NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA’S DEVELOPMENT: PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT; CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND THE PROMOTION OF DURABLE PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA.
Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me, taking the floor for the first time, to congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the 69th Session of the General Assembly and to wish you success during your tenure. Let me also express profound gratitude to the Secretary-General for his Reports, and extend appreciation to the organizers of this event. My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Bolivia, Malawi and Benin on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the African Group and the LDCs respectively.

In this era of global transformation, peace and development have become even more closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Against this backdrop, the focus on peace and development could not have been better timed than at the moment when the international community is grappling with challenges ranging from poverty, hunger, the devastating effects of climate change, terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking, disarmament, the reconstruction and strengthening of fragile economies and societies emerging from conflicts to the on-going stock taking of the progress of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which this Assembly pledged in 2010 to achieve by 2015.

Indeed, we have come a long way and the voyage has been bumpy and sometimes turbulent, yet we have remained focused. The effects of climate change, conflicts and pandemics have continued to compromise the efforts of African states. Despite the challenges, we have, as a continent, made significant strides in reducing the resurgence of conflicts during the last decade.

My delegation emphasizes the importance of peace and security as a necessary condition for development in Africa. Development is impossible without peace, just as peace is impossible without development and that lasting peace and sustainable development are impossible without respect for human rights and the rule of law. Building stable and peaceful societies in Africa requires actions on eradicating poverty and inequality, and enhancing good governance. As poverty is both a cause and consequence of instability and conflicts, the continent cannot achieve peace and development without addressing poverty in its entirety. To this end, the continent will continue to work with the wider international community to prevent outbreak of armed conflicts.

Africa is the region that needs the MDGs more than any other region. We have the unique opportunity to ensure that the critical issues confronting our continent: poverty, hunger, the effects of climate change, inequality and youth employment are adequately addressed in the post-2015 development framework.

Mr. President,

Sierra Leone is one of the countries in Africa that have made remarkable progress in political stability. We continued to place emphasis on the protection of the basic rights of our people. We have put in place comprehensive justice sector reforms in response to both national and global demands to ensure that the rights of our people are preserved, and above all, the need to enhance access to justice for all. We are pleased to note that the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights entered into force last year.

Within the security-political-humanitarian-development framework, we have adopted measures to address many of the root causes of conflict and lay the foundation for medium and long-term national development. We are heartened by the remarkable progress our country has made, especially in identifying and resolving tensions and threats of potential conflict; monitoring and
promoting human rights; building peace and security and consolidating good governance reforms. These provide us with the appropriate healing therapy for a country that has emerged from a massively devastating conflict.

We have moved from a country on the agenda of the Security Council to a nation that is a storehouse of lessons on how to successfully move away from war to peace and development. Sierra Leone is considered a best practice in donor coordination as well as a success story in peacebuilding. We enjoy accolades in charting the path for a peaceful, secure and democratic Sierra Leone.

As we commend ourselves for the gains made, our remarkable post-conflict achievement is in danger of being completely reversed if a vigorous and well-coordinated effort is not made to eradicate the unprecedented Ebola Virus disease. The disease has already claimed thousands of lives and threatens to kill thousands more if drastic action is not taken to contain it. Evidently, the effect of the disease has not only been terrifying, but also impacted the entire socio-economic fabric of the countries currently affected by it. The epidemic is now causing huge disruptions to the agricultural, mining, manufacturing, transportation, tourism and construction sectors. It also poses a significant threat to human development, state security and poverty reduction. Economic disruptions are already being felt. Government revenues are drying up. In short, Ebola has imposed a kind of economic embargo on us. Every major economic activity has either slowed down or come to a standstill.

To conclude Mr. President, amidst our current challenges, we will continue to build on progress made in addressing key development priorities, particularly in the areas of gender equality and women empowerment, youth unemployment and empowerment, management of natural resources, agriculture and food security, effective delivery of public services and a robust private sector led growth that could translate into more tangible peaceful dividends.

I thank you.