

**Statement at the Third International Conference of Financing for
Development to be delivered by Dr. Kaifala Marah, Minister of Finance and
Economic Development, Sierra Leone**

Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia

President of the United Nations General Assembly

Secretary-General of the United Nations

Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Republic of Sierra Leone. At the outset, allow me to acknowledge with sincere thanks and appreciation, the leadership role of the Co-Facilitators in the preparatory process of this Conference. I would also like to extend profound gratitude to the Government of Ethiopia for hosting this International Conference and for the splendid hospitality extended to my delegation. Sierra Leone fully aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of South Africa and Benin on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the LDCs respectively.

This year, we have a historic responsibility to shape an ambitious agenda that is truly transformative to end extreme poverty by 2030 and achieve sustainable development in all its three dimensions. The new development agenda is steadfast and resolute in its poise, to leave no one behind. Indeed, we have come a long way and the voyage has been bumpy and sometimes turbulent, yet we have remained focused. We therefore believe that this Conference will set the stage for the launch of concrete deliverables and initiatives in support of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Mr. President,

As Sierra Leone chairs the g7+ group of fragile and conflict-affected states, and in view of leaving no one behind, fragile states and countries in conflict must be of global concern. During the Monterrey Financing for Development Conference, fragile states were not considered specifically, they therefore found it extremely difficult to make progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Sadly, it is reported that by 2030, two thirds of the world's poor will live in fragile and conflict states.

The delegation of Sierra Leone therefore welcomes the recognition of the need for adequate resources for conflict-affected countries. We would further underscore the significance of a long term, stable and predictable flow of financing in order to reduce the inherent problems that are associated with uncertain or short term financial flows.

We wish to stress the importance of addressing the diverse needs and challenges faced by fragile states and countries in conflict. To this end, we would like to emphasize the crucial need to support domestic tax resource mobilization as well as improve access to climate finance. These are critical in support of national development.

The delegation of Sierra Leone sees the need and supports the call to tackle climate change as well as mobilize political will towards completing a meaningful, universal climate change agreement in Paris in December this year.

Mr. President,

Official Development Assistance (ODA) remains one of the main sources of international financing for many developing countries. My delegation, as well as the g7+, strongly believes that ODA is essential as a catalyst for development, including meeting the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs) and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. But ODA must be smart: it must focus on 'aid orphans' and not geo-politically important countries as is the case; and it must be delivered within the spirit of the 'New Deal'. On this note, we urge this Conference to strongly consider mainstreaming the NEW DEAL principles in the implementation of the financing for development agenda.

The 17 SDGs are indivisible, success on one can lead to the success of others. This is why, as a post-conflict country, Sierra Leone emphasizes the importance of peace and security as necessary conditions for development. Development is impossible without peace, just as peace is impossible without development and that lasting peace and sustainable development are impossible without respect for human rights and the rule of law. Building stable and peaceful societies require actions on eradicating poverty, inequality and enhancing good governance. As poverty is both a cause and consequence of instability and conflicts, the world cannot achieve peace and development without addressing poverty in its entirety.

Mr. President,

Sierra Leone has adopted measures to address many of the root causes of conflict and is laying the foundation for medium and long-term national development. We are heartened by the remarkable progress our country has made, especially in identifying and resolving tensions and threats of potential conflict; monitoring and promoting human rights; building peace and security and consolidating good governance reforms. These provide us the appropriate healing therapy for a country that has emerged from a massively devastating conflict.

We have moved from a country on the agenda of the Security Council to a nation that is a storehouse of lessons on how to successfully move away from war to peace and development. We enjoy accolades in charting the path for a peaceful, secure democratic Sierra Leone and its future prosperity.

As we commend ourselves for the gains made, our remarkable post-conflict achievement has been put to test by the unprecedented Ebola Virus outbreak which has taken a heavy toll on the entire socio-economic fabric of our country. Whilst we are making progress to end the epidemic, we wish to express our special thanks to the United Nations and the International Community for pledging their support to end the epidemic as well as our post-Ebola recovery plan.

To conclude Mr. President, amidst our current challenges, we will continue to build on progress made in addressing key development priorities, particularly in the areas of gender equality and women's empowerment, youth unemployment, management of natural resources, food security, effective delivery of public services and a robust private sector led growth that would translate into more tangible peaceful dividends. We therefore look forward to seeing a meaningful and ambitious Outcome for the Financing for Development Process, with the overarching objective of eradicating poverty and addressing the interests of all humanity.

I thank you.