the inclusion of all citizens in the decision-making process.

MR. PRESIDENT, EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Let us remind ourselves that our collective strength lies in our unity. Together, we can overcome any challenge, rebuild trust, promote peace, religious tolerance, uphold the tenants of democracy, rule of law, support women participation, encourage diplomacy and strengthen global solidarity.

I thank you.