



The Executive Chairperson Address On The Occasion Of International Anti-Corruption Day On Thursday December 9, 2021

SALUTATION:

- Mr. Keynote Speaker
- Our International Partners
- Platform Guest

Distinguished LADIES and GENTLEMEN:

Honorable Keynote Speaker, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen. Today December 9, 2021 is a day set aside by the United Nations Resolution to celebrate International Anti-Corruption Day. Predicated upon the significance of said resolution, the Government of Liberia ratified said resolution in direct confirmation of its preparedness to combat corruption at all levels. The big question is why is this day celebrated in every member state of the United Nations. The answer is: “This Day is celebrated to promote the idea of putting corruption mitigation in place to ensure a better Recovery”.

Today as Liberia undergoes massive recovery programs, it is extremely important for us as Liberians to strengthen all sectors of our society in order for us to collectively declare massive war against corruption. Corruption is a dangerous recipe that impedes and undermines the development and growth of any nation. Liberia must rise up to the task in this 21st century in ensuring that corruption is not entertain, encourage, practice and maintain at any level of our political governance.

Honorable Keynote Speaker, as we celebrate this day, it is sole important for us to know and understand from the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission perspective the actual definition and signs of corruption. According to the 2008 Act of the LACC, **PART II, Corruption is defined as follows: “Any act or acts, decision or decisions or use of public resource or resources by a public or private official in the discharge of official duties and responsibilities which in order to satisfy their selfish desire or interest ignore the established Laws, regulations and thereby denies, deprives and prevent the state or citizens from receiving just entitlement, consideration and treatment.** Signs of corruption are: “Bribery, embezzlement, extortion, fraud, insider trading, misuse of entrusted public property, theft of property, economic sabotage and any economic and financial crime which are provided for under the Penal Code of Liberia”.

Honorable Keynote Speaker, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, today's celebration serves as a wake-up call that the LACC will remain robust in consonance with the 2008 Act to declare war on corruption. As we declare this war, I want to assure our partners and the public that there will not be business as usual. The LACC will legally go after those public and private person(s) who ignore the established laws and regulations to mischievously deny, deprive and prevent the government and the Liberian people from receiving their legal entitlement, consideration and treatment. The full weight of the law on prosecution and punishment will be applied irrespective of status, position, political affiliation, etc. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, during my take over as Chairperson of the LACC on July 22, 2021, it was emphasized that no one will be above the Law in the investigation and prosecution of acts of corruption. This statement was made in reliance to Part V Section 5.2(b) of the 2008 Act which reads: **“the Commission shall have the power to investigate the conduct of any person, irrespective of office or status natural or otherwise, if the conduct of the person(s) constitute corruption”**.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, in the wisdom of the 2008 Act, the LACC is under the legal responsibility to ensure that the interest of the Government is fully protected in making sure that all those who are involve in the acts of corruption face the full weight of the law. When the LACC is fully supported to do its work, I am of the conviction that the acts of corruption which permeate every sector of our society will be minimized. Under this new engagement to combat corruption, the Government and people must be protected to ensure that public and private persons who deal with the usage and expenditure of public funds be made to account under the spirit and intent of transparency. As the LACC ensures that its intelligence surveillance is maintain at all sectors of our society, I am please to inform the public that the LACC has over the period of four months (July-Nov. 2021) gathered and obtain facts and evidence on mischievous expenditure and bad procurement deals of which the government of Liberia has lost thousands of dollars. Some of those involved are currently undergoing investigation and when same are completed those held liable will be prosecuted consistent with the 2008 Act of the LACC.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, In the fight against corruption, the LACC warns that it will not dwell on hearsay evidence or perception. All allegations of corruption in the public and private sectors must be supported by tangible evidence and facts. The LACC maintain that it will not investigate any allegation of corruption that lack facts and evidence.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, as we celebrate this day, I want to use this occasion to salute the Government of Liberia and our Partners for their enormous support. Prior to my take over of the Commission, the Commission has lost its image moreover the building housing the Commission was in complete shambles. Today I can boast that with the meagle budgetary allotments given the Commission in four months, the entire building housing the Commission has been renovated to represent an image of an Integrity Institution.

On the issue of restitution, the Commission is please to state that the total amount of restitution made in Government account over the past four months is 32,894,407.05 LRD.

The GAC Audit Reports are being speedily investigated while the Legal department has succeeded in the prosecution of all Indictments that were obtained in the past four months (July-Nov. 2021).

Honorable Keynote Speaker, Platform Guest, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, this celebration will not be unique were us not to state the challenges faced by the LACC. The LACC needs increased budgetary support in order to adequately combat corruption. According to the 2008 ACT, Part III Section 3.2 which reads: **“The Commission shall have its head office in the city of Monrovia and it may establish branches in all other part of Liberia and appoint investigators and staff anywhere in Liberia”** Due to budgetary constraints the LACC has been unable to decentralize itself outside of the capital city. Let me use this medium to inform you that signs of corruption are not only visible in Monrovia but the rural part of Liberia where resources of Government are also been expanded. The presence of the LACC in the rural part of Liberia will aid corruption deterrence, education, prevention, awareness of the danger of corruption and provide risk assessment of local public actors and assets.

Honorable Keynote Speaker, the LACC lacks prosecutorial powers and this has hampered the delay in the prosecution of corruption cases by the LACC. Working through the MoJ is a complete delay and due to such delay, those that have been liable in our investigation report usually escape under the cover of darkness. There is also a need for the enactment of a Specialized Court for the prosecution of Corruption. Criminal Court “C” is overwhelmed and cannot handle more than five corruption cases in a Term. The LACC also wants the Statute of Limitations amended to include an open and unlimited time for the prosecution of corruption crimes.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, as we observe this unique day, I want to use this occasion to remind public and private individuals involve with public funds and assets that the LACC will not witch hunt neither will it be used for any illegal purpose. The LACC respect the constitutional rights of any accused under the doctrine of the due process of law. Only those who violate the laws on corruption will be dealt with as provided for in the 2008 ACT.

In conclusion, I want to thank the Government of Liberia and our Partners and also other CSOs, the Student Community and the general public that have come to celebrate this day.

Long Live the LACC!!!!