

National Bicentennial Commemoration Official Launch

Article by [Press Release](#)

The Steering Committee for the National Bicentennial Commemoration has released key events leading to the year-long event.

The Government of Liberia has embarked on a year-long commemoration of 200 years of Liberia's founding which began in earnest January 7, 1822 when some 86 free slaves from the United States arrived in what is today called Liberia.

On January 7, 2022, President George Manneh Weah officially kicked off the Bicentennial Commemoration on the Providence Island where the free American Slaves, 200 years ago disembarked from the Ship Elizabeth. The Kick-off event was attended by throngs of citizens, government officials and foreign dignitaries, including United States Ambassador Michael McCarthy.

February is expected to be action-packed with several activities taking place in the nation's capital, Monrovia, with the President of the Republic, Dr. George Manneh Weah, officially launching the Bicentennial Celebration on February 14 at the Samuel K. Doe Sports Stadium where a Cultural Festival will also take place.

The SKD Sports Stadium events will be followed by a Heads of State Summit at the Executive Mansion Ground at 3:00pm and a Grand Bicentennial Dinner Ceremony at 6:00pm.

Prior to the February 14 events, the Bicentennial Commemoration will be factored into this year's Armed Forces Day celebration on Friday, February 11 at the Barclay Training Center. There will also be a National Muslim Prayer Day at the Antionette Tubman Stadium on February 11.

According to the Statement, on Sunday, February 13, the Bicentennial Commemoration will be taken to the Executive Mansion Grounds for a National Christian Thanksgiving Service.

The celebrations continue on February 15 and 16 with the University of Liberia Founder's Day International Conference which is organized by the University and the Bicentennial Steering Committee.

The Bicentennial Commemoration is being held under the theme, "Liberia, The Land

of Return – Commemorating 200 Years of Freedom and Pan-African Leadership” while the slogan is, “The Lone Star Forever, Stronger Together.” This signifies the important historical milestones achieved by the country since it was founded in 1822 by free people of African descent and their patrons from the United States.

The event is being celebrated throughout 2022 from January 7 to December 10, 2022. According to the Steering Committee, the theme for the Bicentennial is “Liberia: The Land of Return-Commemorating 200 Years of Freedom and Pan-African Leadership” while the slogan is, “The Lone Star Forever, Stronger Together”.

The Steering Committee says this theme signifies three important historical milestones achieved by the country since it was founded in 1822 by the free people of African descent and their patrons from the United States.

Firstly, the theme celebrates Liberia, in West Africa, as the land chosen as a refuge by free people of African descent who endured many years of servitude in the United States, to settle as their home country. Consequently, under the auspices of the American Colonization Society (ACS), many of the free people of colour emigrated from the United States and disembarked on Providence Island in Liberia on January 7, 1822, as their home country.

Secondly, the theme seeks to memorialize black freedom and nationhood and the determination for self-governance that began 200 years ago when Liberia was established in 1822. In an era when people of African descent were seeking freedom and self-determination, the founding of Liberia, “the Black Republic,” which gained independence in 1847 stood as the clear indication that Africans were capable of self-rule.

And thirdly, the theme acknowledges the pivotal Pan-Africanist leadership role that Liberia played, crusading for Africa’s decolonization and independence, including its uncompromising stance against the racial segregation in South Africa known then as Apartheid.

Liberia would later champion the establishment of multinational unions on the African Continent and the global stage. Foremost, was its Pan Africanist leadership role in organizing the historic 1959 “Sanniquellie Conference” Involving Liberia, Guinea and Ghana which ultimately resulted in the formation of the Organization of African Union (OAU) in 1963.

Liberia assumed similar Pan-Africanist leadership in the formation of the African Union (AU), successor to the OAU. It likewise joined the call on the Continent for the creation of regional economic organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union.

And it was in a similar spirit of Pan-Africanism that inspired Liberia to join other nations in supporting the formation of international bodies, including the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

As a Pan-Africanist leader, Liberia became the vision bearer and founder of the African Development Bank when the bank was established in the 1960s to foster economic cooperation on the African Continent.

It can be recalled that even while slavery remained legal in the United States until 1865, the resettlement efforts of the ACS culminated into the establishment of present-day Liberia in West Africa to relocate free black men, women and children from the United States and other people of colour from other parts of the world. This led to the departure of the first group of about 86 free blacks from the shores of New York in 1820.

By the end of the 1800s, approximately 17,000 free blacks from the United States and the Caribbean were repatriated to Liberia. Other People of colour would continue to seek refuge in Liberia, the “land of liberty”.

Since their arrival, the settlers established self-governance in Liberia with Joseph Jenkins Roberts from the state of Virginia in the United States serving as President, the first African American to be elected as president of a country. Subsequently, nine other American born Africans from Maryland, South Carolina, Ohio and Kentucky served as Presidents of Liberia, this first Black African Republic.

The Capital city of Liberia is named Monrovia after James Monroe, Fifth President of the United States a staunch supporter of the ACS and the flag of the country is a partial replica of the America flag which symbolized the strong relationship between both countries.

The slogan shows Liberia as the Lone Star Nation and the first independent black Republic in Africa. Despite the country’s recent bitter history of conflict, Liberia has restored peace and stability and it remains stronger as a nation through democratic governance. The country has held three successive democratic elections, which ushered in Mrs Ellen Johnson -Sirleaf as the first female president of the country and Africa.

In 2017, the country witnessed the democratic transfer of power from one democratically elected to President George Manneh Weah, resulting from the outcome of a free, fair and transparent democratic election. This transfer of power was a significant milestone that the country has not achieved one in more than 70 years.

According to the Steering Committee, the theme and slogan are designed to support the objectives of the Bicentennial Commemoration, which are to celebrate Liberia’s rich cultural heritage; to showcase the country’s tourism and investment opportunities; to reunite and reconnect African Americans in the United States and other blacks within the diaspora to their cultural identity in Liberia.

A key objective of the Bicentennial commemoration is to also strengthen the rich historic relationship between the United States and Liberia dating back to the 1800s when Liberia was established.

To ensure the success of the Bicentennial Commemoration, His Excellency, President Dr Geroge Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, is calling on all Liberians, local and international partners and the diaspora communities to participate in this historic event to celebrate 200 years of the founding of the country by free people of African descent from the United State of America and other parts of the world, including the Caribbean and Europe; and the level of freedom and Pan-African leadership that the country has enjoyed while showcasing the country as an ideal destination for tourism and investment.

Various subcommittees are assisting the National Steering Committee of the Bicentennial commemoration ensuring an inclusive measure to assure the success of the event. The President is calling on all Liberians and good friends of the country from round the world to work together collaboratively, irrespective of their social and political alignments, to ensure the success of this event for the overall benefit of the country.