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STATEMENT

BY

**HER EXCELLENCY
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AMBASSADOR & PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
LIBERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

ON

**AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN, AT THE THIRD
COMMITTEE OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2010

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates

Taking the floor for the first time during your tenure, Mr. Chairman, the Liberian delegation congratulates you on your election to chair this important Committee, and commends the excellent manner in which you are steering the work of this Committee. My delegation also wishes to align itself with the statements made by Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and Malawi on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

Consideration of agenda items 28 (a) and (b) affords us the opportunity to reflect upon the progress achieved so far in the struggle for gender equality, respect of women's rights, and the empowerment of women and girls. The year 2010 holds high significance for women. It marks the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which prescribed measures for elevating the status of women; and the tenth anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 which brought into sharp focus the concerns of women in conflict situations and the need for their full participation in peace processes.

This year has also witnessed new initiatives by the Secretary General aimed at improving women's health and reinforcing their participation in peacebuilding. Most notable among the momentous events of 2010 are the creation of the composite gender entity, UN Women, and the appointment of its Executive Director, in the person of Mrs. Michele Bachelet. We warmly congratulate Mrs. Bachelet and confirm our high expectations that UN Women, under her leadership, will bring more coherence and new momentum to our collective effort to advance the cause of women globally.

Mr. Chairman

We know from the results of numerous reviews of gender equality programmes that important progress has been made in global, regional and national policy development. Regrettably, however, implementation has been uneven. Many gaps and challenges remain.

Indeed, despite the successes registered, women across the globe continue to face serious obstacles to the full enjoyment of their rights. The level of participation of women in decision-making processes remains low on both national and global levels, and their representation at peace negotiations is marginal. Women still outnumber men among the world's poor. They are concentrated in vulnerable and low-paid jobs without social protection. Two thirds of illiterate adults are women – a statistic that has not changed in 20 years. Maternal mortality remains unacceptably high in many countries. All of these combine to adversely affect women's progress and development.

Mr. Chairman,

Liberia is convinced that gender equality and the empowerment of women are indispensable to the full realization of sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable and equitable development. The Government of Liberia is strongly committed to gender equality as a means of maintaining peace, reducing poverty, enhancing justice and promoting development. This is why our President H.E. Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has assigned high priority to the full participation of women in all aspects of national endeavour.

Her commitment has taken the form of progressive policies that the Government has put in place to address issues affecting women. These include, for example, the adoption of a National Gender Policy in 2009, which aims to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and equity by building and utilizing the full potential of women and men, boys and girls. The Government has also developed a National Gender-based Violence (GBV) Plan of Action, implementation of which is supported by a GBV Secretariat in the Ministry of Gender and Development, a Sexual-based Crimes Unit in the Ministry of Justice and a Criminal Court dedicated solely to the prosecution of sexual crimes. The Government is currently drafting a new Civil Service Code of Conduct which will include provisions aimed at eradicating gender inequalities within the public sector.

Other measures taken include:

- The appointment of an increasing number of women to ministerial and other key managerial positions in central and local government institutions,

- The mainstreaming of gender equality considerations and MDG3 Commitments throughout the four main pillars of the national poverty reduction strategy for the period 2008 – 2011.
- Prioritization of girl's education through the implementation of a National Girls Education Policy, which seeks to achieve parity in the enrollment and retention levels of girls and boys.
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- Completion of the National Action Plan for implementation of Resolution 1325 in March, 2009.

Mr. Chairman,

The effort to promote women's rights in Liberia has benefited immensely from sustained support of our development partners, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude. Indeed, partnership has played a pivotal role in the measure of success which Liberia has achieved. Our partners have equally ^{shared} in the recognition which Liberia received by being presented an award, by the MDG Award Committee for progress in MDG3. With this encouragement, we urge our partners to stay the course with us in the continuing struggle for gender equality.

In a few days, on 25 October, Liberia will join Ireland and Timor-Leste in presenting a report on the results of our partnership in a Cross Learning Initiative on Women, Peace and Security. The report will highlight the benefits of cross fertilization, cross learning and the dissemination of good practice from north to south, south to south and south to north.

There is now a global consensus that the advancement of women is a common objective which we all share, and requires our relentless commitment to fostering women's empowerment at all levels of development. It is in this spirit that Liberia reaffirms its unwavering commitment to support the work of UN Women and other bodies diligently addressing the issues affecting women.

I thank you.