



## **High Level Segment of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

**Statement Delivered by  
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**On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Liberia  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
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**Madam President  
Mr. Secretary General  
Excellencies, Heads of State and Governments  
Distinguished delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I bring you greetings on behalf of Her Excellency, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the government and people of Liberia. The President could not be here due to urgent matters of state.

As a result, we have the honor to address your Excellencies on behalf of the Government of Liberia. Indeed, we would like to express our government's gratitude and appreciation to the Secretariat of the United Nations for organizing the UN Conference on Sustainable Development here in the great city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. We express our thanks and gratitude to the government and people of Brazil for hosting this conference, and specifically to the citizens of Rio de Janeiro for sharing their city with us. It is the hope of the people of Liberia that this conference will achieve its goals, adopt the principles in the "Future we Want" and implement them when we depart. We owe it to future generations to deliver to them a planet that can sustain human existence.

Liberia has made marked progress in economic growth and development over the last six and half years of the administration of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The country is improving its socioeconomic indicators in some areas, and yet challenges remain in others. We are rebuilding our governance structures, which has resulted in the design of policy prescriptions and an implementation framework for sustained and inclusive economic growth and development.

In spite of our recent history of conflict, the Liberian people are determined to rebuild their nation. We are rebuilding infrastructures which were destroyed. We are providing basic social services such as education and health care for our people, which did not exist for nearly two decades. Currently, we are prioritizing the restoration of affordable energy to accelerate inclusive economic growth and development for all Liberians.

Liberia's energy needs present opportunities for private sector investments in hydro, wind, solar and other forms of sustainable energy. We are combining the use of non renewable and renewable sources of energy to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth and development.

Madam President, Excellencies, distinguished, the effects of climate change are threats to our rehabilitation and rebuilding efforts. They are impacting all areas that are critical to the growth and development of Liberia. For example, agriculture, forestry, health, fisheries and others are all impacted heavily by climate change. Most sectors of the economy are climate sensitive and their overall performance will continually be affected by changes in global weather patterns.

Over time, agriculture will be disrupted by erratic weather patterns characterized by early and prolonged rains and increases in temperature. Agriculture is disrupted in several ways, but most unfortunately, the effects of climate change result in low yields and could potentially disrupt food security. This is a global phenomenon.

Our coastal cities are threatened by rising sea levels. This rise in sea levels continues to destroy coastal communities and results in population displacement.

Liberia's forests, forty percent of the Upper Guinea region is feeling the effects of climate change. More than 50% of the country's fauna and flora are impacted by increases in temperature. A recent vulnerability assessment by the Liberian Environmental Protection Agency (LEPA) indicates that we stand the risk of biodiversity loss and bush fire. As a result, we are taking the necessary actions. We need the help of our development partners for what is emerging as a potential regional disaster in waiting.

There are risks to fisheries due to temperature increases. Increases in sea surface temperature are destroying the fish population. A low fish stock catch is being recorded by fishermen.

Today my country is pursuing balanced sustainable development programs that are characterized by the sensible exploitation of natural resources, while providing basic social services for the people of Liberia. Our sustainable development program includes among others, governance reforms, improvements in the rule of law, equality of opportunities for all of our citizens, strong partnerships with civil societies and our international partners. Our presence here today indicates the commitments Liberia has made to goal Number 8 of the Millennium Development Goal of international cooperation in achieving sustainable growth and development.

Recently in Gaborone, Botswana, we attended the Sustainability in Africa Summit where we reaffirmed our commitment to the pillars of sustainable development. At the moment we have started to carve, through broad stakeholder consultations, an ambitious socioeconomic development plan known as Vision 2030, with the goal of making Liberia a middle income country within 18 years. That plan will be based on the principles of sustainable and inclusive growth and development.

Madam President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, today, we are here again reaffirming commitments Liberia made here in Rio in 1992. Our collective presence here demonstrates the political will of governments and civil societies to promote global sustainable development initiatives. These must not be demonstrated only by words, but must be matched with concrete actions in the succeeding periods and for generations to ensure the survival of the planet and its inhabitants. Those deeds should be characterized by sound principles of growth and development, such as prioritization and inclusion of gender in national programs, the transfer of technology to developing nations, access to finance and protection of intellectual property rights.

Madam President, Excellencies, delegates, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we will leave Rio de Janeiro with the feeling that we have participated in the process to set the global sustainable development agenda. We thank all members of the global community for their participation. Liberia will remain engaged with the international community to ensure that the principles adopted here are part of our own development agenda.

I thank you.