

STATEMENT BY HONORABLE JEREMIAH KPAN KOUNG, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, AT THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN RABAT, THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO FEBRUARY 15-16, 2024.

Your Majesty King Mohammed VI;

The Honorable Enaam Mayara, Speaker of the House of Councilors of the Kingdom of Morocco;

Excellencies;

Honorable Members of Parliament;

Business and Political Leaders;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring you greetings from His Excellency Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr. President of the Republic of Liberia.

I am honored to address this distinguished gathering at the Parliamentary Conference on South-South Cooperation, hosted graciously by the Kingdom of Morocco. As we convene here today, it is imperative to recognize the significance of collaboration among nations in the Global South as a potent avenue for addressing the economic challenges faced by developing nations.

The world today presents us with complex economic and political dynamics, and it is in forums like these that we find the opportunity to assess and address these challenges collectively. I extend heartfelt appreciation to the Government and people of Morocco for their hospitality and commitment to fostering strategic partnerships, political dialogue, and integration among nations.

Amidst our shared histories and diverse backgrounds notwithstanding, it is evident that our destinies are shared. The concept of South-South Cooperation emerged from the recognition that our mutual interests and endeavors are intertwined, compelling us to collaborate closely to achieve common objectives.

As we navigate the economic landscape of the 21st century, it is imperious that South-South cooperation transcends a mere rhetoric and transforms into tangible actions. Our focus must shift towards facilitating the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge to promote trade and foster economic cooperation.

In this regard, I urge all Parliamentarians present to spearhead the formulation of a Unified Trade Agreement, aimed at enhancing economic incorporation among our nations. Concrete actions are essential to translate our vision of South-South cooperation into reality and improve the livelihoods of our people.

Liberia, guided by a foreign policy rooted in collaboration and mutual cooperation, has consistently championed the cause of South-South dialogue. We firmly believe that our national interests are best served through joint collaborations, and we remain committed to forging strong political and economic ties with fellow developing nations.

South-South Cooperation holds immense potential as a catalyst for political consolidation, peace, and security. By promoting cross-border investment and trade, we can reduce transaction costs, eliminate trade barriers, and deepen integration within our regions.

Liberia stands as a testament to the transformative power of South-South mechanisms. Through the support of regional governments during our darkest times, we have emerged as a beacon of democracy in Africa.

As we confront the challenges of today, we must embrace emerging and non-traditional partners in our quest for economic and social transformation. I call upon global partners and nations from Africa, the Arab world, and Latin America to seize new opportunities and commit to partnerships that promote inclusive development.

While trade liberalization remains crucial, we must complement it with coordinated policy actions. This conference presents an opportunity to align our policies and chart a course towards collective economic prosperity.

I commend the efforts towards regional trade agreements such as the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), the Greater Free Trade Area Agreement (GAFTA), and the Latin

America Free Trade Association (LAFTA). However, we must expand our vision beyond regional boundaries and embrace South-South cooperation as a universal framework for economic affluence.

I extend gratitude to the Government and people of Morocco for their leadership in advancing South-South cooperation. Liberia reaffirms its commitment to this noble cause and calls for concrete policy actions to drive our collective agenda forward.

Let us remember the words of Nelson Mandela, who said, "It always seems impossible until it is done." As we embark on this journey of South-South cooperation, let us ask ourselves: What legacy will we leave for future generations? Together, let us dare to dream, dare to act, and dare to build a future where prosperity knows no boundaries.

I thank you!