I like to thank the committee for the good work and to thank the chair for allowing me to take the floor.

In Liberia, a Domestic Violence Bill was introduced to the House of Representatives in January 2016, has been passed by the Lower House, and is currently awaiting concurrence from the upper House (the Senate). If passed into law, this Act would criminalize all acts of violence against women and girls.

To the best of our knowledge, there have been no summary or extra-judicial killings in Liberia for the last 12 years.

The Constitution of the Republic of Liberia guarantees the right to life and equality under the law without discrimination. To that end, Article 11 of the Constitution guarantees that all persons are born free and independent, with natural, inherent and inalienable rights, including the right to life, liberty, security. Article 20 also specifies that no person may be deprived of life (or any other right) without a judgment in accordance with constitutional due process. Therefore, the Constitution explicitly prohibits the arbitrary deprivation of the right to life.

The Criminal Procedure Law of the Republic of Liberia Section 36.1 permits the imposition of the death penalty, except for children below 18 years (Penal Code§51.3), when a warrant is signed and issued by the President. The President has the sole power to grant such relief or sanction the execution. However, in practice there is a de facto moratorium on the death penalty; since assuming office in 2006, the President has not signed any official orders for the execution of any convicted persons. The 2011 Children’s Law guarantees the right to life to all children, and declares invalid any law which requires the execution or any other form of killing of a minor.

The Government is not opposed to the abolition of the death penalty in principle as evident by the fact that it has not carried out a single execution since the reintroduction of the death penalty in 2008. However, Government remains inclined to maintain its position of ‘abolition by practice’ so as to serve as a deterrent for conduct which poses a threat to the consolidation of peace and security in Liberia. Liberia, therefore, accepts to maintain a de facto moratorium with the view to a consideration of de jure abolition. Liberia’s National Human
Rights Action Plan Steering Committee recognizes that Liberia is a signatory to the ICCPR and as such, is obligated to abolish the death penalty, as per its accession to the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR; hence, it will continue the necessary dialogue to domesticate the protocol.