

Statement By

His Excellency Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr., President of the Republic of Liberia

The 38th Ordinary Summit of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government

February 15, 2025

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Your Excellency Mohammed Ould Ghazouani, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and Chairperson of the African Union;

Your Excellency João Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola;

Distinguished Colleagues of the Assembly;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to begin by expressing sincere gratitude to our host, His Excellency Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, and to the government and people of this great nation for their warm hospitality.

I also congratulate His Excellency João Lourenço, President of Angola, on your election as Chairperson of the African Union for 2025. We are confident that your leadership will continue the strides made by your predecessor, H.E. Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, in steering the Union towards success.

Permit me to recognize the exemplary leadership of the outgoing Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, whose efforts have contributed greatly to the institutional reform of the Union, ensuring its continued relevance and effectiveness.

I am deeply honored to address this Assembly for the first time as President of Liberia. As we reflect on the 2025 theme, "Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations," the call is now for us to finally reckon with slavery, colonialism, and systemic racism.

Liberia firmly believes in the importance of reparations as a critical first step toward addressing the lasting legacy and impacts of these historical injustices.

As the home of freed slaves, with 5% of our population being descendants of those liberated, Liberia is uniquely and deeply tied to the struggle and legacy of slavery.

Reparations are a crucial part of overcoming this brutal and traumatic experience, of healing and reconciliation, fostering unity and trust within Africa and the global African community.

As a nation that played a leading role in Africa's liberation movements, Liberia stands as a natural advocate for reparations.

Its ongoing commitment to justice and healing underscores the importance of addressing past wrongs and ensuring the dignity, rights, and opportunities of all Africans and people of African descent.

Liberia appreciates the African Union's support for our democratic processes, especially during our 2023 elections, where over 60 observers were deployed to ensure a transparent process.

The Union's engagement reinforced Liberia's stability and democratic development.

We are also grateful and pleased for the Union's endorsement of Liberia's candidacy for one of Africa's non-permanent seats on the UN Security Council for 2026-2027.

We seek your continued kind support that will allow us to serve the continent and be a voice of change particularly on issues of peace, security, women, youth, and development.

We look forward to working with the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is vying for the other seat, in undertaking continent-wide initiatives such as addressing the nexus between resources and conflict in Africa.

Since assuming office on January 22, 2024, my government has launched the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development, focusing on Agriculture, Roads, Rule of Law, Education, Sanitation, and Tourism.

This five - year development plan aims to modernize Liberia's infrastructure, foster good governance, revitalize our economy, and empower our citizens, with a focus on women and youth.

We look forward to continued collaboration with the Union to address our shared challenges and opportunities.

Liberia will remain an active and committed partner in advancing the Union's agenda for a prosperous and united Africa.

Thank you!