

ADDRESS BY THE REGISTRAR, ALHAJA (MRS.) MULIKAT A. BELLO,
AT THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE 58TH ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING
IN MONROVIA LIBERIA ON TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2010

Your Excellency, President and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Liberia, (Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf)

Your Excellency, Vice President of the Republic of Liberia,
(Ambassador Joseph N. Boakai)

Honourable Speaker of Parliament

Honourable Members of Parliament

Honourable Minister of Education

Heads of Diplomatic Mission

The Lord Mayor of Monrovia

Chairman of Council

Vice Chairman of Council

Chief Government Nominees and Leaders of Delegation

Other Members of Council

Members of the Board of Trustees of the WAEC Endowment Fund

Former Chairmen of Council

Heads of School

Distinguished Guests

Parents

WAEC Staff

Excellence Award Winners

Students

Gentlemen of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Pleasantries

It is with great pleasure that I, on behalf of the Secretariat and on my own behalf, welcome you all to this occasion of the formal opening of the 58th Annual Council Meeting. I welcome specially albeit in absentia our lady of Honour and the Pride of African Women, Her Excellency, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia as I register my appreciation for the honour you have done the Council by accepting our humble invitation to declare open the 58th Annual Meeting of Council, even though the call to state duties has necessitated her absence. I also welcome specially Your Excellency, the Vice President of the Republic Liberia, Ambassador Dr. Joseph N. Boakai, who is standing in for Madam President. Let me also appreciate the Government of Liberia not only for hosting the 58th Annual Council Meeting but also for the generous hospitality which has been extended to all delegates since our arrival as well as for all the facilities which have been made available to Council for a successful meeting. Please have my assurance that we shall make all efforts to take advantage of our being here to explore as many of the attractions offered by this great city as possible before we take our exit at the end of the meeting.

Your Excellency, please permit me to express sincere gratitude to the people of Liberia, particularly the Speaker of Parliament, the Honourable Minister of Education, the Chief Government Nominee, the second Government Nominee and the Mayor of Monrovia for their individual and collective support and invaluable contribution to the arrangements put in place to ensure that the hosting of the meeting by Liberia is not just successful but also very memorable.

Rotational Principle

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the Annual Council Meeting is hosted by each member government of WAEC in accordance with an agreed rotational principle entrenched in the Council's Standing Orders. Last year, the meeting was hosted by the Government of Sierra Leone. This year, it is being hosted by the Government of Liberia. In 2011, 2012 and 2013, it should be hosted by the Governments of Ghana, Nigeria and The Gambia respectively and the cycle goes on. I must say

that the Annual Council Meeting provides the forum at which Council takes stock of the operations and activities carried out in its various offices in all the member countries for the period April of the preceding year to March of the year of the meeting with a view to making amends where necessary and taking decisions on diverse issues that will strengthen the Council's service delivery systems. Council's deliberations and decisions at the annual forum are therefore, geared towards achieving greater success in the execution of the organization's mandate in the year ahead.

Liberia for WASSCE

Your Excellency, I find it quite expedient to recall that in my address on the occasion of the dedication of the Council's National Office Building in Monrovia on July 31, 2008, I pointed out that even though the Republic of Liberia was admitted to full membership of WAEC as far back as 1974, it was, and I dare say it still is *an irony that Liberia is the only member country of WAEC that is yet to present candidates for the Council's international examinations known as the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE)*. This is in spite of the fact that Liberia was indeed the first country to introduce the 6-3-3-4 system of education which formed the bedrock of that examination. I then expressed the hope that in no distant a time, the Government of Liberia would make the required firm commitment that would make it possible for our children in Liberia to join their counterparts in the other member countries of WAEC to write WASSCE.

Today, Your Excellency, I am delighted to acknowledge with appreciation, that in fulfillment of the assurance given on that occasion by Madam President, the Council received, in less than six months thereafter, an official letter of affirmation from the Government of Liberia that, come 2011, Liberia would present its first set of candidates for WASSCE. I must add that following our submission of a Roadmap of activities that must be undertaken by stakeholders in education in Liberia to ensure a smooth change over, I have received reports

indicating that the Ministry of Education has been putting in place necessary structures that will support the take-off of the examination. I recall however, that in November 2009, the Liberia Examinations Committee, during its meeting in Monrovia, noted that the structures in place then for the take-off of the examination in Liberia were still very far from being adequate. Not much change has taken place between November 2009 and now. I therefore, wish to urge the Government to hold the target date of 2011 sacrosanct and intensify efforts at keeping alive the hope of the Liberian Child to have the opportunity, sooner than later, to compete with his/her peers in the other member countries of WAEC. The Council can hardly wait to see the dream become a reality!

