

**SPECIAL MESSAGE**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. GEORGE MANNEH WEAH**

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF**

**THE OBSERVANCE OF THE 173<sup>rd</sup> INDEPENDENCE  
ANNIVERSARY**

**OF THE**

**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

**THE EXECUTIVE MANSION**

**MONROVIA, LIBERIA**

**JULY 26, 2020**

**Madam Vice President;**

**Mr. Speaker and Honorable Members of the House of Representatives;**

**Mr. President Pro-Tempore and Members of the Senate;**

**Mr. Chief Justice, Associate Justices, and Members of the Judiciary;**

**Doyen and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**

**Our Special Guests;**

**Dean and Members of the Cabinet;**

**Bishops, Prelates, and Members of the Clergy;**

**Officials of Government;**

**Chiefs and Traditional Leaders;**

**Development Partners;**

**Superintendents and Local Government Officials;**

**Political and Business Leaders;**

**Members of the Fourth Estate;**

**Marketers, Students;**

**My Fellow Citizens;**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:**

It is my pleasing duty to bring you greetings on this occasion of the observance of the One Hundred and Seventy-Third Anniversary of the founding of our dear Motherland, the Republic of Liberia. Let me also extend fond greetings and best wishes to you from my dear wife, Madame Clar M. Weah, the First Lady of the Republic of Liberia, who could not be present with us today due to official duties abroad.

On this day, it is befitting that we give thanks and praise to the Almighty God for preserving and protecting our Nation over all these years as a united country, where we as a People are at peace with each other and with our neighbors, and as a Nation we remain in peaceful co-existence with all other countries within the comity of nations.

However, it is important to note that we are gathered here today at a very difficult time in our history, when the entire world has been plagued by a devastating global pandemic called Covid 19, which since the beginning of this year has infected millions of people in almost all the countries of the world, and which continues to cause the unfortunate and alarming deaths of hundreds of thousands of people worldwide.

As we speak, this plague continues unchecked, spreading its destructive path to every corner of the globe, to the extent that it has overwhelmed the sophisticated public health systems of many advanced countries, and threatens to completely collapse the already fragile health systems of less developed countries.

Liberia has not been spared the ravishes of this deadly disease, although, due to our previous experience with the Ebola epidemic and our careful and professional management of the coronavirus, we have been able to keep our numbers of infected persons and deaths relatively low.

We declared and enforced appropriate health regulations at the onset of this pestilence, including quarantines, contact tracing and tracking, testing, social distancing, and the washing of hands and wearing of masks. These were later reinforced by the declaration of a State of Emergency and carefully calibrated curfews.

Over time, these measures have resulted in sufficiently satisfactory results to have encouraged our Government to gradually adjust the curfews and recently lift them altogether. We have also lifted the State of Emergency, although the country remains under the vigilance of very stringent health emergency regulations.

So while there is much to be thankful for, our economy and our people are still severely affected by the negative consequences of this pandemic. Not surprisingly, it has caused a drastic downturn in business activity and a consequent decline in revenue generation, as well as resulted in food shortages, rising inflation, and negative projections of GDP growth, amongst others.

There is no doubt that this unfamiliar, deadly, and invisible enemy has changed our lives in no small manner, and will continue to have a negative impact on our well-being and prospects for growth and prosperity in the years to come.

That is why we are commemorating this 173<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of our Nation's founding without the usual pomp and pageantry, but in a somber and sober manner. We should all take this occasion as an opportunity to ponder and to reflect upon a realistic, sensible, and united approach to the crisis that we face at this time as a Nation and a People.

I am sure that we have all been inspired by the powerful and eloquent oration from our Orator of the Day, the Rev. Dr. Simeon L. Dunbar, Founder and President of the Liberty Christian Center, on the Theme: ***"STANDING TOGETHER IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC"***. His analysis was constructive, his message was instructive and encouraging, and his conclusions and recommendations give us hope that if we stand together as one united people, with focus, discipline, and determination, we will not be defeated by this deadly disease. Thank you, Rev. Dr. Dunbar.

#### **DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

I call on you today to let us put our differences aside, whether they be political, religious, or social, and join together to fight this deadly disease. We are one people, who pledge allegiance to the same flag.

We offer our deepest sympathy to the families of those who have lost their lives to COVID-19, and to all those who remain afflicted by the disease, we wish them a full and speedy recovery.

My Administration will continue to exert every effort to help mitigate the impact of this pandemic on our people. Our healthcare practitioners have done a remarkable job to keep the disease under control so far, and will continue to do so, even in the face of rising numbers.

But it is heartwarming to see that the number of survivors is increasing, which is a testament to the enormous sacrifices of healthcare workers. We cannot thank them enough. They are our heroes!

Under my instructions, they will do all in their powers, with the backing of law enforcement agencies, to ensure strict compliance with the protocols meant to curtail the spread of the disease. These measures apply to all, regardless of status. We must stand together and take responsible actions that protect ourselves and our loved ones.

**MY FELLOW LIBERIANS:**

A review of our history will show that we are a resilient people, whose unity, amidst our diversity, has stood the test of time. We continue to live under God's favor and mercy, despite the many challenges we have faced in the past.

Yes, today the advent of the corona virus poses yet another threat to our country and to the well-being of our people. But, in the immortal words of our beloved national anthem, and I quote:

***“With heart and hand,  
Our country's cause defending,  
We'll meet the foe,  
With valor unpretending.”***

Unquote.

Let me now wish all of you a Happy July 26! Although this is customarily a time for gathering with family and friends, I ask you to carefully and strictly adhere to all of the existing health protocols, to keep you and your loved ones safe. It is only by observing all of these measures that we can ensure that we will not be defeated by this virus.

May God continue to bless and protect the People of Liberia.

***HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY TO ALL LIBERIANS, BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD!***

I thank you.