



Statement Made by Hon. Julia Duncan Cassell

MINISTER

Ministry of Gender and Development, Republic of Liberia

**at the 18th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC and the 8th Session of
the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol**

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Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of my delegation, I am pleased to extend my thanks and appreciation to the UN Climate Change Secretariat for organizing the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP18). I wish to also take this opportunity to commend the Government and People of The State of Qatar and The Qatar Foundation for hosting COP 18 and extending to us a warm hospitality since our arrival in the beautiful city of Doha.

Mr. President, Her Excellency, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia and the People of Liberia extend warmest greetings and pledge our support to your ascendancy as President of COP 18.

She looks forward to a successful outcome here in Doha.

Mr. President,

Liberia wishes to associate itself with the statements made by Algeria on behalf of G-77 and China, Swaziland, on behalf of Africa, The Gambia, on behalf of The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Nauru, on behalf of AOSIS.

Mr. President,

We are all cognizant of the fact that climate change is a serious threat to human development and the ecosystems. As such, it continues to affect the socio-economic sectors of developed and developing countries thereby hindering the attainment of the MDGs. My country, Liberia, is no exception.

As regards to our national circumstances, the impacts of climate change is characterized by erratic weather patterns resulting into low agricultural productivity, unprecedented coastal erosion which has led to damage of infrastructure in our low-lying coastal cities and the displacement of people into makeshift camps. The negative impacts of climate change on our livelihoods are enormous and the list is endless. I could go on and on to enumerate what climate change is doing to our national development. However, this will be unnecessary since a good number of Parties present here have enumerated similar impacts of climate change.

Few months ago, we were in Rio de Janeiro, committing ourselves to protecting our earth. We set a basic landmark in Rio which we hope we would work together as a global community to achieve in the period of 10 years. Rio gave us green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty alleviation. The onus lies upon us to work to achieve those fundamental objectives of sustainable development.

In Liberia, we have started a new vision for transformation- Vision 2030, supported by medium-term social, political and economic agenda. It is a vision envisaged by Liberians to move the country from a least developed country to that of a middle income country by 2030. This Vision will be launched shortly. The Vision recognizes the issue of climate change as one of the major obstacles to economic growth, and as such has incorporated the plans for the implementation of several actions toward environmental sustainability and climate compatible development.

Mr. President,

The world is anxiously awaiting a positive outcome in Doha. We have been here for the past 2 weeks deliberating on global climate issues that continue to retard human development, especially the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. President,

Given the severe consequences climate change is having on our effort to rehabilitate and rebuild our country from the shackles of more than a decade civil crisis, I am pleased to inform this august body of some measures we have taken in addressing climate change. Among the measures are:

1. The establishment of a National Climate Change Steering Committee-This Committee is housed in the Office of the President. It is an advisory Committee that seeks to raise the awareness of climate change, develop a national climate change policy and mobilize support in mainstreaming climate change in the country's development agenda.
2. A National Climate Change and Gender Action Plan has been developed with the support of IUCN. It is a plan that will address the impacts of climate change on some major sectors- Agriculture and food security, Forestry and REDD+, Health, Water and Sanitation, Energy, etc. It is intended to build the resilience of vulnerable people, especially women, children, and the elderly against the impacts of climate change.
3. We have developed our national REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (RPP) with support from the World Bank and in-country partners. This proposal when implemented will lead to the formulation of Liberia's national REDD+ strategies and implementation framework. Towards this end, REDD+ is being piloted at the sub-national level. Lessons from the field recommend that the basic needs of rural communities should be integrated into the REDD+ design to ensure its success.
4. The implementation of 2 NAPA projects is on-going-
 - The coastal defense system for the cities of Monrovia and Buchanan to reduce the vulnerability of coastal urban erosion, flood, siltation and degraded landscapes;
 - The integrated cropping and livestock farming to enhance resilience to increasing rainfall variability through the diversification of crop cultivation and small ruminants rearing.

5. The identification of some adaptation and mitigation projects in our Initial National Communication.

Mr. President,

As we come to the end of this Conference, we anticipate that an outcome out of Doha will reflect the aspirations and wishes of the people of vulnerable regions and people of the world. Liberia is no exception. Therefore, Liberia is pleased to recommend the following:

1. That the Second Commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol should include legally binding quantified emissions limitation reduction objectives and the commitment of developed countries to raise their level of ambition. A Second Commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol should address carry-over of assigned amount units and eligibility for using KP flexible mechanisms.
2. The results from Doha must address the finance gap post 2012.
3. The establishment of a pre 2020 mitigation work plan. The importance of this work plan is to raise mitigation ambition during the period of pre-2020.
4. Liberia considers REDD+ as a viable option that contributes to climate change mitigation. Therefore, actions coming out of Doha should consider the establishment of a REDD+ Committee to develop a governance mechanism taking into account the livelihood of forest dwellers and the work program for REDD+ financing.

Mr. President,

We want to use this occasion to extend our thanks and appreciations for the work the LEG continues to do in the preparation and implementation of the NAPA. We look forward to receiving similar support from The LEG in the preparation of our National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

Mr. President,

Liberia welcomes the adoption of the Doha Work program on Article 6 of the Convention. We believe strongly that the adoption of this work program will assist Parties, especially, LDCs with the emerging challenges as it relates to education, training, public awareness and public access to information and international cooperation.

Young people are our future leaders. They need to be invested in, to learn how to cope with the challenges of a changing climate. Liberia believes that youth need to be fully engaged in this process, and as such we have included a young woman, a girl guide, in our delegation. Adoption of the Doha Work program on Article 6 would be the beginning. We need strong commitment to see the implementation of all elements of article 6.

Mr. President,

At COP 14, Liberia called for the inclusion of gender in the UNFCCC negotiations. Today, we are pleased to note that the SBI has adopted a draft conclusion on this issue and has recommended to the COP for its approval. We look forward for a positive outcome on this issue.

Mr. President,

The issue of capacity building is of importance to my delegation. As a post-conflict country with so many challenges including capacity building, we were of the strong conviction that this issue would have been concluded with the establishment of a two year work programme, but unfortunately not much was achieved. We reaffirm our commitment that this issue should be considered as a next SBI agenda in 2013.

Finally, Mr. President,

The people of Liberia and the world are anxiously watching COP 18 with the expectation of concrete results. We believe that the achievement of the agreed outcomes from the Bali Road Map will enhance the full implementation of the Convention. We also believe that the commitment of developed country Parties should provide adequate, predictable and scale-up public finance and the transfer of technology will serve as an important step in addressing the common challenge of climate change.

I thank you all.