

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT JOSEPH NYUMA BOAKAI, SR
ON THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF THE GOVERNMENT.**

Parlors of the Executive Mansion.

May 1, 2024.

Fellow Liberians,

When our government was ushered in one hundred days ago, it was against the backdrop of a people and country wanting a responsive government that would bring much relief from years of deprivation, indignity, and insecurity.

We started this journey together with the faith that we can face and address our difficulties, course correct and set a path for a transformed future.

Today, I am pleased to report to a hopeful nation on the state of our country over the past 100 days, including progress made, some of the challenges confronting us, and setting long-term development goals to improve the living standards of Liberians in the coming years.

Fellow Citizens, given the urgency to provide immediate relief to millions of Liberians during the first quarter of the year, my government launched a 100-day deliverables plan.

In this plan, we considered addressing urgent needs by intervening in critical sectors. These interventions, implemented by the various ministries, agencies, and commissions (MACs), were informed by the following key objectives:

First, the need to ensure accountability in the public sector was a major objective underpinning service delivery in the first 100 days.

Therefore, addressing transparency and accountability in the public sector by undertaking robust anti-graft measures, including strengthening financial oversight, and promoting ethical practices across all sectors to combat corruption, was seen as a critical step to removing barriers.

Second, as citizens of this country continued to be confronted with the seemingly perennial problems of poor roads and accessibility, addressing infrastructure needs was a priority objective of this plan.

Focusing on the maintenance of major road corridors, improving sanitation service, providing critical meteorological equipment, and upgrading ICT systems at the only international airport in the country was considered a major attempt at bringing relief to citizens. Third, wrestling two fundamental issues consequential to the future of our country in terms of expanding educational opportunities and combatting the drug and substance abuse scourge was an important objective to bolster this plan. My government, therefore, saw under this plan the need to support education for struggling students and implement interventions to rescue at-risk youth overtaken by the drug epidemic.

Fourth, policy changes aimed at improving economic development were a fundamental objective of this plan. In this quarter, initial reforms and capacity building in agriculture, tourism, and commerce were seen as building blocks for our long-term economic development.

Pivotal to our 100-day deliverable plan, was the need to introduce key legislations crucial to our governance process, and to the promotion of the potential growth-spurring tourism sector. In these past 100 days, and despite limited resources, we were able to make significant gains against interventions we set out in various sectors.

It is important to mention that what will be outlined in this address is by no means exhaustive, as a full report on the deliverables for the first 100 days of my administration will be released to the public in the coming days.

Agriculture

We have taken major steps to boost agriculture as a cornerstone of our economic development. Among other measures taken, we have completed a national agriculture development plan, which will be ready for validation in the next two weeks.

In addition, a critical intervention to ensure we achieve our goal of reducing rice importation by 70% started this quarter with the acquisition and cultivation of 2000 hectares of land in Bong, Lofa, and Nimba Counties. To date, the Ministry of Agriculture has begun the cultivation of 1000 hectares of lowland at Fuamah Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Bong Mines.

In addition, the government has launched and started the cultivation of the University of Liberia farms in Fendall, which is aimed at feeding students, generating income, and for practical training and research.

Health

Our efforts to intervene in healthcare have not only aimed to provide essential medications and increase access to quality healthcare but also to gradually restore the confidence of our people and development partners in a healthcare system plagued by years of corruption and poor service.

To this end, we are pleased to report that in keeping with our intervention to sustain the availability of essential medicines and medical supplies with reduction of stock-outs, the government has ensured that essential medicines and medical supplies are distributed to 100% of drug depots of 13 counties in the country, with Last mile distributions to Montserrado and Margibi Counties having been achieved 100%. To improve diagnostic capacities at health centers to address critical illnesses, the government has identified sites to build four regional diagnostic centers in the country soon.

Fellow Liberians,

In January, this year we declared the drug and substance abuse epidemic in the country a national health emergency. As a result, the government saw the need to address what is perhaps one of the most troubling social crises of the modern era in Liberia. We are happy to announce that several interventions to combat the crisis have already been made this quarter in keeping with the stated deliverables.

An inter-ministerial committee to lead the fight against substance and drug abuse was established. Similarly, a robust public awareness campaign to dissuade young people from drug use has been taking place in schools, communities, churches, and mosques.

In addition, 123 beneficiaries of the At-Risk Youth Program have been transitioned from rehabilitation to recovery and reintegration. To show further commitment to suffering families, who are dealing with this crisis, the government has secured 50 acres of public land in Bentol for the Construction of a National Referral Neuropsychiatric Hospital. Still on the health front, and for good measure, our intervention has yielded a substantial reduction in maternal and neonatal deaths.

