

**Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sr.  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Liberia to the United Nations  
Virtual Global Forum on the COVID-19 Crisis and Disabilities: Building  
Back Better Towards an Inclusive, Accessible and Sustainable World for All  
United Nations Headquarters, New York  
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**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me first renew our profound congratulations to my Dear Friend His Excellency Ambassador Luis Gallegos for his preferment as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador. The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Liberia to the United Nations is pleased and honored to partner as a Co-Sponsor with the Permanent Missions of Ecuador, Hungary and Singapore and the United Nations Department of Social Affairs (DESA) in hosting this very important event. This event is not only necessary, but timely, given the recent commemoration of the First Anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 2475 - “Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Armed Conflict.” A Document which expands the mandate of the Protection of Civilians; and commits to address the disproportionate impact of armed conflict and related humanitarian crises on Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

We are all aware of the inequalities and the challenges Persons with Disabilities have to grapple with in our societies; undoubtedly, these inequalities and challenges are further aggravated; particularly during this time of COVID-19. It is with this realization that Liberia joined the overwhelming support and endorsement of the Secretary-General’s Policy Brief in calling for a Disability-inclusive Response to COVID-19 - Towards a Better Future for All.”

It is essential that we ensure disability inclusive responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic at the local, national and global levels through cooperation, investment and direct support from all stakeholders. Let me therefore in this light, extend appreciation to the United Nations System and our Development Partners for the support of the efforts of our Governments; locally, nationally and globally to address the adverse socio-economic impact of this scourge; and to ensure that no one is left behind. While we currently focus on meeting the needs of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) during this crisis, we must all maintain the foresight of building back better with inclusivity and sustainability. The

welfare of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) must also be at the core of our Post-Covid Recovery Strategy.

As it is the case with countries around the world experiencing the adverse socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic in Liberia. With a focus on the well-being of vulnerable populations within the country, the Government of Liberia under the astute leadership of His Excellency Dr. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia; has instituted a pillar dedicated to the welfare and protection of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), women, girls and children, as an integral part of the Government of Liberia's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This is also reflected in Liberia's National Flagship Development Plan-The Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD).

The Ministry of Youth and Sports is charged with the coordination of the mechanisms put in place by the Government of Liberia to address the needs of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) during this COVID-19 crisis. In collaboration with the National Commission on Disabilities (NCD), the National Union of Organizations (NUOD) of the Disabled and other Civil Society Organizations, the Government has implemented measures to mitigate the spread of the virus amongst Persons with Disabilities (PWDs); as well as the hardships posed as a consequence. Through funding allocated by the Government, the National Commission on Disabilities (NCD) has provided subsidies to disabled People's Organizations throughout the Fifteen (15) political subdivisions to aid and boost in feeding programs and small businesses to lessen the burden of food insecurity and loss of income experienced by Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The dissemination of information to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) on keeping safe is an essential component of the Government of Liberia's strategy to curb the spread of the virus. The full participation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) on aspects of the response which concerned them was essential in keeping with the spirit of inclusion.

The commitment of the Government of Liberia to the protection of the rights and welfare of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) under the astute leadership of the President of the Republic Liberia, His Excellency Dr. George Manneh Weah, is rooted in its obligation to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and the great importance His Excellency President WEAH and His Government attach to improving the lives of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and equal opportunity for all Liberians. While the Government of Liberia has instituted the requisite legal and policy framework to deliver effectively for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), challenges still abound. The lack of adequate resources remains a major obstacle.

The 2018 creation of the Alliance for Disability, which constitutes a coordination of five (5) line Ministries - the Ministries of Education, Gender, Children & Social Protection, Health, Justice and Public Works and the National Commission on Disability (NCD); along with Twenty-four (24) Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) serves as a good basis to accelerate efforts to continue to promote and protect the rights of Persons with Disabilities - ensuring their economic, education, health and social welfare.

The inclusive nature of the Alliance is an assurance that Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) have a stake in decisions which affect them; in the spirit of, "nothing about us, without us." The National Action Plan on Disability adopted by the Alliance for Disability; must be strengthened and supported to anchor the Government of Liberia's efforts to achieve its aims and objectives on issues concerning Persons With Disabilities (PWDs); and consequently; contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We look forward to continued support and partnerships in helping us achieve our objectives.

On behalf of His Excellency Dr. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia and the Government and People of Liberia; we renew our unflinching practical commitment and support to the full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

I thank you.