

Statement by Honourable Minister of Internal Affairs at the 21st General Session of the African-Asian Rural Development Organization

Republic of Liberia

February 21, 2024, New Dehli, India

Honourable Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Esteemed Representatives of African-Asia Rural Development Organization (AARDO), Ladies and Gentlemen:

Excellences, please accept my profound thanks and appreciation for the invitation extended to my government and people of the Republic of Liberia to participate in the 21st General Session of the African-Asian Rural Development Organization. Our thanks also go to the Organizers for the kind hospitality afforded to me and my delegation since our arrival here in New Dehli.

This historic assembly of the African and Asian governments and civil society organizations represents a significant platform, aimed at devising strategies and pathways to improve the socio-economic growth and development of rural communities in both Africa and Asia. It demonstrates stronger bonds of friendship and commitment to eradicating poverty and addresses inequalities that underpin the well-being of our people, as well as contribute to nation-building.

Excellencies, allow me to mention that no country in the world can achieve sustainable development without the required human capital, food security, and other essential elements of human security. As the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Liberia, serving for the past year, I am exceedingly pleased to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of AARDO to the human capital development needs of Liberia.

Liberia, as a post-war economy, faces a tight fiscal space and has inherited significant financial obligations to AARDO over the past several years. I also wish to highlight that Liberia has outstanding obligations as a member of AARDO from previous years. In this regard, I kindly request your esteemed consideration in addressing this matter through the most appropriate mechanism, in accordance with the Rules and Procedures of

AARDO. Recognizing the strategic importance of AARDO's initiatives, the newly elected government of His Excellency, Joseph Nyuma Boakai, President of Liberia has made concerted efforts to reinstate our country's active participation in AARDO. Being committed to reigniting our membership, I am honored to inform this distinguished gathering that my Government sincerely appreciates the high level of professional and focused areas of AARDO's programs that can be leveraged to the advantage of the government and people of Liberia. These areas mark a new era of engagement, capacity development, and transformation for our nation.

Allow me to inform you that Liberia's medium term development Plan - the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID and the County Development Agenda (CDA) are five-year strategic and complementary development frameworks that guide our development agenda. The acronym ARREST stands for: A – Agriculture; R – Road; R – Rule of Law; E – Education; S – Sanitation; and T – Tourism. Objectives of this development Plan can only be realized, including the reconstruction of our economy, and in meeting international benchmarks such as the SDG 2030, AU 2063 and ECOWAS 2050 if the required human capital is available. In this respect, Mr. President, we would like to further seek support towards mobilizing the needed trained man-power that would help to achieve Liberia's development agenda and address climate change, and thereby enhance rural community development. Liberia can achieve Agricultural production, irrigation system, animal husbandry, communication, and sustained service delivery, including waste management, safe drinking water, electricity, quality education, as well as health service delivery through a decentralized approach. After having had the opportunity to participate in various on-line programs and discussions with the AARDO Secretariat, we wish to underline that AARDO's Strategic Framework 2030 and technical program are well aligned with the ARREST Agenda of Government.

On behalf of the Government of Liberia, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to AARDO and its leadership, for their unwavering support and generosity. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthening our collaboration with AARDO

and ensuring that Liberia continues to play an active role in this esteemed organization's mission for rural transformation and sustainable development.

I wish our conference great success in devising and implementing programs eagerly awaited in many countries in Africa and Asia, including in my own country Liberia.

Thank you.