

NATIONAL STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY DR. GEORGE MANNEH WEAH

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

AT THE

26TH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

GLASGOW, SCOTLAND

THE UNITED KINGDOM

NOVEMBER 1, 2021

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;

**Her Excellency Madam Clar Marie Weah, First Lady of the
Republic of Liberia;**

**Your Excellency the Secretary General of the United Nations;
The President of the 26th United Nations Climate Change
Conference;**

Heads of International Organizations;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,;

This year's COP26 is taking place at a time when the world is having to learn to live with the devastating and disruptive consequences of the deadly Coronavirus pandemic. Climate change, like COVID-19, presents an even bigger threat to the world and to our common humanity.

We have therefore gathered here at this 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference to seek common action to save our planet, and bring equity and fairness to how we achieve these objectives under the Paris Accord on Climate Change.

Upon taking the leadership of my country in 2018, one of the first major steps that I took was to ensure the ratification of the ***Paris Agreement*** in that same year. This was a demonstration of my Government's highest political commitment to ensure that Liberia is among the comity of nations working together in addressing the challenges of climate change.

In June of this year, I convened a ***National Climate Change and Environment Conference*** to mobilize my citizens and partners in working together to urgently address the critical issue of climate change and environment. Liberia's ***Revised Nationally Determined Contributions*** were presented and adopted at that Conference, and have subsequently been submitted to the UN Climate Change Secretariat.

Your Excellencies, we welcome the U.S. Government back to the Paris Agreement, and urge strong U.S. leadership and commitment in placing the world on a path to meeting our climate change targets, and in assuring fairness and equity among advanced and developing countries.

Liberia therefore looks forward to joining and leading in the U.S. Government's ***Conserve Global Forest / Carbon Sink Program***, and to joining similar programs launched by other advanced nations.

With the largest forest cover of more than 43% in the Equatorial Guinea rainforest, Liberia serves as a major hub for carbon sequestration. This natural endowment is a buffer not only for us, but the larger world. We are a major part of the global lungs which make it possible for the industrial world to breath.

It is our intention to maintain these forests in prime condition, and that is why we have outlined in our ***Revised Nationally Determined Contributions*** specific climate-resilient and adaptation measures that we are determined to implement in order to guarantee the wellness of these global lungs.

Since signing the Paris Accord, Liberia has lived up to its promise to reduce deforestation from logging and timber production and from agriculture. We have expanded our protected forests, and we are prepared to protect more forests and to intensify our work with local communities to expand their options for food and fuel in order to reduce pressure on forest resources.

However, is this high level of forest conservation paying off for Liberia?

EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

We are all aware that there is an inherent imbalance in the current architecture of climate financing. Countries like Liberia, who maintain and protect the largest remaining tracts of forest reserves, receive the lowest benefits for these ecosystem services. We who are the richest in terms of forest resources and biodiversity, are the poorest in terms of socio-economic development.

Although we bear the brunt of the impact of climate change, we benefit the least from the existing solutions and financial arrangements currently in place for tackling climate change.

In order to address this imbalance, there needs to be a fundamental shift in the way we tackle this mismatch in climate investments today.

I believe that one of the ways that this can be done is to establish an ***African Carbon Credit Trading Mechanism***. With your support, Liberia will be willing to host a conference in the near future to explore the details and structure of such an entity. We will work with pan-African and other global financial institutions to develop a long-term regulated market for African carbon credit.

I am convinced that these initiatives will increase the chances for all African countries that depend on their forest reserves to attain sustainable economic growth and national development in line with the vision set out in the 2030 Agenda.

Excellencies, accessing climate finance is key for Liberia in order to achieve our revised climate change ambitions. Even as we recognize the roles of the various climate financing mechanisms such as the ***Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund*** and many others, we must acknowledge that there is a huge gap in climate investments today. We therefore need to re-imagine what a successful future looks like in climate financing, and this will require fundamental shifts in the way we think.

Therefore, even as we intensify our ecosystem protection, we are determined to join other forested countries in Africa to expand resources available to us for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Here at COP 26, we must find a strategic balance between mitigation and adaptation on the one hand, and commitment to climate financing on the other hand. Developed countries must translate the principle of leaving no one behind into action, through the mobilization and scaling up of capital flows for energy development and energy transition for the African continent.

We as global leaders must collectively adopt a new mindset of appropriate and urgent action in the fight against climate change, that will fully address the three goals of the Paris Agreement: Mitigation, Adaptation and Finance for a net-zero carbon emission by 2050.

Together, we can make a difference as a shared community of global citizens with a common destiny. Together we can heal the world from the scourges of climate change. Together, we can save this earth from the deadly consequences of global warming. Together, we can bring humankind into harmony with nature.

I thank you.