



DECEMBER 2018

Environmental WATCH

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Maintaining a clean environment is a pro-poor agenda

Clean & Green Is Our Perfect Dream

Environmental Watch is the publication of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia.



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EPA Director Tells Int'l Conference That Impacts Of Technological Advancement Can Be Harmful To Health

The Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia, Dr. Nathaniel T. Blama, Sr. has told a gathering of environmentalists in Geneva, Switzerland that the advancement in science, technology and industrialization has generated adverse effects, and is causing irreparable damage to human health worldwide, especially in Africa. Speaking at the start of the 11th meeting of the Basel Convention Open Ended Working Group in Geneva on Monday, September 3, 2018, Dr. Blama said "the global progression in science, technology and industrialization has

resulted in the rise of activities which are hazardous and continue to cause harmful and sometimes irreparable damage on human health, marine life and the ecosystem." The Basel Convention is an international treaty that was designed to reduce the movements of hazardous waste between nations, and specifically to prevent transfer of hazardous waste from developed to less developed countries (LDCs). Describing the movement of hazardous waste to Africa, which continues unabated, as 'toxic colonialism', Dr. Blama said the practice is of great concern to the African Group.



Monrovia Threatened By Rising Sea Level

A preliminary outcome of a study conducted on the Monrovia Metropolitan areas depicts frightening projections of an imminent disaster, if actions are not taken to immediately avert coastal erosion in several parts of the city. Coasts, Deltas and Rivers (CDR) International presented their technical findings from a study of the coastline to the High Level Inception Meeting which was attended by His Excellency President George Manneh Weah, amongst other eminent persons. CDR lauded government's emergency intervention to protect the coastline in New Kru Town, but said the intervention needs to be upgraded soon to a sustainable revetment structure. He also stressed the need for urgent action to prevent the Liberia Electricity Corporation substation in West Point from being washed under the

ocean, "because of its high economical value." The Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency also presented at this meeting. Director Blama said that coastal erosion would place additional financial burden on the government, because it would spend money on resettling people affected by erosion. Moreover, the loss in infrastructure and land would amount to US\$250 million. The project to protect the vulnerable areas of Monrovia's coastline, Monrovia Climate Resilient Program (MMCRP), is expected to have a completed proposal by June 2019 and a finalized grant document by September 2019. Activities will begin November 2019. President Weah lauded the EPA and the CRD for the study, and pledged government's unflinching support to the project which, according to him, is tied to the government's Pro-Poor Agenda.

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EDITORIAL

Why Environmental Watch?

As a publication of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia, Environmental Watch is set-up to share information and educate the public on the sustainable management of the environment and its natural resources. These are facing enormous threats due to climate change and man-made disasters.

We are making our debut edition on the newsstand today with a commitment to effectively and accurately inform the populace on the status of the environment.

We are also committed to providing protection of the environment and conserving biodiversity by implementing policy that ensures the long-term economic prosperity for the country. This will be done through the provision of requisite information that are necessary to safeguard against the abuse of the environment by individuals and corporate institutions operating in our space.

As an outlet of Liberia's environmental regulatory agency, our actions are strongly supported by the Environmental Protection Management Law (EPML). We will endeavor to bring to compliance and expose corporations, businesses or individuals who will seek to cause irreparable damage to our environment and natural resources.

Environmental Watch is intended to meet the needs of the present generation, without compromising the potential of future generations.

Liberia Ratifies Paris Agreement

...Deposits Instrument at UN Headquarters



(New York, August 27, 2018) Liberia on Monday August 27, deposited its Instrument of Ratification of the Paris Agreement, committing to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change.

The Paris Agreement primarily seeks to keep the global temperature rise this century, well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius; as well as strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change.

The Agreement was adopted by consensus on December 12, 2015 and entered into force on November 4, 2016, 30 days after 55 parties had deposited their Instruments of Ratification.

Liberia's Instrument of Ratification signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Gbehzohngar Findley, commits the Country to "faithfully perform and carry out the stipulations contained therein", a demonstration of the Liberia's commitment to global initiatives.

The Instrument of Ratification was deposited by Liberia's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Israel Choko Davies.

Gov't Representatives Host African Negotiators

-At Climate Change Conference in Poland

Liberia is part a global delegation attending the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24) in Katowice, Poland, an EPA release said.

At the ongoing COP24, the Liberian government in collaboration with Conservation International hosted an informal workshop for African negotiators that are discussing Article 6 of the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

Article 6 of the Paris Agreement establishes a broad framework for voluntary cooperation among parties in delivering climate action. The article sets out three approaches through which parties may interact: "bottom up," bilateral or regional cooperative approaches via internationally transferred mitigation outcomes; a centrally-governed mechanism to contribute to mitigation and support sustainable development, and non-market approaches.

