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**University of Liberia opens Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation**

**Monrovia, Liberia** – The University of Liberia recently inaugurated the Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation (KAICT) to develop human resource capacity for policy studies in conflict, peace, security, gender and development. Liberia’s Vice President, Mr. Joseph Boakai, was the special guest of honour at the ceremony attended by senior Government officials, members of the diplomatic corps and the UNMIL Officer-in-Charge, Mr. Luiz Carlos da Costa, who represented the United Nations family.



University of Liberia President, Dr. Conteh, (right) welcomes Mr. da Costa on the main campus in Monrovia

In his keynote address, Mr. da Costa said the KAICT could serve as an important centre of learning for the entire West Africa sub-region and beyond, ‘Not so many years ago Liberia was spoken of as the epicenter of instability in the region. It is now time to reverse that label and for Liberia to demonstrate, by example, that it can be the regional centre of stability and development.’ He added that the KAICT will fulfill the essential and vital role of educating and teaching, which can restore the soul of the country, ‘Only through the in-depth study of the root causes of past problems, the reaching of understanding in inter-group relations and the commitment of an educated corps of persons can nations be built.’

Performing the inauguration ceremony, Vice President Joseph Boakai said the launch of the Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation is a practical manifestation of the Liberia’s desire for long-lasting peace. ‘We should learn to beat our swords into ploughshares. We are all aware that conflict is a human phenomenon that brings out contradictions and these contradictions can be transformed into meaningful and positive initiatives that benefit humanity,’ the Vice-President said. The Liberian Government therefore attaches much importance to the need for such an institution in post-war Liberia, he added.

According to the President of the University of Liberia, Dr. Alhassan Conteh, the University decided to establish the Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation in honour of the UN Secretary-General for his valuable contributions to conflict resolution and transformation in Africa, particularly in Liberia. Dr. Conteh, revealed that the University took into consideration an initial proposal from Mr. McCarthy Weh, Director of Research of the Liberian Senate, in addition to the University’s own conviction that the UN Secretary-General be honoured during his recent visit to Liberia, in July.

The strategic objective of KAICT aims to establish and maintain a world-class policy research and dialogue program aimed at transforming Liberia’s past of war and conflict into a better future of good policymaking in conflict, peace, security, gender and development. Kings College, London, UNDP and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra, Ghana are amongst institutions and organizations that are already contributing resources and personnel to the establishment of KAICT. When fully established, the KAICT will award Master of Arts degrees in Conflict Transformation.

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