

INTERVENTION BY H.E. AUGUSTINE KPEHE NGAFUAN, MINISTER OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA AT THE ELYSEE  
SUMMIT ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA HELD IN PARIS, FRANCE  
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Mr. President, Distinguished Excellencies:

Permit me to begin by extending warm greetings from H.E. Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia who would have loved to be here but could not do so because of some unavoidable reasons.

President Sirleaf would have me convey her deepest condolences to the good and sisterly nation of South Africa, the entire African Continent and the world at large on the passing from mortality into immortality of President Nelson Mandela. President Mandela was a great African hero whose indomitable courage, selflessness, and vision not only transformed South Africa but have left an indelible impact on our one world.

Mr. Chair, the Africa of today is a continent on the forward march, a continent that is transforming economically, socially, and democratically. The Africa of today is a continent that wants to focus on lifting its peoples from poverty to prosperity, giving them basic freedoms in order that they may live a fuller life. Therefore, the Africa of today considers threats to peace and security an unnecessary and unfortunate distraction from the focus on socio-economic development and political progress. An environment of peace and security is essential for all our other lofty goals.

So purging the Continent of all violent conflicts is the right step in the right direction. In this regard, Liberia commends you, President Hollande, and the good people of France for the robust intervention in Mali, which was pivotal in stabilizing the country and creating an ambience for the restoration of democracy and constitutional order. France's recent initiative to assist African counties reverse the deteriorating security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) is an effort that is also deserving of our commendation.

But while conflict mitigation and/ or resolution efforts are worth commending, we need to focus more attention on conflict prevention, as violent conflicts exact a very huge negative toll on our societies. Accordingly, Liberia associates itself with calls for more robust, honest, and concerted efforts to stop the proliferation of small arms in Africa. The Small arms have fueled

many violent conflicts on the Continent. Additionally, dealing with the unemployment challenge, especially youth unemployment should be put on the front burner. Youth unemployment is a threat to peace and security, especially in post- conflict fragile states.

Moreover, regional and sub-regional cooperation aimed at bolstering peace and security is a path we must continue to pursue. Many sub- regional organizations including the Mano River Union (MRU) comprising Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone have adopted strategies and measures to deal with common threats to peace and security that are deserving of international support.

Finally, Mr. Chair, in order to promote peace and security in Africa, African countries need to be their brother's keeper. Many subversive activities and conflicts in African countries are made possible because of support from neighboring countries. Therefore, ultimately we will gain enough traction in our effort to promote peace and security on the Continent if each and every African country commits never to use its territory or resources in support of schemes that subvert a neighboring country or, for that matter, any other African country.

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, I THANK YOU.