

Press Release by the Peacebuilding Commission Liberia Configuration

16 March 2021

The Liberia Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission met on 9 March 2021 to discuss promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality in Liberia. The meeting was convened by Ambassador Anna Karin Eneström, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations and Chair of the Configuration, and briefed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia, H.E. Mr. Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sr., the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection of the Republic of Liberia, H.E. Mrs. Williametta E. Saydee-Tarr, the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Liberia, Mr. Niels Scott (joined by the UN Women Country Director, Ms. Marie Goreth Nizigama), and a representative of civil society, Ambassador Juli Endee of The Liberia Crusaders for Peace. The meeting was the first country-specific meeting of the Commission following adoption of the Peacebuilding Commission's Gender Strategy Action Plan.

The Commission recognized the importance of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding and welcomed Liberia's commitment to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, including through the second Liberia National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for 2019-2023, the National Roadmap on Rape and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), and the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development for 2018-2023. The important role civil society, including women and women-led organizations, play in advancing efforts to sustain peace was also underscored by several participants, including the Government of Liberia.

The Commission recognized the importance of women's full and effective political participation and representation, and encouraged the Government of Liberia in its ongoing efforts, and President Weah's expressed commitment, to address the underrepresentation of women in politics, including through legislation to improve the gender balance in political participation and to reduce barriers to women being elected, including the proposed electoral reform bill submitted by the National Elections

Commission seeking concurrence to institute an enforceable 30 per cent gender quota on candidate listings and the leadership of political parties and coalitions.

The Commission expressed concern at the persistent challenge of violence against women and girls in Liberia, noted that the President had declared rape a national emergency, and encouraged the Government in further advancing its efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. The Commission also highlighted the role of the COVID-19 pandemic in exacerbating social and economic disparities, and security concerns for women and girls.

The Chair welcomed the support of international partners to gender equality and women's empowerment in Liberia, including that of the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund. The Commission stands ready to continue to support the Government and the people of Liberia in building and sustaining peace.