

GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA NATIONAL STATEMENT DELIVERED BY, HON. ABUBAKAR BAH, VICE MINISTER FOR URBAN AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA.

Your Excellency President of the UN-Habitat General Assembly, Ministers, distinguished delegates representing member states, development partners, mayors from around the world, members of civil society, the fourth estate, invited guests, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

I am very pleased this morning to join you all at this auspicious occasion marking the Second Session of UN-Habitat General Assembly held here in Nairobi, Kenya, a city of great attractions and hospitality. May I be quick to extend felicitation to the energetic Executive Director, Madam Maimunah Mohd Sharif and her resourceful team for such an efficacious leadership exhibited since her ascendancy in 2018. I am happy to report that I was here in 2019 at the first ever General Assembly of UN-Habitat and had the opportunity to have addressed the Assembly on the challenges and prospects facing sustainable urbanization in Liberia.

Your Excellency and delegates, the Liberian Government has been very committed to sustainable urbanization which leads to smart, resilient, and green cities. Few weeks ago, Liberia hosted its fourth (4th) National Urban Forum, an event jointly hosted by the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Internal Affairs and UN Habitat to bring together all stakeholders in the urban sector of Liberia. The main aim of that forum was to review the progress made thus far in the formation of a National Urban Policy (NUP) for Liberia which started in 2016. At that National Urban Forum, stakeholders representing institutions of national and local government, academia, vulnerable groups, slum dwellers and civil societies, validated the draft National Urban Policy for Liberia. The Draft Policy will now be submitted to the cabinet for possible actions were necessary.

The ongoing partnership with the Government of Liberia by UN-Habitat in developing a National Urban Policy (NUP) for Liberia, is part of a remarkable endeavour to support poverty reduction and the development of sustainable and resilient Liberian cities; especially, intermediary and secondary cities.

The importance of developing a National Urban Policy for Liberia cannot be overemphasized as Liberia grapples with coastal erosion, solid waste management, multiplicity of slums, natural disaster, rural-urban migration, and other forms of urban challenges. The formation of a well-designed and implemented NUP will evaluate the current urbanization opportunities and challenges, thereafter formulate long and short term solutions to leverage on opportunities and mitigate possible challenges for a better and prosperous future.

Your Excellencies and delegates, the Government of Liberia is committed to its development agenda which is the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD); hence is opened to additional collaboration with other relevant stakeholders to provide the best forms of opportunities for achieving resilient and sustainable urbanization. We believe that urbanization will flourish by connecting national, regional and local government policies; and strengthening urban, peri-urban and rural links through coordinated territorial development.

Ladies and gentlemen, the NUP has been recommended as a tool for the implementation and monitoring of global urban agendas, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework. This development will form part of series of plans leading towards the goals of Vision 2030, and will further aligned our national plan with the African Union Agenda 2063 and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly goal 11.

Asante Sana!