

The Deputy Secretary-General

Remarks to the Peacebuilding Commission Meeting on Liberia

New York, 13 March 2018

[As prepared for delivery]

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank His Excellency Ambassador Olof Skoog, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission configuration for Liberia, for convening this meeting of the Commission.

Honorable Samuel D. Tweah, Minister for Finance and Development Planning,
Your Excellency Ambassador Lewis Garseedah Brown, II.
Dear colleagues in Monrovia and New York,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to join you today in support of Liberians, as their country goes through an important time of transition and renewal.

First, I extend my congratulations to the people of Liberia for the remarkable peace gains of the past 14 years, the recent peaceful elections and the smooth transfer of power.

I welcome the new President George Weah who has already signalled renewed focus and commitment to inclusive and sustainable development and to addressing the root causes of conflict. The United Nations stands ready to support President Weah and his government through this transition.

In just a few short weeks, the United Nations Mission in Liberia, UNMIL, will close. The United Nations' support to Liberia will then be provided by the Country Team. I recognise and commend the important contribution UNMIL has made to peace and security in Liberia, including the loss of 200 peacekeepers who gave their lives in the service of peace. We honour their sacrifice.

I also commend the leadership of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Farid Zarif, in bringing the mission to a successful conclusion, in partnership with the Government of Liberia.

Peace can only be sustained where sustainable development is achieved; and development gains will always be at risk without sustained peace. UNMIL has been at the forefront of establishing the key foundations for peace in Liberia.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is our blueprint to support Member States for the next twelve years. Development is a critical objective in its own right; it is also the most important pathway to peace and security. The 2030 Agenda sets out the priorities of the international community in a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred vision for growth and transformation.

In 2016, the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture underlined and reinforced this vision. They called on the United Nations to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach in support of countries in transition, including Liberia.

Liberia is an important example of what sustaining peace means in practice. In March of last year, Liberia submitted its peacebuilding plan, led by national actors, including the Government, all political parties, civil society, together with UNMIL and the UN Country Team. I welcome these efforts, which have the full support of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Liberian government will now draw up a new National Development Agenda for 2018-2024 that will bring together all Liberia's peacebuilding priorities and its efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

I welcome the suggestion that this plan should include a framework for engagement and mutual accountability between the Government, the United Nations and the Peacebuilding Commission.

The international community's continued commitment to Liberia's peace and development will be critical.

The United Nations will continue to support the Government of Liberia through a smooth transition towards sustainable development. The United Nations Country Team will take over from UNMIL, under the leadership of a strengthened resident coordinator.

The strengthened Resident Coordinator's Office will be essential to ensuring that the UN is well positioned to support the Government in realising the 2030 Agenda, as well as maintaining the UN's good offices role. The RC's office will also work on

building partnerships with political and civil society networks, and with senior officials in government and the international community.

The RC's Office and the UN Country Team will combine a focus on sustainable development with the continuation of their work on prevention. They will support the government in the formulation and implementation of the new National Development Plan.

The Secretary-General has set reforms in process so that the United Nations can offer more integrated, comprehensive, strategic and coherent support to countries like Liberia. These reforms, together with the repositioning of the UN development system, are firmly anchored in the respect for national priorities, national sovereignty, leadership and ownership. This is reflected through Liberia's strong ownership of its peace and development agenda.

One of the principal funding mechanisms for the UN's engagement with Liberia will be the Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund. This will be a country-level, Government co-chaired, pooled fund, aimed at reducing the fragmentation and duplication of development assistance to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and through that, sustain peace.

It aims to help development agencies and organizations to agree with the Government on priorities and the allocation of resources so that they go where they are needed most.

The Peacebuilding Fund has already lent its support to Liberia's Peacebuilding Plan to the tune of \$10 million in 2017 and is now ready to extend its support to the Multi-Partner Trust Fund in 2018.

But much more is needed from development partners, if Liberians are to realise their aspirations for the future.

Providing comprehensive support to the Government's national development planning process needs to remain a priority for the international community. This will ensure that gains made in peace and stability in Liberia continue to take hold through making progress on sustainable development. The Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund is an ideal platform for this partnership.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Peacebuilding Commission has long been an important partner for Liberia. I am

heartened to see your continued commitment here today, and that of development partners on the ground.

I look forward to visiting Monrovia next week for the 'Liberia Moment' conference, to celebrate the long path that Liberia has travelled towards peace and to discuss the way forward with the Government.

We will work together towards implementing the 2030 Agenda and creating a better and more stable future for all Liberians.

Thank you.