Mr. Chair
Excellencies
Madam Executive Director & Distinguished Members of the Executive Board of UNFPA
Well Wishers, Colleagues and Friends:

The thriving partnership subsisting between the Republic of Liberia and UNFPA has proven critical and beneficial. Liberia; working in close collaboration with UNFPA; has resulted to the increased level of enhancement of the sexual and reproductive health rights in Liberia. Consequently, family planning services and the legal setting have seen immense improvement; with increased involvement from communities themselves; including, but not limited to areas that have been inaccessible for a protracted period.

Let me, on behalf of His Excellency Dr. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, the Government and People of the Republic of Liberia, acknowledge and extend thanks to Mr. Mabingue Ngom; UNFPA Regional Director for West and Central Africa; for his presentation of the Country Programme Document for Liberia; and express our appreciation to the Executive Board of UNFPA for this opportunity to contribute to discussions toward the approval of the Country Programme Document (CPD) for Liberia; for the period; 2020 to 2024.

It is important to stress that this Country Programme Document aligns with our National Flagship Development Agenda - the Pro- Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD); which was envisioned and subsequently launched by His Excellency President Weah. The Pro- Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development puts the Liberian People at the core of all our development processes; with the goal of leaving no one behind. Hence,
the implementation of the UNFPA Country Programme Document for Liberia will prove very integral to achieving the Pro Poor Agenda of His Excellency President Weah.

Madam Executive Director, Excellencies, Friends, we are conscious that this Country Programme Document for Liberia would not have been made possible had it not been for the collaborative efforts of UNFPA and Partners, the Government of Liberia and Civil Society; as well as all other relevant stakeholders. Please accept our immeasurable gratitude.

Satisfied with this level of partnership, enjoyed by the Government of Liberia and UNFPA and Partners; we entertain the hope that UNFPA will continue to work with the Government of Liberia and key stakeholders; for the full achievement of the strategic outcome areas of this Country Programme Document; including; but not limited to sexual and reproductive health; adolescents and youth; gender equality; women’s empowerment; and population dynamics; which, as we have emphasized, are essential for the realization of our National Development goals.

In the context of population dynamics; for example; paragraph Two (2) of the Country Program document, highlights Liberia’s rapidly growing youthful population; the youth constitutes 63% of Liberia’s population.

Our goal is to accelerate the process of transforming Liberia’s demographic dividend into a potential driver of growth through social inclusion; the creation of employment; and life skills opportunities. This; however, cannot be achieved exclusively; as it would require partnerships at all levels; with UNFPA being pivotal.

We take note of the challenges outlined in the Country Programme Document; and assure that the Government will continue to work together with UNFPA and Partners; in making strides to address such challenges. However, we like to take specific note of paragraph seven (7) which asserts among others that the Government’s commitment to prevent and respond to gender-based violence is being undermined by the failure to revise legislations;
and a national action plan to address gender-based violence within the framework of a national strategy.

We like to use this opportunity to provide clarity. As we today draw nearer to the approval of the Country Programme Document, we would like to make clear that the Government of Liberia continues to conduct; and has increased awareness campaigns against compromised settlements; resulting from sexual based violence against women.

Prior to commencing such initiative, the Government of Liberia and relevant partners also launched the “Spotlight Initiative” in June this year. Reducing the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence, and harmful practices; and increasing women’s access to sexual and reproductive health services are the primary objectives of this endeavor.

More importantly; and which directly addresses the aforementioned assertion in paragraph seven (7) of the Country Programme Document; in relation to legislation; we are pleased to inform this gathering that in July this year, the Government of Liberia signed into law, the Domestic Violence Act – a legal instrument that seeks to abolish all forms of violence meted out against women, children and men.

We certainly hope that these will be considered for inclusion in this Country Programme Document for Liberia; as the UNFPA Executive Board approves the Document.

With this backdrop, we welcome the joint implementation and monitoring mechanism enshrined in the Country Program Document which among others would allow for joint field visits; as well as quarterly; and annual reviews; in line with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) monitoring framework; and the provision for a mid-term review that would facilitate adjustments; taking into consideration progress that would be made during the course of implementation of the Country Programme Document.
In recognition that the Country Program Document aligns with our national development framework- The Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development; and the commitment of UNFPA to support its implementation; we hereby endorse; and support the approval of the Country Programme Document for Liberia; for the period; 2020-2024; by the UNFPA Executive Board.

Let me conclude by reiterating on behalf of His Excellency President Weah, the Government and People of Liberia, our appreciation to the UNFPA Executive Board; and the UNFPA Family and Partners for the level of collaboration; and more importantly, for its renewed commitment to supporting the National Development Program of the Government of Liberia.

We look forward to working more closely with UNFPA; with critical support from our development partners; for the full implementation of the Country Programme Document for Liberia.

I THANK YOU!