

Special Statement by H.E. Gbehzohngar M. Findley, Minister of Foreign Affairs, during the International Conference on Nuclear Security: Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts (ICONS 2020), organized by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Vienna, Austria from 10 to 14 February 2020

Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi

Director-General

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Delegates from Member States

Fellow participants

I am deeply honored and elated by your special invitation to form part of this important international conference on Nuclear Security, Sustaining and strengthening Efforts, organized by the IAEA. I am also fascinated by the IAEA's relentless effort in bringing together ministers, policymakers, senior officials and nuclear security experts of Member States to formulate and exchange views on experiences and achievements, current approaches, future directions and priorities for nuclear security. It is a known fact that this conference expects to create awareness, maintain and further strengthen national nuclear security regimes as well as international cooperation in strengthening nuclear security globally. Additionally, it aims to review the current status of nuclear security efforts,

existing approaches and trends, and highlight areas that may need more focused attention including technological dimensions.

IAEA, has endeavored to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the IAEA has served as an intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical cooperation and the peaceful use of nuclear technology and nuclear power worldwide since its inception. Meanwhile, the programs of the IAEA has significantly encouraged the development of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy, science and technology. It also continues to provide international safeguards against the misuse of nuclear technology, promote nuclear safety (including radiation protection) and nuclear security standards and their implementation.

The Republic of Liberia as a country became a Member State of the IAEA in 1962 and has since been participating in the IAEA Technical Cooperation (TC) program. However, Liberia was inactive from 1990 -2005, due to the prolonged civil crisis which destroyed most of the country's infrastructures. In view of the currently prevailing favorable environment in the country, the Government has renewed its technical cooperation with the IAEA in order to optimize the contributions of nuclear science and technology.

However, following the signing of the Revised Supplementary Agreement (RSA) in 2018 between the Government of Liberia and the IAEA which served as a conduit of enhancing technical cooperation between Member States. This necessitated the urgent need by the Government of Liberia to develop a Country Program Framework (CPF) in collaboration with the IAEA for the period 2018-2025. The Country Program Framework (CPF) which was prepared by the Government of Liberia in collaboration with the Secretariat, defined mutually agreed priority developmental needs and interests that can be supported through technical cooperation activities in line with the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development of Liberia, (PAPD), and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Liberia until now, has not established a Regulatory Atomic Commission; as an independent regulatory arm of Government to spearhead IAEA activities, however plans are underway by the relevant and appropriate authorities to ensure that the legislation of the Regulatory Commission, will be established, enhance and further deepen technical cooperation between Government of Liberia and the IAEA.

The Government of the Republic of Liberia expresses its profound gratitude to the IAEA family for strengthening and enhancing technical cooperation through the final approval of the CPF as a conduit to open the corridors of opportunities for IAEA's intervention in Liberia. Let me officially inform this conference that since

the approval of the CPF in 2019, the Government of Liberia stands to benefit from the establishment of radiation safety infrastructure, the building of human resource capacity of the establishment of radiotherapy services. This is a laudable initiative by the IAEA as a safe application of Nuclear technology that will benefit Liberians as the CPF continues until 2025.

Let me reaffirm the Government of Liberia's sincere commitment to strengthening cooperation for the future as we all envisage a nuclear free global community and safe application of nuclear technologies.

Thank You all