Mr. President of the UNDP Executive Board,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

Representatives of the Government of Angola, Liberia, and Sierra Leone,

Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to present the Country Programme Documents for Angola, Liberia, and Sierra Leone to the Second Regular session of the Joint UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board for approval.

The three programmes (CPDs) have benefited extensively from consultations with Government partners and a wide range of stakeholders, including UN sister agencies, multilateral and bilateral partners, civil society, and the private sector. All three CPDs respond adequately to the individual countries’ national development priorities and focuses on UNDP comparative advantages. They are also aligned to the African Union Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the UNDP Strategic Plan.
Mr. President, Distinguished members of the Executive Board.

Angola is a Least Developed Country (LDC) expected to graduate to Middle-Income (MIC) category in February 2021, based on the income-only criteria. Oil production and its supporting activities contribute to about half the GDP, and 90% of exports and the natural resources offer a promising development potential. However, the economy, dependent on hydrocarbons and due to a sharp decrease in oil prices, is seeing a decrease in GDP growth that is only averaging about 2.8 percent over the period 2017-2021. As social indicators will need to keep pace with economic growth, the Government remains committed to improving social services and diversifying the economy, which are key priorities in its National Development Plan (NDP) covering the period 2018-2022.

Angola is ranked 147 out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index, with a value of 0.581. The HDI has shown constant improvement over the years, compared to a value of 0.4 in 2001. However, 36 per cent of Angolans live in extreme poverty. In 2018, 51.2 per cent of Angolans were considered multidimensionally poor, with 29.9 per cent in urban and 88.2 per cent in rural areas. The population is projected to grow rapidly, from 25.9 million in 2014 to 41.8 million people by 2030. In 2018, an estimated 46.6 per cent of Angolans were 14 years old or less.

The Government of Angola (elected since August 2017) is aiming to create a favourable environment for inclusive economic growth, to achieve macroeconomic stability and advance political decentralization. The Government is implementing the Programme to Support Production, Diversification of Exports and Substitution of Imports, which targets the high unemployment rates among women and youth (31
per cent and 52.4 per cent respectively, compared 28.8 per cent overall). The first ever election of local governments is also expected to be held in 2020.

The Country Programme is aligned with the National Development Plan 2018-2022 which is in turn aligned to the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is based on the promise of ‘leaving no one behind’ and ‘reaching those furthest behind first’. The programme includes integrated solutions to interconnected development challenges. It focuses on the following priority areas: (1) fostering poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth; (2) increasing resilience to shocks and crises and enhancing management of natural resources for conservation and economic development; (3) strengthening inclusive democracy, human rights, justice and rule of law.

Mr. President, Distinguished members of the Executive Board,

We are expecting the Executive Board to approve the CPD for Angola.

Mr. President, Distinguished members of the Executive Board,

Liberia is one of the poorest countries in the world with a 54% poverty rate. Acute poverty and vulnerability in Liberia are a result of entrenched social and economic inequalities and exclusion. This is further compounded by the depreciation of the currency and the weak economic growth in 2018 and 2019 estimated at 1.2% and 0.4% respectively. Liberia’s Human Development Index (HDI) has been declining, ranking Liberia 181 of 189 countries. The legacy of the civil war engendered weak and obsolete infrastructures that limit the provision of basic services and exacerbate the impact of the lack of resources for widespread education and employment.

Liberia’s revenue base relies mainly on taxes from natural resource extraction through mining, timber and plantation concessions to foreign companies - making
the country vulnerable to the fluctuation of commodity prices and offers little in terms of job creation. The domestic private sector is small and suffers from low productivity, limited capacity for innovation and minimal access to formal finance. However, the government has started work on addressing these business environment constraints, attracting investment, and improving value addition in key agricultural value chains under the leadership of President Weah and through the ambitious Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD 2019 - 2024). The Agenda offers an excellent opportunity to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through its emphasis on education, health, gender equality, poverty reduction and food security as the country emerges from years of conflict, the Ebola crisis and the resultant economic downturn. The focus on pro-poor growth and job creation reinforces its overarching theme of inclusiveness. It is also encouraging that the pillar on Sustaining Peace directly addresses the key priorities of the Liberia Peacebuilding Plan, which seeks to invest in durable solutions for advancing peace and reconciliation efforts at all levels in Liberia.

The UNDP Country Programme (2020-2024) will support the Government’s national development plan to promote mechanisms to improve the quality and effectiveness of core government functions, while advancing the recovery process, and reducing the risk of a relapse into societal disorder. It will focus on advancing three of the four outcomes articulated in United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2020-2024), including inclusive growth through the private sector; peace and justice through formal and informal mechanisms; and governance through decentralization. Human rights-based programming principles, innovative approaches, integrated platforms, sub regional offices and financing solutions will be used to build strategic new partnerships and to accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the local and national level.
Mr. President, Distinguished members of the Executive Board,
We are expecting the Executive Board to approve the CPD for Liberia.

Mr. President, Distinguished members of the Executive Board,
Sierra Leone is a Least Developed Country (LDC) whose economic recovery has been volatile with the impact of the Ebola outbreak, the collapse of iron ore prices and a deadly landslide that hit Freetown in August 2017. These unfortunate events derailed Sierra Leone’s aspiration to attain middle-income status by 2035. Today, the country continues to face challenges with high youth unemployment and weak governance. Moreover, problems of poor infrastructure and widespread rural and urban impoverishment persist. The economic recovery has been volatile with economic growth rate remaining roughly stagnant at 3.7% in 2018. These factors raised income poverty from 52.9% in 2011 to 57% in 2018. The Human Development Index ranks Sierra Leone at 184 out of 189 countries placing the country in the low human development category.

In March 2019, the Government launched its Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019-2023, which focuses on human capital development and integrates the Sustainable Development Goals, African Union Agenda 2063 and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. It identified Education (SDG 4) and Peace, Justice, and strong institutions (SDG 15) as priorities to ensure it “walks out of fragility”. To support the Governments National Development Plan, UNDP’s new country programme (2020-2023) will seek support efforts to eradicate poverty and build resilience to climate change shocks and disasters. The Programme will focus on inclusive democratic governance and inclusive local economic development. The programme targets the most vulnerable people to eradicate poverty, while bolstering human capital development as a fundamental pathway to achieving middle-income status and the Sustainable Development Goals.
Mr. President, Distinguished members of the Executive Board,
We are expecting the Executive Board to approve the CPD for Sierra Leone.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Members of the Board for their support to the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa and to all programme countries under the Bureau’s responsibility.

Thank you for your attention.

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