



## **ULAA SUPPORTS CODE OF CONDUCT; Denounces Monrovia Politicians on Dual Citizenship**

### **A Position Statement from the ULAA**

**April 30, 2017**

As Liberians march towards 2017 Presidential and Legislative elections, the attention of the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA) is drawn to some actions and pronouncements by some political actors and institutions relative to the Code of Conduct Law. The Code of Conduct Law requires that Executive Branch appointees and individuals appointed to tenured positions resign two and three years, respectively, prior to any scheduled elections, if they desire to participate in that election.

#### **The Law**

Liberia's 1986 Constitution mandates the National Legislature to "prescribe a Code of Conduct for all public officials and employees, stipulating the acts which constitute conflict of interest or are against public policy, and the penalties for violation thereof," (Chapter XI, Article 90 (c)).

**PART V, 5.1 – 5.2: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION of the Code of Conduct reads:**

All Officials appointed by the President of the Republic of Liberia shall not:

- a) engage in political activities, canvass or contest for elected offices;
- b) use Government facilities, equipment or resources in support of partisan or political activities;
- c) serve on a campaign team of any political party, or the campaign of any independent candidate.

5.2 Wherein, any person in the category stated in section 5.1 herein above, desires to canvass or contest for an elective public position, the following shall apply;

- a) Any Minister, Deputy Minister, Director-General, Managing Director and Superintendent appointed by the President pursuant to article 56 (a) of the Constitution and a Managing Director appointed by a Board of Directors, who desires to contest for public elective office shall resign said post at least two (2) years prior to the date of such public elections;
- b) Any other official appointed by the President who holds a tenured position and desires to contest for public elective office shall resign said post three (3) years prior to the date of such public elections;
- c) However, in the case of impeachment, death, resignation or disability of an elected official, any official listed above, desirous of canvassing or contesting to fill such position must resign said position within thirty days following the declaration by the National Elections Commission of the vacancy.

### **ULAA Position**

ULAA takes note that the Code Conduct is one piece of legislation that was crafted by the Executive Branch of Government, debated, and enacted by the National Legislature, and finally upheld by the Liberian Supreme Court as “Constitutional”. This makes the Code of Conduct one of the few Legislative Acts that has been fully vetted and scrutinized by all three branches of our democracy and people of Liberia.

ULAA, therefore, views the pronouncements and actions of politicians and others intended to openly violate the laws as dangerous, and has the propensity of delegitimizing the critical institutions of governance and undermines the peace and stability Liberians have enjoyed over the past decade.

Further, ULAA supports the Law since there is no constitutionally protected right for anyone to remain an executive branch appointee and contest for elected office at the same time; or utilize the resources, trappings, and benefits of that appointment to seek elective office. Otherwise, individuals appointed by the executive branch in the military and police forces, such as the Chief of Staff and other commission officers of the army, as well as the Inspector General of Police and many others would have no limitation in becoming active politicians seeking elected offices while simultaneously serving in those positions.

The Union recognizes that this law, like many other laws on the books, may not be to the liking of some segment of the population, however, in a democracy, it is the duty of citizens if they do

not like a Law to organize, petition, and persuade their law makers to change the laws, or vote them out of office. It is precisely for this purpose that ULAA has undertaken the task of advocating for the repeal of the 1974 Alien and Nationality Laws, and the enactment of a dual citizenship law for natural born Liberian citizens who are citizens of their host country of refuge.

Similarly, ULAA is calling on these politicians and individuals to follow the footsteps of the Union, instead of denying the existence of the Code of Conduct, or acting in ways that suggest an open violation of the Law.

ULAA believes that given the fragility of our Country and the menace of impunity that has permeated the governance structures of the nation, it is important that individuals seeking high level leadership positions in our Country demonstrate true fidelity to the Laws of the Land, and resist the appearance of being above the Law.

