



STATEMENT

BY

H.E. AMBASSADOR MARJON V. KAMARA

**AT THE 6TH COMMITTEE
ON CRIMINAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF UN STAFF**

Mr. Chairman
Distinguished delegates,

I join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. chairman, and the members of the bureau on your election to steer the affairs of this Committee. I assure you of my delegation's fullest cooperation and support in addressing issues on the agenda of the Committee. Liberia associates itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the representative of South Africa on behalf of the African Group. I thank the Secretary-General for his report on the important matter of criminal accountability, made in conformity with resolution 69/114 of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman

An important development which followed the formation of the United Nations was a discussion about criminal accountability. For many years this subject remained ingrained in debates and reflections about how to hold individuals accountable for their actions.

When the General Assembly in 2005 endorsed the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations that the Secretary-General make available to the United Nations membership a comprehensive report on the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations, it was against the backdrop of alarming reports of acts bordering on criminality being allegedly committed by ██████ UN officials and experts on mission. The General Assembly had resolved to take measures to address this despicable and contemptuous attitude of some UN staff.

Mr. Chairman

UN peacekeeping has been pivotal in restoring calm and sobriety to societies and nations in conflict, such as mine. UN peacekeepers provide invaluable service which include protection of civilians during armed conflicts. They also protect and promote human rights and, in many instances, initiate the processes of peacebuilding and rehabilitation. These notwithstanding, the conduct of ██████ officials and experts on mission has served to tarnish the image of the United Nations. While Liberia commends the actions taken so far by the United Nations to hold people accountable, it cannot agree more with the assertion that this behaviour of certain elements of the peacekeeping community is a flagrant "violation of the fundamental duty of care", which the UN and its peacekeepers owe to communities in crisis.

Now, most importantly is the question of jurisdiction and cooperation among states and between states and the United Nations to ensure that UN staff engaged in alleged criminal acts are held to account. Liberia supports the Secretary-General's policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. Liberia also supports the exercise of jurisdiction by member states in cases where their nationals appear to be the subject of investigation. Reports, however, of the lack of information on actions taken by states upon referral by the Secretary-General of some of their citizens undermine the efforts of the Organization to curb the problem. Liberia therefore calls on those states to live up to their commitment to investigate and prosecute where evidence avails. Not taking action would be acquiescing to impunity.

Mr. Chairman

That ██████ UN staff and experts on mission continue to prey on the innocent and deprived, the weak and the vulnerable, despite concerted efforts on the part of

the Organization suggests failure at various levels, the international and national. Enhanced efforts are required to remedy this situation, including from whistleblowers to bring to light these grievous offenses. Reports which surfaced in recent times that a whistleblower had to endure punishment for providing information on the criminal conduct of █████ UN staff on peacekeeping are even more troubling.

In conclusion, Liberia looks forward to reinvigorated efforts to address this situation. Perhaps, adopting a convention as recommended by the group of legal experts to create binding obligations on states to ensure that UN staff and experts on mission account for their actions would be a way forward. The time to address impunity is now; action must not be postponed.

I thank you.