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STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. BOIMA S. KAMARA

Minister of Finance and Development Planning

AT THE

MINISTERIAL MEETING

OF THE

**"HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS"**

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H.E. MR. BOIMA S. KAMARA
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

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Mr. President

Excellences

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Liberia is pleased to participate in the first High Level Political Forum since the adoption of the SDGs. Behind the leadership of President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberia played a major role in the Post 2015 development processes which culminated in the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015,

The theme – “Ensuring No One Is Left Behind” is a strong motivation for all of us to reaffirm our commitments to address vulnerabilities in implementing the SDGs.

Most will recall that our country was in the middle of a protracted civil war when the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were formulated. Despite efforts to align the MDGs to our national Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), Liberia struggled to achieve the targets established for the MDGs making only modest gains. That experience motivated Liberia to actively engage the SDG formulation process to ensure that our unique perspectives were considered and reflected in the SDGs.

Liberia understands that as a fragile and conflict-affected country, compounded by the recent outbreak of the deadly Ebola epidemic, we face significant and unique challenges in implementing the SDGs in a way that will ensure that no one is left behind.

Liberia appreciates the importance of and linkages between peace, security and development. We recognize that focusing on political issues such as reconciliation, peacebuilding and governance,

as well as economic factors, such as unemployment and productivity are essential to meeting our developmental objectives.

In this regard, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf launched the SDGs nationally in January this year demonstrating the political will to implement Agenda 2030. Already, an actionable strategy called the Agenda for Transformation, a five year slice of an eighteen year program to transform Liberia into a middle-income country, is being implemented. As we undertake the process of domesticating the SDGs at the country level, Liberia commits to adopt a coherent, inclusive, whole- of- government strategy for implementation which underpins peace, security, stability, human rights, inclusion and development as the foundation for achieving the SDGs.

We align with the Africa position presented by Tunisia at the opening session, which clearly outlined the importance of mainstreaming the Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want – along with the SDGs in the domestication process.

For Liberia, leaving no one behind means taking deliberate steps to address the issues of fragility and vulnerability that threaten to derail our efforts to achieve the SDGs. We have undertaken a comprehensive review of the implementation of our current national medium term plan and initiated the alignment of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 with our national vision.

We are taking steps towards a structural transformation of our economy to reduce the over reliance on natural resource extraction and ensure inclusive economic growth. Liberia has launched an agriculture transformation agenda to drive economic diversification led by agricultural productivity enhancement in order to reduce susceptibility to global economic, food and fuel price shocks. In implementing Agenda 2030, Liberia will complement economic transformation with strengthening social protection programs as a core instrument for reducing poverty, addressing inequality and helping the ultra-poor and vulnerable households to manage risks more effectively.

Mr. President, Liberia recognizes the importance of tracking and measuring performance in implementing Agenda 2030. That is why the government has set up an institutional framework comprised of all stakeholders to coordinate and monitor implementation. Domesticating the SDGs and Agenda 2063 will be operationalized NOT through beautiful strategies but by implementing key priority interventions. The experience from MDG implementation has taught us to guard against setting super ambitious targets that are attractive on paper but are unrealistic to achieve.

We call for the indicator work to accommodate flexibilities at the country level to develop practical and relevant country level indicators to monitor performance in SDG implementation. This

will require strengthening data and statistics institutions to play the important role of gathering evidence to inform our interventions and guide our progress.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Liberia commits to working in partnership with all stakeholders – international partners, civil society organizations and private sector actors to ensure policy coherence in order to implement agenda 2030 in a way that ensures that no Liberian is left behind.

I thank you.