



**Office of Vice President
Republic of Liberia
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Monrovia, Liberia**

SPECIAL Address

Delivered By

Honorable Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr.

Vice President of the Republic of Liberia

at the

**High-Level Leaders' Roundtable on Political Leadership to End and
Prevent Conflict**

Held at the

WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT

Hosted by the

United Nations

Istanbul, Republic of Turkey

May 23, 2016

Excellency, Secretary General Ban Ki Moon,

Honorable High Commissioner Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein,

***Distinguished Heads and Members of Delegations of States at this
Roundtable,***

***President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of the Republic of Turkey and other
Distinguished Co-chairs of this Leadership Roundtable,***

Esteemed Members of this Roundtable Audience:

Let me join previous speakers in expressing our thanks and appreciation to the Government and people of Turkey for the warm and enthusiastic welcome accorded our delegation since our arrival a couple of days ago in this beautiful City of Istanbul and also for the excellent facilities put to our disposal. Similarly, we commend the United Nations for this opportunity for us to focus on the Responsibility to End and Prevent Conflict, a move that is even more germane to this global quest to ease this crisis.

The story of my country and the halls of horrors that we have walked through as a result of a very bloody civil war, is actually one that highlights the highs and lows of the human spirits and its indomitable nature to bounce back from the long haul of near total destruction.

I am sure it will not be inaccurate to figure that conflict—civil, regional, and sectarian violence—carries the greatest blame for the death, displacement, and hopelessness of people.

And that is why attestation to this assertion is made in our Common African Position on Effectiveness stating that, Quote: "**We are cognizant that most of the humanitarian crises on the African continent are conflict induced....**" Unquote. States should therefore take ownership of the drive to remove causes for conflict and keep society on an even keel of stability and fair play.

I must emphasize that as part of the first series of steps of conflict prevention, there is a need for states to focus on the elimination of poverty, the provision of opportunities for success to its citizens, and create the environment for advancement and education. At the same time, states have a responsibility to promote the rule of law, ensure that respect is accorded to all, and peaceful co-existence in diversity is vigorously pursued. Conflict situations, which unfortunately turn out to be inevitable, must be promptly managed and ongoing conflicts diffused so as to avoid reaching crisis proportions.

You all will agree that the collapse in the normal order of things in a given society erupts into the breakdown of respect for the law, which in turn breeds violence in a chain of action and reaction.

Let's take a case in point. In our case, Liberia endured a prolonged period of alienation of one set of the population against the other. Loud and persistent calls for redress of issues of marginalization and the equitable distribution of power and wealth of the national went unheeded.

Political upheaval--spun by social, ethnic, and financial motivations--was the eventual outcome, a factor that then set the nation on a long course of chaos, instability, on to the brink of disintegration. A very good number of you, if not all of you, sitting here today are very much aware of the travails that saddled Liberia in the course of that dark journey.

We remain grateful to you—the international community—for the helping hand we received in pulling us back to sanity and now an over a decade long period of peace and stability. This took great and sustained effort and humanity, a long process that has got Liberia to where it stands today.

We cannot therefore but only reecho the urge put out by your Excellency, Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, in your message of over a month ago on April 4.

In your Opening Remarks to Member States on Preparations for the World Humanitarian Summit in New York, you noted that the World Humanitarian Summit is not an end point. You pointed out that this Summit, I quote: "**must be the beginning of a new era of international solidarity to halt the terrible suffering of people affected by conflicts and disasters and who are depending on us.**"

Honorable Secretary General and Chair of this Roundtable,

For our part, we stand firmly committed to acting early upon potential conflict situations based on early warning findings and shared conflict analysis in accordance with international law.

Currently we are far in a sub-regional effort to establish the National Center for the Coordination of the Response Mechanism (NCCRM), simply known as the ECOWAS Early Warning Center. As we express gratitude to the United States for its statement of commitment to support the effort, we call on all of you—the international community at large--to lend support to this noble effort at conflict prevention.

We do support a list of other commitments, Mr. Chairman. We firmly support the commitment to Adherence to International Humanitarian Law and for Sexual Reproductive Health in Emergencies.

We find all of the remaining commitments, particularly under this First Roundtable profoundly germane to the efficacy of the Agenda for Humanity, that we are embarked on crafting.

As I part this podium, I do so fully confident that our learned and distinguished panelists will do justice to the cause of this Leadership Roundtable.

Thank you very much and best wishes for rewarding deliberations.