Road Rehabilitation and Infrastructure

A key target for the government's deliverable for the first 100 days was the reconditioning of roads to ensure that they are pliable to create access and boost economic activities.

Under our 100-Day Action plan for road maintenance, we earmarked 11 key projects across the country to make sure that primary roads are all pliable during all seasons.

The Ministry of Public Works has been undertaking major road corridor projects totaling about 783.5 km in Bong, Lofa, Bomi, Gbarpolu, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, Rivergee, Grand Bassa, Sinoe, Maryland, and Grand Kru Counties.

To date, contractors, equipment, and logistics have been heavily mobilized, and active work such as clearing, grading, shaping, and stabilization of critical spots, identification of culvert lines, and borrowing pits for material testing along all corridors are ongoing. In addition, maintenance zones for equipment and road crew have been identified to ensure roads are maintained all year round. I am pleased to report that as a result of these interventions, we are receiving reports from citizens that travel time between counties has substantially been reduced.

Public Administration

Strengthening public administration for efficiency, including payroll and personnel audits across the MACs to eliminate waste and save the government urgently needed funds has begun to bear fruits. Other interventions such as the launch of a National Consultancy Policy to enhance the efficient use of the often-abused consultancy services in government was achieved.

Sanitation

It is well known that we inherited a poor sanitation system that we immediately sought to address. To date, we have acquired the trucks and equipment needed and have begun to clear the sewage system in Monrovia. Similarly, we have begun to restore the water supply to Central Monrovia, Bushrod Island, Kakata, and Buchanan.

Education

We have made strides in meeting our targets in education during our first 100 days. Key deliverables included paying scholarship arrears for Local and foreign students and investing in Youth capacity building in ICT for the first six months.

To date, the Government of Liberia has allotted funds for the payment of arrears for both local and international scholarship students. These arrears include underwriting expenditures such as monthly allowances, resettlement assistance, air ticket costs, French language training programs, and other administrative and operational costs associated with students' well-being. Additionally, my administration inherited a debt of nearly 6 million of unpaid fees to the West African Examination Council for WASSCE sat by our students. Despite meager resources, US\$3.5 Million has been appropriated in the FY 2024 budget for the payment of WASSCE fees.

A complete digital training program and start-up seed funding for youth capacity building in ICT has been developed, with major facilities to host the training already assessed in seven counties.

The project has already been launched with thousands of enterprising young Liberians in queue to register.

Legislative Agenda

Fellow Citizens, in my annual message in January, I proposed several legislations focused on shaping the outcomes we desire from our development agenda.

Today, I am happy to announce that we have submitted three bills to meet our legislative agenda for the first 100 days. The following draft laws were submitted during this quarter: The Presidential Transition Act; the Bill for the Establishment of the Ministry of Local Government, and the National Tourism Bill.

Challenges

Fellow Liberians, despite these achievements, we also acknowledge that challenges remain. We have tried to meet these targets with limited resources in a tight fiscal space. In addition, we have inherited a system that was bedeviled by weak institutions and therefore under extreme stress. Vestiges of the past still stare at us and undermine service delivery to citizens. The road ahead is not without obstacles, and we must remain vigilant in our efforts to overcome them. We are committed to addressing issues of corruption and improving the material and social conditions of all Liberians.

Looking Forward

My dear compatriots, we look forward to the future with hope and optimism. The people of this country are the most important reason why we serve, and therefore delivering service to them should be our true objective. In the next few months, we will unveil our National Development Plan clearly expressing economic, political, and social strategies we intend to employ with your participation to drive our country in a direction that will improve a better quality of life for Liberians.

Yes, the past 100 days is not a comprehensive measure of a 6-year administration. It is one thing to rescue a country from corruption, decay, and mismanagement. And it is entirely another thing to set it on track and the right trajectory. That, however, remains our challenge and the responsibility that the Liberia people have entrusted to my administration. I am determined, as the leader to chart a course that will not let our people down!

So, as we reflect on the progress of the past 100 days, let us recommit ourselves to the transformation of our country and continue to work together, united in our common vision for a prosperous and peaceful Liberia. With determination and perseverance, we will build a nation that is highly respected globally and one that we can all be proud of.

I, therefore, encourage all Liberians to join us to **Think Liberia, Love Liberia, and Build Liberia**. Thank you.

May God bless us all and save the state.