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Monrovia, Liberia: President George Manneh Weah has delivered his maiden state of the Nation Address and promised to reduce his salary by 25 per cent in light of the prevailing economic situation facing the nation.

The Liberian leader paid tribute to outgoing President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for and said he was privileged and honored by her presence to grace the occasion. "Madam, WELCOME. Your presence here today shows how far we have come as people," he said.

According to an executive Mansion release, President Weah was speaking yesterday when he addressed the 54th National Legislature during a Joint Session at the Capitol in Monrovia.

He said he was responding in keeping with the mandate of Article 58 of the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia, which places a duty on the President of the Republic, on the 4th Monday of January every year, to present the administration's legislative program for the ensuing session of this Honorable Legislature, and to report to the Liberian people, through you, their duly elected representatives, in Joint Assembly, on the State of the Republic.

He recalled the historic and peaceful transition from an incumbent administration to a newly elected government; the first such event in our history for more than 70 years. "Liberians have received commendations and congratulations from all over the world for the civility and maturity demonstrated throughout this long process, which eventually ended in the passing of the *baton* from one generation of leadership to a younger generation," he asserted.

President Weah said "What is expected of us, who have been elected by our people to govern them? What is really expected of those of us who have been entrusted with the responsibility to lead them? The answer is to be found in Chapter 2 of our Constitution, from which I shall now read selected articles extensively and verbatim:"

Chapter II - Article 4 "The principles contained in this Chapter shall be fundamental in the governance of the Republic and shall serve as guidelines in the formulation of legislative, executive and administrative directives, policy-making and their execution."



Article 5 - The Republic shall: aim at strengthening the national integration and unity of the people of Liberia, regardless of ethnic, regional or other differences, into one body politic; and the Legislature shall enact laws promoting national unification, and the encouragement of all citizens to participate in government; b) preserve, protect and promote positive Liberian culture, ensuring that traditional values which are compatible with public policy and national progress are adopted and developed, as an integral part of the growing needs of the Liberian society; c) take steps, by appropriate legislation and executive orders, to eliminate sectionalism and tribalism, and such abuses of power as the misuse of government resources, nepotism and all other corrupt practices.

The Liberian leader continued - **Article 6** - “The Republic shall, because of the vital role assigned to the individual citizen under this Constitution for the social, economic and political well being of Liberia, provide equal access to educational opportunities and facilities for all citizens to the extent of available resources. Emphasis shall be placed on the mass education of the Liberian people and the elimination of illiteracy.”

Said President Weah: “**Article 7** - The Republic shall, consistent with the principles of individual freedom and social justice enshrined in this Constitution, manage the national economy and the natural resources of Liberia in such manner as shall ensure the maximum feasible participation of Liberian citizens under conditions of equality, so as to advance the general welfare of the Liberian people and the economic development of Liberia.”

Article 8 – he reckoned “The Republic shall direct its policy towards ensuring for all citizens, without discrimination, opportunities for employment and livelihood under just and humane conditions, and towards promoting safety, health and welfare facilities in employment.”

Article 9: “The Republic shall encourage the promotion of bilateral and regional cooperation between and among Liberia and other nations, and the formation and maintenance of regional organizations aimed at the cultural, social, political and economic development of the peoples of Africa and other nations of the world.”

Article 10: “The Republic shall ensure the publication and dissemination of this Constitution throughout the Republic, and the teaching of its principles and provisions in all institutions of learning in Liberia.”

President underscored two economic pillars with emphasis on jobs and promised to introduce new legislations and policies, which will be intended to achieve sustainable economic growth, develop and expand agriculture, and address our very large infrastructure deficit, with particular emphasis on road construction and the provision of affordable and adequate electricity for all our people.

President Weah said under sustaining the peace – his government shall examine ways to improve the judiciary system to ensure that the basic rights of all Liberians are protected. To that end, we will propose legislation that will be intended to create new processes and avenues to ensure that all our people are fully reconciled.

He said: “In terms of security and defense, we will rely on your budgetary support to enable us to continue to improve the professional and operational development of the Armed Forces of Liberia, and other security agencies, in order to better prepare them to participate in the fight against global terrorism. In this regard, we will specially focus on the housing constraints faced by our security personnel.”

On citizenship only to black people – “The framers of the 1847 constitution may have had every reason and justification to include these restrictions in that historic document. The great object of forming these Colonies, being to provide a home for the dispersed and oppressed children of Africa, and to regenerate and enlighten this benighted continent, none but persons of color shall be admitted to citizenship in this Republic.”





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