Statement by
Hon. James Fromayan
Chairman, Liberia National Commission on Small Arms
at the
"Third United Nations Conference to Review Progress made in the
Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate
the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects
New York, 18 June, 2018"

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as President of the Third Review Conference of the POA. My delegation also congratulates other members of the Bureau on their election. You can count on the support of Liberia in ensuring the success of this conference.

Mr. President, let me also seize the opportunity to thank the United Nations for its immeasurable contributions to Liberia’s recovery and development. The successful conduct of the 2017 elections which witnessed a democratic transition in the country in 70 years is reflective of the role of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Liberia remains grateful to the UN and indebted to many Member States here today, particularly those that provided troops to the UN Peacekeeping Mission.

Liberia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished Representatives of Nigeria and Indonesia on behalf of the African Group and the Non Aligned Movement respectively.

Mr. President,
Like many Countries in this room, Liberia is not a known producer of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) but a victim of its proliferation. This can be largely traced to the decade and half long civil war in the country and the Mano River Union Basin. Knowing firsthand the devastating humanitarian and socio-economic consequences associated with the illicit trade, transfer, and circulation of SALW, Liberia attaches great importance to the central role of the UN PoA and ITI as crucial multilateral instruments to tackle the illicit flow of SALW and their multifaceted effects.

To this end, Liberia established in 2012, the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA). The Commission oversees the implementation of the POA nationally and embarked on strengthening the Country's legal framework--its national laws, regulations and administrative procedures. Notably, we've ratified the ECOWAS Convention on SALW, Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and UN Program of Action (PoA), enacted the Fire Arms and Ammunitions Control Act (FACA) of 2015 and developed several binding instruments including Administrative Regulations, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Memoranda of Understanding between LiNCSA and National Security Agencies. We've also recently drafted two bills: one for the full domestication of the ATT and the other to increase the scope of the mandate of LiNCSA for the domestication of the ATT and all other conventions and protocols. They will be submitted to the Parliament for passage into law.

Mr. President,

With the backing of a strengthened legal framework and support of the government, Liberia took advantage of an opportunity provided by the
United Nations Institute for Disarmament and Research (UNIDIR) to conduct the first Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) study in the country since the end of the civil crisis in 2003. Recommendations in the form of options were presented to the government for appropriate action in order to improve and strengthen the country’s stockpile management system. We are grateful to UNIDIR for the support. We are also pleased to report that Liberia has marked and recorded all state-owned firearms from 2016 to 2018. The process is also ongoing to develop administrative regulations for the marking, recording and licensing of locally made shotguns for hunting purposes, as well as regular inspection of armories.

Liberia continues to work closely with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other regional and international groups in the area of Small Arms and Light Weapons control. One noteworthy collaboration is the EU/ECOWAS arms for development project. Under this project, we constructed and handed over a town hall to the people of B’hai in one of our Southeastern Counties.

Recognizing that gender mainstreaming strengthens quality and sustainability of small arms control, and the importance of General Assembly Resolution 1325, we have established a gender section within the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms. We are mobilizing resources to make it more functional.

Mr. President,

We've made progress. However, huge challenges still lie ahead. In addition to the resource constraints faced by Liberia and other developing nations, there's the emerging challenge of illegal local manufacturing of pistol-like
guns. The technology for the manufacturing of pistol like guns has spread across our region and it is the newest weapon used by gangs and criminals and has become a known source of threat in the region. The porosity of our borders and inefficient immigration services exacerbate the situation.

In light of these challenges, Liberia believes that while it is true that powerful nations have to adopt clear and realistic approaches to dealing with this common agenda; there is an urgent need to spotlight developing nations in a significant way. This does not in any way negate the support of donor countries to developing countries, but it serves as a call for increase in support and strengthened collaboration.

There have to be practical actions taken in terms of mutually established synergies drawn from the UN-POA, ATT, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union’s Vision 2020. Liberia believes that this action coupled with genuine commitment from all countries is fundamentally important moving forward.

I thank you for your kind attention.