
Speech Delivered By The President Of Liberia

05/07/2007

Speech Delivered By The President Of Liberia, Mrs Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf At The assembly Of The African Union Your Excellency the President of Ghana and Chairperson of the African Union, Your Excellency the Chairman and Commissioners of the African Union Commission, Your Excellencies Brothers Presidents, Heads of State and Government, Distinguished Guests,

Mr Chair of the African Union we thank you and the Government and people of Ghana for the excellent hosting of this meeting and we thank you for the exemplary leadership which you have shown as Ghana leads the way in economic progress and development. Excellencies, Liberia is pleased to have a full voice in this historic meeting in Accra, the birth place of Africa's renowned Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah.

Mr Chairman you have recalled that on its independence in 1957 that great African leader President Nkrumah called for the establishment of the United States of Africa. In 1959 Liberia, a long time support of liberation throughout the African continent called for a more measured approach through the establishment of an Association of African States that would focus on the building of African institutions as a path towards the achievement of President Nkrumah's dream of one Africa.

These two movement led to the formation in 1961 of the Casablanca group promoting the views of President Nkrumah and the Monrovia/Sanqualli group representing the views promoted by Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere and the Liberian President William Tubman. In 1963, in effect adopting the Monrovia alternative, the Organisation of African Unity was born. This was followed in 1964 by the establishment of the African Development Bank.

Since those historic developments, we have seen Africa in prosperity and in decline, in peace and in war, in unity and in disharmony. We have seen the establishment and the dissolution of regional and continental institutions. We have seen countries in robust economic growth and countries economic free fall. We have seen the transformation of the Organization of African Unity to the more vibrant African Union.

Excellencies, today almost 45 years after the Casablanca and Monrovia movements, we are back to the challenge, we are in the country of President Nkrumah to discuss, once again, the unity of Africa, the mobilisation of our continent's natural and human resources for the development of the African people. Today, almost 45 years later Liberia, our great country, this promoter of African liberation lies in ruin her people displaced, her infrastructures destroyed, her citizens impoverished, her new Government facing the awesome challenge of moving our country on to the path of peace, reconciliation and development.

Has conservation worked? Has gradualism served Liberia or Africa? The record speaks for itself. This is why Liberia endorses, in principle, the spirit of African unity as expressed in the proposed establishment of the United States of Africa. This is why Liberia is trying to regain the progress lost through years of conflict by becoming an active member in promoting integration of the continent through regional and sub-regional bodies such as the expanded Mano River Union and our progressive and dynamic Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

This is why Liberia plays an active role in regional integration mechanisms such as the West African gas pipeline, the West African Power Pool and the fully operational ECOWAS passport. This is why Liberia is working towards admission and participation in the process that will lead to a common West African currency. We believe that similar progress can be noted in the East African Community, in SADC and in other regional economic communities.

Mr Chairman, Excellencies,

When Liberia was in the throes of self-destruction, when Liberia reached beyond its own borders to violate the geographic integrity of other nations, West Africa and Africa generally intervened to save us from ourselves. We lost our sovereignty then and we effectively lose it now as we try to meet the conditionalities that will enable us to return to a state of normalcy, to restore the faith and confidence of our people in themselves in their Government and in their future.

Liberia believes that this meeting should endorse without further study, the concept of the United States of Africa and instruct in no uncertain terms, all regional economic commissions and community institutions to formulate and adopt the road map and the timetable for the achievement of this goal using or revising these details in the report of Obasanjo Committee and the proposed integrative structures now before us. This will allow institutions to move forward in pace with progress.

Liberia will, in the meantime, continue the ongoing dialogue among our people, the representatives of our people, our women and our institutions. They will provide the mandate for the required constitutional reform. They will guide our accession, consistent with the continental timetable or within a shorter period of time, to the United States of Africa. We are confident that this objective will ultimately be achieved.

I thank you.