

OPENING REMARKS

BY

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

AT THE

THE CABINET RETREAT

PEACE EMPIRE HOTEL

GANTA CITY

NIMBA COUNTY

July 10, 2022

Her Excellency Chief Dr. Jewel Howard-Taylor,

Vice President of the Republic of Liberia;

The Dean and Members of the Cabinet;

Development Partners and Special Guests;

Officials of Government;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I wish to welcome you to this Presidential Cabinet Retreat and thank you for your active participation in the governance of our great Nation.

While I commend your hard work and dedication to duty, it is noteworthy that a lot still remains to be done to bring our nation to the promised land, as enshrined in the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), our national development plan.

Accordingly, we have carefully selected a set of priorities for consideration during this retreat, namely:

1. The PAPD performance.
2. Outlook of the national economy.
3. Management and coordination of foreign aid.
4. A review of the 2022 Legislative Agenda.
5. Increasing accountability and transparency in Government.
6. Enshrining a culture of performance and delivery of results.
7. Improving coordination and teamwork in government.
8. A review of Presidential priorities for the next 16 months.

Over the last four years of this Administration, we have made great strides in the implementation of development projects across the country. It is therefore imperative to review the status of these projects, to ensure that they are fully aligned with our goals and intentions to take our country to its desired destination.

Accordingly, I have included a Presidential Development Tour in the retreat activities, so that I can inspect key development projects and initiatives in Nimba County.

It is my expectation that all of you participants will actively engage in this Retreat, as we are now entering a crucial period for this Administration. In October 2023, just 16 months from now, the Liberian people will have the constitutional opportunity to reward us for the results we are achieving. It is therefore imperative that all hands are on deck with a full commitment to ensure that we get a resounding victory.

Accordingly, I commend your active participation in the Performance Management and Compliance System, which requires all Ministries, Agencies and Commissions to develop a comprehensive, critical, and analytical report of policies and programs that are under their direction, with particular emphasis on those that have been instituted during the period of our stewardship.

You are also expected to develop Service Delivery Charters for your institutions, to provide clarity to the public of the high-quality services we are providing. It is also of critical importance that you develop Institutional Strategic Plans that are well-aligned with the national development agenda, the PADP.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Before I close, I would like to brief you on a number of significant developments that have taken place in our Region and on our Continent in the past week.

Last Sunday, I attended the 61st Regular Meeting of our regional body, ECOWAS, which was held in Accra, Ghana. During this conference, the Chairmanship of ECOWAS was passed on from His Excellency Mr. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, who had served two consecutive terms, to His Excellency Mr. Umaro Sissoco Embaló, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau.

The leadership of the ECOWAS Commission was also changed, with the Presidency being passed on from Mr. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou of Cote d'Ivoire, who had served in that capacity since 2018, to Dr. Omar Alieu Touray of The Gambia.

Additionally, significant progress was made in dealing with the military interventions in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea, through the direct and vigorous engagements of ECOWAS with these regimes, in order to hasten their return to civilian rule and constitutional governance.

Sanctions were lifted against Mali, in response to the declaration by the military of a fixed timetable to turn over power in 24 months, by 2024, which date was acceptable to ECOWAS. Burkina Faso released the former President, Mr. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré from all forms of detention. And in Guinea, in order to make progress, the Authority of Heads of State and Government appointed a new ECOWAS Mediator for that country, in the person of Mr. Thomas Boni Yayi, former President of Benin.

All of these developments are the result of persistent engagements by ECOWAS in order to ensure stability, democracy, and peace in our sub-region.

But peace without prosperity is an unfinished agenda. That is why last Thursday, I attended the African Summit of the International Development Association of the World Bank in Dakar, Senegal, along with twenty-two (22) other African Heads of State and Government. The conference was also attended by the World Bank Group leadership, heads of regional and UN institutions, and representatives of IDA donor governments.

This Summit was a follow-up to a previous IDA20 Summit which was held in July last year in Abidjan, La Cote d'Ivoire, which I also attended, and where African leaders made a joint plea to the IDA and World Bank for a robust and ambitious replenishment of IDA resources to support our recovery agenda and to drive the sustainable development and economic transformation of our continent.

Our deliberations in Dakar were successful, as we championed a strong start to IDA's twentieth financing cycle (IDA20). We called the attention of the World Bank and its agencies to the fact that our continent is experiencing reversals of development gains triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and compounded by climate change, food insecurity, conflict in the region, and the war in Ukraine. We therefore welcomed their positive response by their decision to approve an IDA20 financing package of US\$93 billion to help all countries supported by IDA recover on a greener, more resilient, and inclusive path.

In view of this new development opportunity, I hereby instruct all Government Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions to vigorously engage the IDA and World Bank to ensure that Liberia will benefit from these funds during this transformational period, particularly in the areas of health, education, agriculture, digital economy, youth and women empowerment, roads and ports, energy and gender. Please be informed that the funding available under IDA20 will expire and revert to the donors if not utilized within the stipulated time-frame.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The official theme for this Retreat is rightfully framed as "Pushing Forward for A Better Liberia." As I said at the Bicentennial Celebrations, it is imperative that we ask ourselves, "what are those things that we must do to ensure that Liberia is a better place than when we met it?" The answers to this question must be the primary focus of your thinking throughout this Retreat.

I welcome you once more and look forward to frank, constructive, and productive deliberations in the national interest.

I hereby declare that the Retreat is now open for business, in accordance with the approved agenda.

I thank you.