



ADDRESS BY PROF. PAI OBANYA
CHAIRMAN, GOVERNING COUNCIL OF
THE WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL (WAEC)

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS COURTESY VISIT TO
HER EXCELLENCY, ELLEN JOHNSON-SIRLEAF
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2012

Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Liberia
Honourable Minister of Education
Deputy Minister of Instruction (Chief Government Nominee of Liberia on
Council)
Other Government Officials
Ladies and Gentlemen

I feel highly honoured and very delighted to be here today on this occasion of my courtesy visit. On behalf of Members of the Governing Council, Registrar and entire staff of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) in all the five Member Countries and on my personal behalf, I want to congratulate you, Your Excellency on your re-election into office as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Liberia. Your re-election is an affirmation of the confidence of the people of Liberia in your purposeful leadership and an expression of their appreciation of the people-oriented programmes executed by your Administration in your first term in office. Your Excellency, even those of us who are not Liberians appreciate the many positive changes which Liberia witnessed within your first five-year term, especially in the areas of global visibility, political peace and stability, infrastructural development, economic turn-around and laudable reforms in the education sector, to mention just a few. Your Excellency, we say *hearty congratulations* and we wish your God's guidance in the discharge of your onerous responsibilities as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Liberia. Amen.

Your Excellency, my visiting you today is primarily in fulfillment of the Council's tradition of formal presentation of the Chairman of Council to the

Presidents of the Member Countries of the Council within the shortest possible time.

As you may be well aware, I was elected the 17th Chairman at the 60th Annual Meeting of Council in March this year, following my nomination by the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and in line with the Council's principle of rotation of Chairmanship among Member Countries.

Your Excellency, I have it on the authority of the Secretariat that the relationship between the Secretariat of the Council at both the National Office in Monrovia and the Headquarters in Accra, and the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Education has, over the years, been very cordial. The records have it that since Liberia became the fifth member-country of the West African Examinations Council in 1974, it has continued to identify with the organization. It is on record that when the Convention establishing the Council was ready in 1982, Liberia, without any reservation, signed the Convention just as it also signed the Revised Convention in 2003. From 1974 to date, the Council has continued to enjoy tremendous patronage from the government and people of Liberia. We are confident that your administration will continue to give the necessary support to further strengthen the relationship.

Your Excellency, permit me to utilize the opportunity of my visiting you today to table before you the key concerns of the moment in the relationship between WAEC and Liberia. These are the issues of Liberia's outstanding contribution to the Headquarters and Liberia's arrangement to join the WASSCE system in 2013.

On the issue of Liberia's outstanding contribution to the Headquarters, this address will not be complete if it omits to give expression to the Council's appreciation of the efforts that have been made in the last couple of years to discharge the financial responsibility of the Government of Liberia to the Headquarters of the Council. We appreciate that for the first time in many years, Liberia paid its apportioned contribution to the Headquarters for 2011 in full. In addition it made some part-payment from the arrears of contribution. We must, however, hasten to point out that with the addition of the 2012 apportionment, Liberia's outstanding contribution to WAEC Headquarters which stood at **US\$1,121,343.36 as at December 31, 2008** has risen to its **present level of US\$1,594,508.75** as a result of accumulating short-payments annually. I therefore want to urge you, Your Excellency, to use your good offices to see to the offsetting of the lingering arrears of contribution to the Headquarters.

I have been briefed on the efforts by WAEC and the Government of Liberia, especially from 2008 to date, in regard of the country's arrangements to join the WASSCE system. I have been informed that in February 2009, a letter of formal expression of "Liberia's desire to enter the WASSCE" and invitation to WAEC "to begin the conduct of the WASSCE to candidates in Liberia as of 2011" was received by the Registrar and that there had been several follow-up actions thereafter resulting in the change of the target date to 2013. I am told that, by the special grace of God, the maiden edition of WASSCE in Liberia will be written in May/June 2013 by candidates from a few selected schools. I want to believe that the Government, through the Ministry of Education, has finally selected the pilot schools and that the

schools and their students are fully prepared for Liberia's historic maiden attempt at WASSCE. I also want to believe that the length of the period of transition from the National Examination (LSHSCE) to the International Examination (WASSCE) is being seriously considered by the Government of Liberia, through the Ministry of Education. This is the time to take a firm decision on it and communicate same to WAEC.

Let me assure you, Your Excellency, that WAEC, on its part, is committed to ensuring that it provides as much support as possible to smoothen what would otherwise have been the rough edges. The May/June 2013 WASSCE time-table has been amended to suit Liberia and, this is evidence of how far the Council is willing to go to support Liberia.

I thank you very much for granting me audience in spite of your very tight schedule. I pray God to bless you abundantly with His grace and empower you divinely for an even more successful second term in office.

PROF. PAI OBANYA
Chairman of Council
August 2012