



Press Statement

UNDP Renews Commitment to Liberia's Carbon Readiness

Monrovia, Liberia: 29 February 2024: The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has renewed its commitments to support Liberia's readiness for the carbon market globally and has charged civil society organizations to serve as voices of marginalized society to help the realization of the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

UNDP Resident Representative a.i. Louis Kuupen said active participation of CSOs towards the implementation of the NDCs will help Liberia in the preservation of its national resources, most specifically its forest resources, which are of great social good to the rest of the world.

"Discussions around the implementation of the NDCs are of critical importance to the nation as their outcomes would help the government make informed decisions," said Kuukpen.

He spoke on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at a one-day national dialogue on NDCs with a focus on the forest target.

The national dialogue, which followed a series of consultations including a regional dialogue held in Gbarnga, Bong County in November of last year, is part of an effort led by the National Civil Society Council of Liberia (NCSCCL) with support from UNDP to help Liberia achieve its goals outlined in the NDCs with emphasis on the forest sector.

"We stand ready to support Liberia's readiness for the carbon market. In so doing, we stand ready to help you achieve the regulatory framework that can help in the process. This discussion and many others will help because serious issues will be raised from which the government can act," the UNDP Resident Representative a.i. noted.

He urged NCSCCL and its collaborating CSOs to develop a roadmap that UNDP can use to help towards the achievement of the NDCs.

"You must take advantage of this discussion to help in the achievement of the forest target within the implementation of the NDCs. You must see yourselves as active participants in the full implementation of the NDCs," he added.

The National Dialogue is to strengthen network-building and partnerships, mobilizing national and local CSOs to engage regularly and effectively in forest NDC climate-related processes with support from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) through UNDP.

Giving an overview of the project, the Chairperson of NCSCCL, Loretta Alethea Pope-Kai, explained that the national dialogue is intended to identify policies and governance priorities for driving the implementation of the forestry sector's NDC targets, through a project that is being supported by UNDP.

Pope-Kai said the Council under the UNDP-supported project, aims to network and strengthen partnerships by mobilizing national and local CSOs to engage regularly and effectively in forest NDC climate-related processes.



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She pointed out that the baseline is to enhance communication mechanisms by sharing updates on forest NDC action and relevant information to promote advocacy, policy brainstorming, and support to the government and other stakeholders.

The head of the NCSC asserted that one of the major goals behind the project has been to establish a multi-stakeholder-driven process for tracking and reporting on the NDCs implementation in the forestry sector.

Madam Pope-Kai told the gathering that the project aims to ensure that at least 25% of priority degraded forest be restored by 2030.

She craved a smooth working relationship between the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) to enhance the concrete implementation of the NDCs.

"The national dialogue is to discuss what is happening in the sector and push for possible implementation. We look forward to the new administrations at EPA and FDA to work together," she noted.

She explained that as an apex body for all CSOs in Liberia with the influence and networking capacity, NCSC will strengthen the multi-stakeholders working group (National Climate Change Steering Committee) to engage the FDA and the EPA on what has happened and how to increase stakeholders' engagement to ensuring that the government meets up with this target priority.

"The main focus of the Council is not to reinvent the wheel but to work and strengthen the capacity of existing structures," the National Civil Society Council's Boss emphasized.

As part of the many activities, NCSC has identified different CSOs engaging in climate change and forest issues at the national and local levels.

Accordingly, the project also aims to strengthen coordination with the National Climate Change Steering Committee (NCCSC) and ensure that CSOs in the sector are aware of the forest targets through information sharing in monitoring the implementation of the NDCs.

Also speaking at the occasion, the Managing Director of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Mr. Rudolph J. Merab Sr. stressed the need for concerted effort in addressing issues regarding the full implementation of the NDCs and other environmental goals.

He pledged the FDA's willingness to work with all stakeholders in ensuring that Liberia achieves the NDCs.

"We need your help, and we will count on you. We will listen to your discussion here today and we will work together."

Mr. James Kermue Jr., Program Officer of the British Embassy in remarks, indicated that strengthening the engagement of key civil society actors is pivotal in accelerating Liberia's journey



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towards the implementation of NDCS and fostering a long-term Commitment to net zero and climate-resilient development.

He reassured the United Kingdom's commitment to supporting Liberia in achieving these goals, recognizing the collaborative efforts required for a sustainable and resilient future.

"The UK announced at Cop 27 (Nov 2022) additional funding of £6m for the UNDP Climate Promise Initiative which brings the UK's total contribution to £ 9 million with the first allocation of £3m in February 2022, Liberia benefitted £156,200," stated Kermue.

"The funds are used to provide capacity building support to developing countries to increase commitments to nature and nature-based solutions under the Paris agreement through the UNDP Climate Promise."

Liberia is known to hold 43% of the Upper Guinean Rainforest, which is a significant portion of the West African biome (EPA, 2019).

Even though the country is noted for its advantages in biodiversity and forest cover, a recent land satellite land cover monitoring from the FDA indicates that from 2009 to 2022, Liberia has experienced deforestation in its Northwest and Southeast Forest landscapes, and these are on the decrease while forest degradation has at least tripled everywhere (FDA, 2021).

The total tree cover loss is about 1,918,352 ha from 2001- 2020. However, the FDA has recommended that the country institute a strong legal and operational framework to manage and sustain the remaining forest resources in Liberia.

Besides, Liberia's NDC has set targets for the Forestry sector to reduce the national deforestation rate by 50% by 2030 (EPA, 2021).

Additionally, the NDC has proposed that the country restore about 25% of priority degraded forests by 2030 and at the same time establish five new Protected Areas to complement the existing government commitment to increase forest Protected Areas to 1.5 million ha, ensuring a 3km buffer zone, by 2030 (EPA, 2021). Under Climate Promise 2.0, Liberia is one of the countries receiving funds from the UK's DEFRA for a national project.

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