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Monrovia, Liberia

Message from the Office of the National Peace Ambassador
International Day of Peace (IDP) - September 21, 2020

To our Fathers, Mothers, Brothers, Sisters, Sons and Daughters, we extend greetings to everyone from the Office of the National Peace Ambassador (ONPA) as we celebrate (IDP) International Day of Peace 2020, on September 21st in Liberia. This IDP Message is a presentation of the National Peace Ambassador, Rev. William R. Tolbert III. The UN theme for 2020 is “Shaping Peace Together”. By this theme, we are encouraged to celebrate the day by spreading compassion, kindness, and hope in the face of the COVID19 pandemic.

In our recent history, we as a nation and people have come through seemingly insurmountable circumstances and challenges including: prolonged conflicts; destruction of our infrastructure; disenfranchisement of majority of the population; social and economic uncertainty; unemployment and lack of opportunities for the youth population segment; political transformation and governance reforms; and the Ebola Virus Disease. Yet, in spite of all these, we continue to persevere with resilience and optimism. Now we battle another invisible enemy in the COVID19. Once again, our resolve is tested; and we must stand together and do what is required to battle this pandemic.

The local and international health professionals have directed us to use our masks, practice social distancing, maintain frequent washing of our hands and use of sanitizers as required, and where possible, instead of cash, use mobile money for transactions to avoid handling currency. All of these may be difficult but not impossible to do regularly. Nevertheless, it is necessary that we do not become complacent because we do not hear alarming reports of death or hospitalizations because of the pandemic. Rather, we must adhere to these policies and practices to ensure our safety and security of ourselves and others with whom we interact with regularly.

We need constant reminders of what we have done to make a difference for ourselves and our loved ones. In reflection of what we have gone through and anticipate what is ahead, we must acknowledge that our success is realized through celebration of life through spreading compassion, kindness and where there appears to be hopelessness and helplessness, let us encourage each other and demonstrate that there is help and hope.

During this critical period in the history of our nation, we are also preparing for scheduled elections on December 8th. While the issues related to the COVID19 pandemic are important to reiterate, it is also important that we use this IDP Peace Message to elevate issues related to the scheduled elections.

There have been numerous reports of underage voter registration, multiple registration of persons in different jurisdictions, trucking of persons to register to vote in several counties nationwide, inflammatory rhetoric and violence amongst political aspirants and parties. It is important that our National Elections Commission (NEC) investigate these reports to determine accuracy and where necessary, issue strict warning and/or impose sanctions for persons or political parties involved who do not abide by policies or procedures. In addition, we must as a nation and people respect national leaders and maintain law and order. Recent disrespect of H. E. President George Manneh Weah and other elected or appointed officials of government are unwarranted and do not contribute to peaceful elections. These issues if not addressed by appropriate institutions of Government and others in the private sector, will undermine legitimacy of the process as well as peace and security we have strived to maintain for close to two decades. Hence, we appeal to all aspirants and political parties to remain civil and maintain law and order as we proceed with preparation for the scheduled elections. Any illegal action by one or more aspirant or political party affects all Liberians.

As it relates to the above, we appeal especially to our youth throughout the fifteen counties to not consider violence as the first and only option. Do not allow yourselves to be trucked or used for violence against anyone else. Remember our success is assured through dialogue and other constructive engagement involving all stakeholders.

In closing we express heartfelt thanks and appreciation to H. E. President Dr. George Manneh Weah, and Government Officials for the recent initiatives, stakeholder consultations and proclamations to address the issue of rape. Let us work together to support these initiatives will alleviate the suffering of victims and their families and caregivers. Remember if one is in pain, we are all in pain. If one dies, we all die. If one lives, we all live!

His Excellency our President has the responsibility to lead the Government and People of Liberia. Every man, woman, boy, and girl, has a shared responsibility to actively participate in this process of governance and transformation. While many are critical, it is best to put aside the negative and advance positive advice and wise counsel to sustain development, reconciliation, peace, and security of Liberia. Everyone should participate in nation building by giving selflessly of all that we have and all that we are.

We also express profound gratitude to our international partners for their willingness to accompany Liberia during our reconstruction. We acknowledge the pandemic has exacerbated our national challenges, nevertheless, we intend to stand together and

address all the issues that undermine peace and security to ensure an improvement in the quality of life of all Liberians regardless of ethnicity, level of education, socio-economic background, and religious affiliation.

We finally express thanks and appreciation to ECOWAS Radio and the media (community radio stations) in the fifteen counties for all assistance with the broadcast and relay of this IDP Message of Peace and other activities on this day September 21, 2020.

Though September 21st is International Day of Peace (IDP) we must maintain collective efforts to celebrate compassion, kindness, hope and living not for self but for others during the pandemic or any other calamity or seemingly insurmountable situation; so that every day becomes a “Day of Peace and Joy” for every Liberian!

Remember, all for one and one for all. Above all else, God! and Liberia!

Thanks to All!