



**INSTALLATION PROGRAM PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF LIBERIAN BASKETBALL
(FSLB)**

**“THE ROLE OF FSLB IN DEVELOPING BASKETBALL IN
LIBERIA: ENVISION THE POSSIBILITIES”**

DELIVERED BY DR. MELVIN H. HALL, FSLB PRESIDENT

ON JUNE 25, 2022, VIA ZOOM

Hon. Marbue Richards – Our Installing Officer
Mr. Abraham Samukai – President of the Liberian Basketball Association
Mr. Patrick Worjloh – Chairman and other members of the Board of Directors
Mr. Anthony Fannoh – Former President and current Board Member, FSLB
Cllr. James N. Verdier Jr. – Vice President and other members of the EC
Chairs of various Standing Committees of FSLB; Mr. Kenneth Smith, Mr. Michael Itoka, and Ms. Agatha Farngalo
Our outstanding members and supporters of FSLB,
Friends, and family members of FSLB

Let me begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all of those who have made this day possible. Thank you for the commitment, dedication, and sacrifices you all have made to FSLB. I would like to recognize a few of those people. Mr. Anthony Fannoh worked tirelessly to help birth this organization; Mrs. Dawn Richards-Tolbert and Mr. Christian Williams both served as members of the Board; Mr. Alston Wolo was the Treasurer for several years, handling the financial affairs of the organization. I would also like to extend a special thanks to Mr. Isaac Vah Tukpah Jr. and the other members of the of the Elections Commission who worked to ensure a free and fair election as well as Mr. Daniel Doe for heading the Transition team. Thank you to the Chairs of our various committees, including Mr. Kenneth Smith, Mr. Michael Itoka, and Ms. Agartha Farngalo. And lastly, but most certainly not the least, a particular shoutout goes to Mr. Stephen Koffa, who built and maintained the FSLB website at his own expense. FSLB is deeply indebted to you all.

I am both honored and humbled by the confidence you all have put in me and the Executive Committee to lead and run this Organization. This is a new beginning, as we both reflect on the progress we have achieved and envision the possibilities of what is to come. We celebrate today because we are all teammates playing to reach a singular goal. Back in Liberia many of us were opponents and fierce competitors going after one another on the court for High School and National championships. Because we are all on the same team now does not mean that we are without opponents. The FSLB organization is now our team, the game we are playing for is the future of Liberia as well as Liberian basketball and the outcome of this game is NOT a foregone conclusion. The game is not rigged in our favor. Our opponents are time and resources. We must sacrifice, come together, and remain dedicated to win this game for the next generation of Liberians who are watching, looking up to us, and cheering us on.

In order for us to win this game, our **mission** must be to inspire the youth of Liberia through basketball and sports in general – one neighborhood at a time. To accomplish this, we need to remain focused on the **vision** to empower Liberian youth by building basketball courts and playgrounds, supplying them with equipment, sponsoring basketball clinics for them, and training officials and administrators to develop the game of basketball while emphasizing integrity, fair play, enthusiasm, and responsibility among Liberian youth.

The pathway to success is to put the proper organizational structure in place for individuals and committees to perform their respective responsibilities and encourage others to donate their time, talent, and financial resources. Let us examine some of the pillars of this structure:

Constitution: The Constitution committee has begun an excellent work on revising some articles in the constitution for clarity, while adding other articles that allow the organization to function better. We will encourage the completion of this work and act to strengthen the Committee so that it soon forward recommended amendments to the General Membership for the two-third vote as required by the Constitution.

Committees: The strength of this FSLB organization lies with the general membership and the committees. With good leadership, we will go only as far as our members can carry us. The committees along with their duties and responsibilities will be placed on the FSLB website. We ask everyone to sign up for, at least, for one committee. Please come on board and let us give back to the game of basketball. We encourage our current committee members to keep working hard. We have a lot of work to do over the next two years.

Policies and Guidelines: The FSLB's WhatsApp chatroom has become an important platform for communication and sharing of information and ideas within the organization. We are revisiting our FSLB chatroom guidelines and rules with respect to the types of postings that should be restricted and the constitutionality of these restrictions. We will always encourage healthy discussions on all aspects of the game of basketball in the chatroom with a spirit of decorum.

Membership: We must increase the General, Associate and Honorable membership. This will be done by increasing the number of one-on-one phone calls and interactive sessions. We will complete and upload the membership list to the website. We will have several methods on the website for donating and paying dues (Direct Deposit, CashApp and Zelle). All of these methods will be linked directly to the Organization's account. We ask individuals from various states to serve as member-

recruiters for FSLB. It seems reasonable that individuals within the States will be far more knowledgeable about recruiting individuals within their states.

Teamwork and Outreach: We will build a strong team by cultivating trust, inclusiveness, transparency across the board, financial accountability, communication, and camaraderie among all members. We will encourage an environment that allows us to disagree and discuss our differences of opinion respectfully while reaching a group decision amicably. We will discourage and vehemently disavow all personal attacks and instead promote a spirit of harmony and unity.

Fundraising: The Communications, Public Relations, and Fundraising committees will work to identify individuals, groups, and organizations willing to donate to 501 (c3) organizations, such as FSLB. We will use these donations solely for projects in Liberia. It is a general knowledge that the projects in Liberia cannot be funded only from internal membership dues and contributions. We must seek outside funding.

Website: Mr. Stephen Koffa has done an excellent job of single-handedly maintaining the FSLB website, largely at his personal expense. We recognize and commend him for that. We must actively recruit others to help. After a careful reading of the entire FSLB website, we are convinced that we need help to improve the site. For example, some of the things we plan to incorporate into the website are the history of Liberian basketball, especially the history of the various Liberian basketball leagues; the names and stories of former basketball players; the names and stories of current basketball players who are playing in Liberia and overseas. Some historical basketball pictures of teams and individual athletes are currently on the FSLB website. We must write the stories to accompany those historical basketball pictures presently on the website. The website will include videos of basketball clinics, games, and statistics. We will also update the profile pictures and short biographies of all of the current Executive Officers and the members of the Board of Directors of FSLB. Overall, we will use our FSLB website as both an important fundraising instrument and a tool to keep members and the public informed and engaged. Going forward, please make it a habit, to constantly visit the website and find ways to help.

Newsletter: In addition to revamping the website, we plan to start a quarterly FSLB newsletter and informational flier so the public is constantly in the loop regarding what is happening with the organization and how they can get and remain involved. We hope this will expand our impact and further our mission.

Distinguished officers and members of FSLB, we all have critical roles to play in ensuring the success of FSLB. Each of us must take ownership of a particular committee or activity and be actively engaged rather than a detached observer, just waiting to see what others are doing. Our foremost concern should be about what we are doing for FSLB and not what others are not doing. Let me paraphrase the famous words of the former U.S. President John F. Kennedy who once said, "Ask not what your country can do for you but ask [instead] what you can do for your country. Therefore, we must not ask what FSLB is doing for us, but instead what can we do to help FSLB develop basketball in Liberia.

Please remember to thank others first for what they are doing before you tell them about what they are not doing. As members of the same team, we must all make the commitment that the closest player must rebound the missed shot without stopping to ask who missed the shot. We must cover our teammate's mistakes and bad passes. We win and lose as a team.

Finally, I challenge us to remain committed and steadfast to our mission to help take the game of basketball to every Liberian neighborhood. Despite the difficult task ahead, with God as our helper we will succeed. May God bless you, your families, and this great organization. Thank you.