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December 17, 2020

**Statement by Mr. Sigurgeirsson and Mr. Bernatavicius on Liberia  
(Preliminary)  
Executive Board Meeting  
December 21, 2020**

We thank staff for the comprehensive report and Ms. Mannathoko and Mr. Jappah for their helpful Buff statement. We note the authorities' efforts towards placing the program back on track in view of the difficult circumstances. While a number of performance criteria and structural benchmarks have not been met, we recognize that the authorities have managed to implement some key mitigating measures as prior actions. **We support the request for completion of the first and second reviews under the ECF arrangement and for waivers of nonobservance of performance criteria and modification of performance criteria.**

**Although program performance has been mixed,** we recognize the authorities' efforts in taking corrective action in meeting prior actions. We particularly welcome the progress made regarding the civil service payroll reform, including the implementation of biometric ID. We encourage the authorities to maintain their momentum towards reaching the original target of 100 percent.

**We note that some progress has been made in reversing the significant deterioration of safeguards at the central bank.** However, further efforts are clearly needed to address the outstanding issues identified by the 2020 safeguards assessment. We note with concern, that the structural benchmark set out to strengthen the anti-corruption framework was not met. *In this context we would welcome staff's update on the progress achieved so far in implementing the authorities' commitments to governance safeguards under the RCF and CCRT.*

**Poverty remains widespread and the COVID-19 pandemic has deteriorated the situation.** Further efforts in improving domestic revenue mobilization will be key, as fiscal buffers remain non-existent and development needs are vast. We encourage the authorities to

also concentrate on improving the business environment to allow the private sector to serve as the main engine of recovery.

We wish the authorities every success in these challenging times.