Examinations

The Council's national and international examinations were conducted successfully in 2009 in all the member countries. The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone presented candidates for the Council's International Examination, the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in May/June and November/December 2009. The Gambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone presented candidates for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Liberia presented candidates for the 6th, 9th and 12th Grade examinations. Sierra Leone presented candidates for the National Primary School Examination (NPSE). The second edition of the National Assessment Test (NAT) was conducted for Grades 3 and 5 pupils in The Gambia.

A total of two million, eight hundred and eleven thousand, seven hundred and fifty-seven (2,811,757) candidates enrolled for **all** the Council's examinations in 2009. A breakdown of this figure shows that Nigeria presented one million, seven hundred and twenty-seven thousand, eight hundred and forty-nine (1,727,849) candidates (or 61.45%); Ghana enrolled seven hundred and two thousand, seven hundred and twelve (702,712) candidates (or 24.99%); Sierra Leone accounted for two hundred and six thousand, eight hundred and seventy-five (206,875) candidates (or 7.36%); The Gambia registered

eighty-four thousand, five hundred and fifty-nine (84,559) candidates (or 3.00%); while Liberia had eighty-nine thousand, seven hundred and sixty-two (89,762) candidates (or 3.19%).

Examination Malpractice

Your Excellency, I am delighted to say for the records that from November 2007 to date, no incidence of leakage of any question paper has been recorded in any of the examinations conducted by WAEC in Liberia. However, other forms of examination malpractice, the most notable of which is collusion, have continued to be a source of serious concern for the Council, not just in Liberia but indeed in all the other member countries as well.

While the Council will continue its relentless fight against the canker, there is the need for concerted efforts by all stakeholders in education to stem the tide of the evil that examination fraud constitutes. To this end therefore, we plead for the enforcement of existing legislations or the promulgation of relevant legislations in the various member countries to complement other efforts at fighting examination malpractice to a standstill.

WAEC Endowment Fund

Your Excellency, during WAEC's 30th Anniversary celebrations held here in Monrovia, Liberia in March 1982, Council inaugurated the WAEC Endowment Fund. The objects of the Fund are to promote educational projects of an international nature, provide awards to individuals and institutions for outstanding contributions to the Council's work and give prizes for outstanding performance by candidates in the examinations conducted by the Council. In fulfillment of these objects, Council will at this ceremony honour three candidates with the **WAEC Excellence Award** for their outstanding performance in the May/June 2009 WASSCE conducted by WAEC. They are:

Master Frank Adu Poku	(1st Prize)
Miss Maame Afua Otua Ofori	(2nd Prize)
Miss Fathia Karim	(3rd Prize)

The three candidates, all from Ghana, were selected from a total of 1,520,319 candidates who sat the May/June 2009 WASSCE in The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

Master Frank Adu Poku has also won the **Augustus Bandele Oyediran Award for the Best Candidate in West Africa.**

Also at this ceremony, the Award of '**Distinguished Friend of Council**' will be conferred on Mr. Jefferson D. Lewis, former Head of National Office of WAEC, Liberia.

On behalf of the Chairman, Members of Council and the Secretariat of WAEC, I heartily congratulate the award recipients.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, you are aware that pursuant also to the objects of the WAEC Endowment Fund, the 15th in the series of the Annual WAEC Endowment Fund Lectures was delivered yesterday, Monday, March 22, 2010 by Dr. D. Evelyn S. Kandakai, former Minister of Education, Republic of Liberia, Chairperson of the Forum for African Women Educationists (FAWE), Liberia Chapter, and Executive Director, Liberian Education Trust.

CONCLUSION

Your Excellency, there is no doubt that WAEC owes its continued existence to the faith and confidence which the Member Governments have reposed and continue to repose in it. Permit me at this juncture therefore, to express sincere appreciation on behalf of the Secretariat to all our Member Governments for their continued unflinching commitment to and support for our noble organization, WAEC. Permit me also, to appreciate the Chairman and Members of Council and indeed all our partners in the conduct of the core business of the Council for the ready and unfailing support which they have always

given individually and collectively to enhance the role of our organization as an integrating force in the West African sub-region. I believe we can count on the sustenance of the confidence, support and cooperation of all concerned.

On our part as Secretariat, we believe that our organization, WAEC, will continue to make the difference in the education sector of the West African sub-region as we once again reiterate our commitment to ensuring that the faith and confidence reposed in us by all stakeholders are not misplaced.

On this note, Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you all once again for the privilege and honour of your presence at this Opening Ceremony of the 58th Annual Council Meeting.

God bless you all.