**Address of the Liberian Delegation to the Twenty-Second Session of the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council**

**Monday, May 4, 2015**

**2:30 p.m.**

**Geneva, Switzerland**

Members of the Council;

The troika;

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen;

It is my pleasure to be here today to address this distinguished body. Liberia welcomes this opportunity to interact with other member states and to discuss how we may continue to move forward in the implementation of human rights standards. This is the second time that Liberia has participated in the UPR process, and we have found that this dialogue among member states to be extremely helpful in identifying key areas for the protection and promotion of human rights in Liberia.

Liberia has marked a number of notable achievements since its last appearance here four years ago. In 2011, the country held its second peaceful national presidential and legislative elections since the end of the civil war in 2003. In 2013, we observed ten years of peace, an important milestone in our country’s history.

The Government has developed a national security strategy in light of the anticipated drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Liberia. Enhancing human rights compliance within the security sector is an integral part of this strategy. Ensuring access to justice is also a key component, provided for through the progressive establishment of justice and security regional hubs, which will enhance service delivery particularly outside the capital city of Monrovia.

Liberia has also implemented a number of policies to strengthen the rule of law and foster the protection of human rights. These include the Reconciliation Roadmap, which implements recommendations made by Liberia’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission; the Agenda for Transformation, which prioritizes development of the justice sector and addresses cross-cutting issues impacting upon human rights and vulnerable groups; and the National Human Rights Action Plan, which provides for the implementation of Liberia’s regional and international human rights obligations and of the recommendations made during the Universal Periodic Review.

Liberia has also ratified a number of human rights and human rights-related instruments. In 2012, we ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and in 2014, we ratified the Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights, the Kampala Convention, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance.

Liberia is taking steps to address its backlog in treaty reporting, and is currently in good standing with regard to reports due under the CRC and CEDAW. I am pleased to say that we are in the process of finalizing the Common Core Document. We have developed a National Strategy on meeting treaty obligations, including treaty reporting, to address other outstanding reports. Moreover, we have begun the process of issuing a Standing Invitation to the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council.

We recognize the importance of having an independent national institution for human rights. Liberia’s Independent National Commission on Human Rights, established in 2010, has trained a number of human rights monitors, and has begun implementation of the Palava Hut program, a critical initiative of the Reconciliation Roadmap.

The Republic of Liberia recognizes, however, that many challenges lie ahead in the implementation of human rights. As a fragile society, we face additional challenges as we strive to meet the needs of our citizens. Most recently, the outbreak of Ebola has posed the most serious threat to national stability since the end of our fourteen-year civil war. Ebola’s impacts have been widespread, particularly on our economy and our health infrastructure. As I speak to you today, we are only a few days from being declared Ebola-free, and we are cautiously optimistic that the worst is behind us. I am particularly proud of the initiative and the determination of the Liberian people, who rose to the challenge of the epidemic and played a vital role in eliminating Ebola from their own communities and the country as a whole.

Now that our country is beginning to emerge from one of its greatest crises in recent memory, we look forward to engaging with renewed vigor in the process of enhancing human rights protection in Liberia. In closing, we hope that our interaction today with this distinguished body will be a fruitful one. We welcome the recommendations of the international community as we engage once more in this crucial human rights process, and look forward to the continued support of the international community as we strive to implement our human rights obligations.

Thank you.