Under the Paris Agreement, parties have agreed for the first time that all countries must push forward with legally binding climate change actions.

According to the release, all countries are required to draw up national emission reduction targets that will contribute to their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) – which they must regularly submit to the UN Climate Change Secretariat.

EPA National Climate Change Focal Point Benjamin S. Karmorh, Jr., said that African Negotiators are all working towards the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Karmorh added, "We need to understand what the challenges are and opportunities that will help us in fulfilling our obligations under the Paris Climate Change Agreement."

El Hadji Mbaye Diagne, a Senegalese who is the Lead Coordinator for Article 6 of the Paris Climate Change Agreement, thanked Liberia for giving African negotiators the opportunity to discuss issues that are



important in an effort to refine Africa's positions.

Diagne said that the goal of the workshop was to discuss the status of negotiations on Article 6 and refine African group positions on priority topics, including the inclusion of forests, how countries can handle emissions transfers from sectors not included in the scope of a country's nationally determined contribution, and issues of governance.

He said that Africans are on the same pitch with many issues, adding, "There are still many issues African countries need to further discuss and see how they can strategize during these negotiations."

He said that international transferred mitigation outcomes under Article 6 can facilitate financial support for emission reductions beyond a country's Nationally Determined Contribution, which is essential to the guidelines agreed at COP 24, in order to support environmental integrity, while ensuring strong benefits and incentives for African countries.

The workshop brought together delegates from Senegal, South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Republic of Sudan, The Gambia and La Cote d' Ivoire, the release said.

Liberia joins the National Determine Contribution Partnership in Poland



*Hon. Nathaniel T. Blama, Sr
Executive Director of the EPA*

Article 6 of the UN Paris Agreement, requires parties to implement their NDC as a plan of action in addressing Climate Change at national level that in order to contribute to the global contributions in protecting the climate and environment in the area of mitigation and adaptation and at the same time, promoting sustainable development goals and environmental integrity thereby reducing poverty.

In response to Liberia's request by the Executive Director of the EPA, Hon. Nathaniel T. Blama, Sr., the outgoing Co-chairs of the Federal Republic of Germany and Morocco endorsed the membership of Liberia. The endorsement was granted and officially communicated to the EPA boss based on Liberia's dedication towards pursuing ambitious climate actions and enhancing sustainable development.

The NDC Partnership is a new coalitions of governments and international institutions working together to ensure countries receive tools and support they need to achieve ambitious climate and sustainable development targets as fast and effective as possible. The Partnership is also open to countries and international institutions that are committed to ambitious implementation of nationally determine contributions under the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

By joining the NDC Partnership, Liberia as a member will gain access to a global network of knowledge and resources to support the nation's work in climate change. Additional benefits include, acquiring access to a large network of partners that can deliver a flexible array of services geared towards implementation of NDCs; through targeted technical assistance and capacity building; knowledge products of fill information's gaps; and enhanced financial support; opportunities for knowledge sharing and learning; and increasing access to information and building a peer community around other countries that are implementing their NDCs.

The NDC Partnership was officially launched during COP 22 conference in Marrakech, Morocco on November 15, 2016.

Pictorial on Monrovia Metropolitan Climate Resilient Program report launch held at the Cecil Dennis Hall, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Monrovia



President George Weah sandwiched by Speaker Chambers and ED Blama, Sr and other top officials of government



EPA Executive Director Hon. Nathaniel Blama, Sr. in conversation with a member of CDR International



EPA Manager for Planning Z. Elijah Whapoe chatting with Clara Gallagher at EPA during the ceremony



Mr. Jeremiah G. Sokan and Hon. Blama, Sr. comparing note at ceremony



Hon. Blama and House Speaker Dr. Chambers chatting prior to the commencement of the program



UNDP Staff attending the ceremony



Hon. Blama, Sr doing the overview of the Monrovia Metropolitan Climate Resilient Program



A cross section of Government officials at the program

EPA 'Rescues' Baby Chimp, Turns it over to LCRP



The Department of Compliance and Enforcement at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have turned a baby chimpanzee over to authorities of Liberia's first and only combined Chimpanzee sanctuary, protection and conservation organization in the country. The chimpanzee was rescued by EPA wildlife officer, Mr. Tourmy M. Flomo on Wednesday, November 21, and later turned over to the LCRP. The animal, popularly known locally,

albeit erroneously, as baboon, was confiscated from a male trader (not named) when he was in the process of trading the ape. According to Flomo, the man's action contravened section six of the National Wildlife Conservation and Protected Area Management Law, which prohibits the hunting, killing, capturing and selling of endangered species. Such actions have prescribed penalties ranging from six months imprisonment to US\$500 fine. "After noticing that he had violated the animal law, the trader, whose identity was not established, escaped the scene, thus making it difficult to prosecute him for breaching the law," Flomo said.

