



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MONROVIA, LIBERIA
(www.mofa.gov.lr)**

**STATEMENT
BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MR. GBEHZOHNGAR M. FINDLEY,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
ON THE COMMEMORATION OF AFRICA DAY**

MAY 25, 2020

THEME: "Silencing The Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development and Intensifying the Fight against the COVID-19 Pandemic"

Fellow Africans:

It is exactly 57 years ago today when 32 independent African states converged in Ethiopia to establish the Organization of African Unity, now the AU, with the aim of defending the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of African states, and dedicated to the eradication of all forms of colonialism on the African continent.

Being satisfied with the fulfilment of these objectives, the Organization was permutated in 2002 to meet today's challenges – socio-economic development.

As we commemorate this historic day quietly under the theme: "**Silencing The Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development and Intensifying the Fight against the COVID-19 Pandemic**", we cannot overemphasize the importance of working together as Africans to ensure that Africans live freely and happily. In the efforts to establish this continental body, we pay special homage to the vision bearers, with particular reference to the central role of Liberia as the oldest Republic on the Continent.

At the inception of the formation of the OAU, the heated debate between the Monrovia and Casablanca blocs, brought to bear by the conflicting perspectives, presented an opportunity for deeper soul searching to determine the configuration of the Organization. Those differences were clearly trashed out during the 1963 summit for the singular goal of emancipating the African Continent. The pivotal role of Liberia in taking the seminal initiative to hosting the Sanniquellie Summit of 1959 set the stage for convergence of thoughts between the two blocs, during the maiden Africa Summit of 1963 which herald in the formation of the OAU.

Looking back, we today take proud in the profound display of true pan-Africanism at the Addis Ababa maiden summit, which brought together the two major blocs- as proponents of the varying perspectives on the shape of the organization. The difference of opinion did not stand in the way of our forbearers to charting a future for generations after them.

We, therefore, reaffirm Liberia's commitment to work with other Africans in our region and the rest of our Continent to promote the achievement of the goal of our Continent and we should be proud of our identity as Africans.

We must strive to achieve Africa's goal of a conflict-free Africa, we must strive to make peace a reality for all our people and to rid our continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations and humanitarian disasters. Let us realize that the stigma of a 'continent at war with itself' had long been attached to Africa.

We can only achieve a United and prosperous Africa if the guns are silenced. Let us keep in mind that our progress and prosperity can be achieved if the guns are silenced and until the achievement of lasting peace in all of Africa, our endeavors to peace and security, and development remain unwavering. To this end, we must do all in our power to work towards achieving the African Development Agenda 2063, which clearly projects the Africa we want.

As measures are being put in place globally to put an end to this terrible global pandemic, COVID-19, Africans must continue to exert collective efforts to end other ailments on our Continent. By this we will create the Africa we all want. This is the time for unity – a time for silencing the guns, as in unity success is sure.

I call on Africans from all walks of life to remain committed to the goals and aspirations of a United and prosperous Africa inspired by our forefathers long before us. Only Africans will transform Africa. On behalf of His Excellency, Dr. George M. Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, I wish to congratulate Africans all over the world as we celebrate this great day.

I THANK YOU.