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Weah Abolishes Tuition Payment at Undergraduate Public Schools

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Monrovia, Liberia: Most parts of Monrovia and around the country burst into spontaneous celebrations Wednesday, October 24 when President George Manneh announced during a major policy statement at the University of Liberia main campus on Capitol Hill that undergraduate students in public colleges would no more pay tuition.

“The increasing cost of education in Liberia leading to non-enrollment, non-attendance, and frequent drop-outs is becoming counter-productive to our development goals,” the Liberian head of state stressed amid thunderous applause's inside and outside of the UL auditorium where he spoke.

“I believe, therefore, that the time has come to take bold initiatives and make direct social interventions to address this problem.”

Then the President averred: “I therefore wish to declare tuition-free for all undergraduate students at the University of Liberia as well as all other public universities in Liberia.”

The declaration sparked celebrations amongst young people in the country, particularly at the state-run University of Liberia, where registration formalities particularly the timely payment of tuition had sparked protests and massive school dropouts amongst students. Some of the students, unable to control their joyous emotions, ran out of the auditorium to join their counterparts outside the hall and in various parts of Monrovia to demonstrate their appreciation for what everyone considers a rare and unprecedented policy action by any Liberian president on education. They sang, “George Weah! George Weah! The Talk-and-Do President!” The Liberian President recalled irritating conditions of the last several decades in which students of the University of



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President Weah with Finance Minister Tweh

Liberia and Liberians desirous of earning a college degree endured. “With a student body of close to 40,000 students, it has been extremely difficult to efficiently manage the registration and administrative processes of the University on a manual basis,” he reflected on some of the ordeals that prevented too many Liberians from getting a college degree.

President Weah said he was shocked when he was told that every semester about 20,000 UL students go through the billing process, yet only about 12,000 students attend and pay.

“Furthermore, about 5,000 of the 12,000 students who are in attendance are dependent on some form of financial aid or scholarship. The rest of the students do not attend due to the lack of financial means,” he said “As we are all aware, there have been many instances when the registration processes have ended in riots, conflicts and demonstrations on the campuses of the University. In 2017, the UL Administration made a decision to digitize the University of Liberia. But up to the time I took Office in January of this year, the project had not yet been started.”

In the special statement he delivered at the UL main campus, the President said he was under legal and moral obligation as the Visitor, to ensure that the Nation’s highest institution of learning is well established, adequately funded through budgetary support from the Government, and properly managed by competent administrators. President Weah said he was determined to bring the UL to speed to get on par with technology, get it digitized with aim of easing the registration burdens. He recently launched an e Portal platform allowing students register online instead of going through the riotous age-old registration process. He said all these are in line with his government’s Pro-Poor Agenda which also aims to build the human capacity of the country.

“There is a definite link between a well-educated citizenry and economic growth, and in recognition of that, my Government has decided to invest in our human capital in order to achieve sustained economic growth. Having a good education is important to one’s success in life,” the Liberian President stressed, adding, “Education is the key to success because it enables a person to think logically and communicate effectively.”

He also used the occasion to call on students to make use of the opportunity given them so that they are able to reach their full potential in their educational sojourn.

“To the students,” he said, “let me inform you that this will be a win-win partnership between you and Government, as you will still be expected to pay all other fees charged by the University.”

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