Receiving the chimp, Ms. Desmond lauded the EPA for initiating the rescue mission. She said that LCRP now has over 30 orphan rescued chimps in their home at the National Public Health Institute in Margibi County. According to her, the number of chimps that has been rescued suggests that over 300 adult chimps have been killed. Madam Desmond described the rescued ape as a "Western Chimpanzee," which she said is critically endangered, because the population of that kind of chimp has decreased by 85 percent in 20 years. She said that the chimpanzees in their care would soon be relocated to a new 100 acre forested space in Margibi County, where they are building a sanctuary and conservation center for chimps.

EPA and UNDP Outline The Natural Hazards Threatening Liberia

Threats such as flooding, windstorms, wildfire and coastal erosion exist in Liberia and these will only worsen with climate change, warns EPA Executive Director, Nathaniel T. Blama, stressing that these will have a significant impact on local communities' livelihoods. In an effort to curtail the impacts of these natural threats, the National Disaster Management Agency in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) launched the National Disaster Risks Assessment in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. On October 26, 2018, they hosted an inception workshop under the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) projects, funded by the Green Climate Fund) to plan Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies and operational guidance in the response to disasters. Stakeholders representing government's line ministries and local disaster management authorities from nine counties including Maryland, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, Bong, Margibi, Grand Cape Mount, Sinoe, Lofa and Nimba, attended the occasion. Participants obtained a better understanding on the purposes, guiding principles, methodological framework of the National Disaster Risks Assessment. Mr. E. Abraham Tumbey Jr, UNDP NAP Project Manager, emphasized the importance for mainstreaming disaster risk



reduction into national and sectoral development plans with the involvement of broad stakeholders including policy makers, communities, research institutions and civil society. He noted that because of the strong link between climate change and disaster risks, the partnership between EPA and NDMA offers enormous potential for disaster risks reduction in Liberia.

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Eco-stoves Production Reduces Exposure To Harmful Pollutants

...EPA Explain



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia conducted a three-day training workshop on the production of energy efficient cooking-stoves, in collaboration with the UNDP. The aim was to teach the production of improved stoves that reduce concentrations of kitchens pollutants, harmful exposures and emissions of Green House Gases (GHGs). They are more energy efficient and therefore prevent forest loss in Liberia and save users money by requiring less wood or charcoal.

According to Liberia Initial National Communication (INC) on climate change submitted to the UNFCCC in 2013, the country's total national GHG

emissions for 2000 was estimated to be 8,022 Gg of equivalent CO₂, with the energy sector accounting for about 67.5% of the national total. In 2015, Liberia committed to reduce Green House Gas (GHGs) by at least 10% by 2030 and improve energy efficiency by at least 20%. The country also agreed to raise share of renewable energy to at least 30% of electricity production and 10% of overall energy consumption by 2030 and replace cooking stoves with low thermal efficiency (5-10%) with the higher-efficiency (40%) stoves.

One of Liberia's planned mitigation action is to produce and distribute 280,543 energy saving cook stoves that use fuel wood and 308,004 energy saving cook stoves that use charcoal by 2030.

The health and environmental benefits of improved stoves are clear. Studies have shown that indoor air pollution (IAP) is a risk factor for acute respiratory infections, chronic obstructive lung disease, tuberculosis, lung cancer, low birth weight and cataracts. Most of the population relies on solid biomass fuels for cooking on simple un-vented cookstoves: it is these which cause the elevated levels of indoor air pollution.

Mr. E. Abraham Tumbey, NAP project coordinator, said the training captured 40 vulnerable women and disadvantaged youth with limited or no access to income. They were selected from five populated cities including Gbarnga, Monrovia, Buchanan, Kakata, and Ganta. At the end of the training, Mr. Randell M. Dobayou, Deputy Executive Director for EPA, presented 50 eco-stoves to the newly trained cookstove producers. He asked participants to further distribute among households as trained eco-stove producers in helping to raise awareness on the needs and benefits of using energy efficient cooking stoves in the country.

