

Official Statement
by Honorable Varney A. Sirleaf
Minister of Internal Affairs
National County Sports Meet 2021/2022
Kakata City
Margibi County
Saturday, December 11, 2021

His Excellency George Manneh Weah, President and Chief Patron of Sports, Republic of Liberia;

Honorable D. Zeogar Wilson, Minister of Youth and Sports;

Cabinet Colleagues; Honorable County Superintendents, other officials of Local government, Members of the Press, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

I wish to welcome you to the 2021/2022 National County Meet. The National County Meet is an annual sporting activity organized the government through a collaboration of the Ministries of Youth and Sports and Internal Affairs.

As you may be aware, next year marks 200 years since the arrival of the freed black slaves from the United States of America in 1822. The foundation for Liberia was not laid by the settlers alone, but with the deep involvement of powerful leaders of the land. That singular collective effort became the source of our existence today as a nation; it is the source of strength, unity and peaceful co-existence. It was not easy from the onset, but it later created the atmosphere for the Declaration of Independence later in 1847.

This year's theme '**Commemorating 200 Years of Togetherness Through Sports**' was consciously chosen to reflect our bi-centennial celebration. Today, despite our diversity of religion, ethnicity, culture etc, we remain together as one people striving for sustainable peace and development.

As we come together, let us remember that the County Meet is an historical event that ties us together as a nation. If nothing else, the National County Meets has kept and continue to keep us together as a people since it began in 1954. Liberians, especially our youth look forward to this sporting event with enthusiasm and expectation every year.

We must work to cement the gains we have made over the years that will guarantee our national development in the context of President George Manneh Weah's policy for peace and social mobility under the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD).

I am aware of the excitement that comes with the competition especially when each of the 15 counties is racing for a victory in each of the sporting disciplines. However, let us be reminded of the objective of the County Meet; **uniting the people**.

Early this year, our dynamic President, and the Chief Patron of Sports, took the government to the people through his nationwide tour. During that County Tour President Weah interacted with several youth and sport enthusiasts when he participated in many football and volleyball games. The games were meant to bring people together and to inspire the young people. This is the objective of this year's County Meet. It is my fervent hope that this year will showcase the best talents.

To you, Mr. President, we are grateful for the invaluable contributions you have made and continue to make to the development of sports. We take due note of Your Excellency commitment to the upliftment of our young people. We have witnessed the upgrade or development of sports stadiums including the Doris Williams Sports Stadium in Buchanan which you dedicated during your County Tour, Tusa Field in Gardnersville and many more. **Thank you Mr. President!**

As we commemorate 200 years of our existence, I also upon Liberians to continue on the path of peace for prosperity. Let us celebrate our peaceful coexistence and remember that sports have been one of the pillars of peace and national reconciliation. The National County Meet brings our young people together in the spirit of love and unity in ways that no other event does. We are able to enjoy this unique event each year because of the peace we are enjoying as people.

Fellow Liberians, we have been together for two centuries now. Let us work for the sustenance of peace and prosperity as enshrined in the government development framework, the Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development.

No matter our political persuasions, Liberia will always remain as our common denominator and will always stand tall above us all. Let us remember to be humble in dealing with our fellow countrymen and women. But above all let us rally around the President, and work together for a truly reconciled Liberia and sustainable development.

Lastly, I congratulate my colleague and co-host, Honorable D. Zeogar Wilson, staff of Ministry of Youth and Sports, my team at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, County Officials, and all the sponsors for organizing this year's National County Meet which kicks-off today here in Kakata, Margibi County

To the participating teams, I say show Liberians your sporting talents in the spirit of true unity, peace, and reconciliation reign!

THANK YOU