Meanwhile, ULAA expresses satisfaction on statements emanating from the National Elections Commission that it will fully enforce all eligible laws, including the Code of Conduct for all candidates seeking elected offices for the October 2017 elections.

ULAA wishes to warn all politicians and political institutions that the Union will hold them squarely responsible for any unlawful acts committed by them or their supporters in response to the actions of the National Elections Commission in ensuring that all Laws of the Republic of Liberia are fully respected by individuals intending to participate in the pending elections.

Similarly, ULAA denounces what appears to be a smear campaign and acts of intimidation against the Chairman of the National Elections Commission, after the declaration that the Commission will enforce the Code of Conduct as it relates to the 2017 general and presidential elections.

ULAA believes that questioning the citizenship of the National Elections Commission Chairman, who has successfully presided over many bi-elections is to also question the legitimacy of those elections, thus creating a serious constitutional crisis and posing a grave danger to the pending 2017 Elections. Further, the questioning of the citizenship status of an individual who everyone knows was born and raised in Liberia, with generations of parental ancestry rooted in Liberia proves that the Law as relates to dual citizenship of natural born Liberians, is a weapon of choice reserved by Monrovia politicians to exclude other Liberians from full participation in the body politics of the nation.

Also, within the broader context, ULAA strongly denounces Monrovia based politicians who, for their own narrow political and personal interests, have over the years used the issue of dual citizenship to draw a wedge between natural born Liberian citizens living in the diaspora and their kith and kindreds at home, despite the tremendous economic support Diaspora Liberians provide to the homeland. It is even more sad that esteemed elderly statesmen and national political icons who are expected to invest their political and moral stocks into uniting and reconciling all Liberians are the ones leading this ugly packaging of Liberians into home based and diaspora segments under the false pretense of nationalism.

The tragedy that has befalling our nation is that while these Monrovia politicians push so aggressively to take away birthright citizenship from natural born Liberians under the draconian Alien and Nationality Law with no apparent national benefit, other laws, such as the Liberianization Law, with all its enormous economic benefits for Liberians and the nation remain unenforced.

As a result, the real “aliens” such as the Chinese are selling sand off our beaches, while others “are selling ice, ice cream, and used clothes, among many other small business ventures much to the disadvantage and exclusion of our fellow citizens. This has facilitated the full surrender of the nation’s economic power and wealth to real foreign individuals and entities with no ancestry links to Liberia whatsoever.

Sadly, and agreeably, the result of this complicity and duplicity by Monrovia politicians is that Liberia lacks an empowered economic middle class, while the general citizenry remains in abject poverty in full view of the massive exploitation of the nation’s economic resources by the real “aliens”. To this, these Monrovia politicians do not care, since it poses no direct competition to their political interest than their perceived fear of natural born Liberian citizens who hold another citizenship.

However, ULAA takes comfort in the fact as globalization and the full benefits and advantages as multi-national citizenship takes hold around the World, and also as more and more Liberians become aware that the progress and advancement of Liberia requires the full participation of all of its sons and daughters, both at home and abroad, these deceptive Monrovia politicians will soon find themselves trembling and shaking before the rising tides of the Liberian people’s desire to reconcile, unite, and march in locked step in advancing the nation’s developmental agenda, whether living at home or in the diaspora.

Finally, ULAA believes that a peaceful, participatory, free and fair election provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for peace and development in Liberia, and calls on all to remain within the confines of the Law as the Nation enters this crucial process in its history. Let us remembered our past, enjoy the present and embrace the future for peace, love, happiness and good governance as we participate in a free and fair election under the rule of law.

The Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA) is the umbrella group of Liberians and their various organizations in the Americas. ULAA is a voluntary, nonprofit and non-governmental organization formed on July 4, 1974 at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States of America. The mission of ULAA is to advance the just causes of Liberians and Liberia at home and abroad. The current President of ULAA is Wilmot W. Kunney.

**Together, we struggle for a better Liberia.**