EPA, Alabama State University Sign MOU

...To Enhance Scientific Research, Other Opportunities

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia and the Alabama State University (ASU) in the United States of America have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to enhance cooperation in several areas including the enhancement of scientific and technological research opportunities.

The MOU came into force on Friday, December 14, 2018, when EPA Executive Director, Nathaniel T. Blama, Sr. signed the document, which was previously signed by Alabama State University's President, Dr. Quinton T. Ross Jr.

Representing ASU at the signing ceremony, held at EPA office on 4th street, Dr. Boakai Keith Robertson, Executive Director of Graduate Programs in Biological Sciences at ASU said the EPA of Liberia and ASU have expressed their intentions to build a cooperative working relationship in areas of mutual interest over the next two years.

He said ASU and the EPA have agreed to access intern opportunities for students through various EPA programs, as well as career opportunities after graduation. Under the deal, access to scientific and technological research opportunities for faculty members will be made available.

The deal also provides for the conduct of series of environmental career development workshops for students and the provision of mentoring relationships with EPA's scientists and policy makers, Othreniel Angel Forte, a staff in the office of EPA Executive Director, Nathaniel T. Blama, Sr. said.

Reading the MOU at the ceremony, Miss. Forte said under the arrangement, a design research and programs to address the need of diverse populations as related to traditional and non-traditional areas of agriculture and green industries.

She explained that ASU will provide technical support and expertise specifically in the area of energy and climate change, protecting America's waters, improving air quality and cleaning up under-served and minority communities.

EPA Executive Director, Blama said benefit that would be accrued under the deal with ASU are enormous and note that the entire country stand to benefit from the



agreement.

Blama disclosed that capacity would be built under the MOU and noted that the EPA would under the project EPA would sort faculty support for the University of Liberia and other institutions.

He disclosed that recently the EPA and the University of Liberia through the National Adaptation Program (NAP) project entered a MOU for the establishment of a graduate school in environmental science at the UL.

Blama further noted that under the deal EPA staff would be sent to the ASU for internship, while the ASU would send staff to Liberia to build capacity at the EPA.

He spoke of the possibility of ASU tailoring specific programs including 'Disaster Risk Management', 'Climate Change and Agriculture Adaptation' in accordance to EPA's needs for internship staff.

Blama disclosed that President George Weah has reiterated his dream to take people from poverty and noted that this is why he calls it 'Poor Pro Agenda Poor', which doesn't mean people should remain poor.

He said the deal would help fulfill President Weah's dream, because according to him education will relief people from poverty.

EPA Seeks Media Help To Tell The Public About Climate Change



The EPA is seeking partnership with the media to draw the attention of major stakeholders toward environmental issues in the country. As part of its achievement, the EPA National Climate Change Secretariat (NCCS) in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport organized a three-day stakeholders training on the Benefits and Sustainability of the Early Warning System (EWS), where they invited the media as an integral

EPA Hosts Technology-Needs Assessment Workshop

The Technology Needs Assessment project (TNA) assists developing countries, which are parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to determine their technology priorities for the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change.

The project is implemented by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and Danish Technical University (DTU) Partnership on behalf of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The EPA Executive Director, Hon. Nathaniel T. Blama Sr, said the TNA project seeks to transfer technological knowledge and skills from developed countries to Liberia. He explained that the project can't achieve its objectives in the absence of information on Liberia's technology deficit and called on participants representing line government ministries and agencies to cooperate with the project team by releasing information on their capacities when they are approached.

Hon. Blama continued, "to develop your capacities to adapt to the change in the environment or the occurrences

partner.

"The Early Warning System is enabling Liberia to provide weather and climate change information; so you as stakeholders need to be aware of it and how it works", remarked Mr. Randall M. Dobayou, Deputy Executive Director for the EPA. He noted that the media is a key player in spreading the information and as such the media should take advantage of reporting environmental stories.

Also speaking, the NCCS National Coordinator, Mr. Jeremiah G. Sonkan, stressed the need to improve the country's hydro-meteorological services and its associated networks aimed at observing and predicting risky weather related to hazards and climate trends.

According to him, the EWS can be applied in many fields to describe the provision of an emerging dangerous hazard that enables advance action to reduce risk associated with climate change. "The EWS is a setup aimed at avoiding or reducing the negative hazardous impacts of climate change such as floods, landslides and forest fires. An effective EWS benefits the local population," he added.



within the environment, you can't do it with your naked eye. You can't do it with your naked instance. It has to be through technology advancement."

The UNEP Country Coordinator, Lucy Gregersen, and Senior Research Officer at Cape Town University South Africa, echoed the ED's enthusiasm.