



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY

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AT THE

**HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 17TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF PARTIES (COP17) TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK
CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

AND THE

**7TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (CMP7) SERVING
AS A MEETING OF PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL**

AT THE

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, DURBAN IN SOUTH
AFRICA**

DECEMBER, 2011

Madam President

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government

Ministers of Government and Heads of Delegation

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

I have the privilege and great honour to deliver this statement, on behalf of His Excellency, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone at this High Level Segment of the 17th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 7th Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. **NGIYA BONGA**

At the outset, let me take this opportunity to express our profound thanks and appreciation to the President His Excellency Mr. Jacob Zuma, the Government and brotherly people of South Africa for the warm hospitality accorded us since we set foot in this beautiful city of Durban. Madam President, please allow me on behalf of the Sierra Leone delegation to congratulate you on your appointment as President of the 17th Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 7th Session of the Conference of Parties serving as a meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

Madam President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Sierra Leone is one of the Least Developed Countries and its historical and current greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere as indicated in our first and second national communications is

negligible. Nonetheless, the country is one of the most vulnerable to climate change due to its low adaptive capacity and growing dependence on resources sensitive to changes in climate. Key economic sectors such as agriculture, forestry, water, health, wildlife and tourism and efforts towards poverty reduction are identified as the most vulnerable in Sierra Leone.

Madam President, Your Excellences, Ladies and gentlemen

Climate change is one of the greatest killers of mankind at this time. This was clearly stated in a publication titled, "US News-2010: Year in review": **"Earthquakes, heat waves, floods, volcanoes, super typhoons, blizzards, landslides and droughts killed at least a quarter million people in 2010-the deadliest year in more than a generation. More people were killed worldwide by natural disasters this year than have been killed in terrorists' attacks in the past 40 years combined"**. Sierra Leone therefore sees this as a wake-up call that, it is not only us in the LDCs who are dying from adverse climate change impacts but the rest of mankind in our global village.

Presently, my country is suffering from the impacts of the changing climate the world is now witnessing. The highly populated and urbanized coastal zone of the country is directly impacted on by sea level rise as it is now visible in our coastal areas of Yeliboya in the north and in Shenge and Plantain Island in the south of the country. Due to sea level rise along the coastal lowland areas there are visible

signs of severe coastal erosion around coastal villages like Adonkia in the Western Area, Mahera Beach and Konakridee in the Northern Province, which resulted to the physical alteration of the coastline and destruction of structures. Unusual floods and changing rainfall patterns have had terrible impacts on our farming communities, leading to reduction in crop yields. Severe weather has also resulted in mudslides, destruction of coastal areas, life and property. In Shenge, some government and private buildings are trapped under the flood water. These impacts coupled with existing socio-economic problems only increase stress on our food security and livelihood programmes. Furthermore, these impacts also threaten to reverse our gains of sustainable development and put additional pressure on already overstretched human and financial resources in my country.

Madam President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Despite these and other climate change related challenges, my country submitted its Initial National Communications in 2006 and the National Adaptation Programme for Action (NAPA) in 2008 and presently preparing our Second National Communications. In addition, the country submitted its NAMA and continues to formulate climate friendly policies and programmes geared towards implementation of the Government's development programme known as the **Agenda for Change** consistent with the objectives of the UNFCCC. We have also set up a National Climate Change Coordinating/Standing Committee to provide guidance and direction for the formulation of a national

climate change policy and strategies and the regulation of climate and carbon trading issues in Sierra Leone. The development of a draft national climate change policy and strategies in line with the national Agenda for Change to address climate change problems and issues is well underway. The process for setting up of a National Secretariat for Climate Change has started which will enable us to access public sector funding from global climate change financing and development partners to address climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development.

Madam President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Sierra Leone reaffirms its association with and support of the Least Developed Countries, the African Group, the G77 and China for the various positions taken on the on-going negotiations here in Durban. In particular, we call on Parties to support the process for a legally-binding agreement to reduce GHGs in the atmosphere as it is the most plausible path towards achieving acceptable stabilization limit and avoid suffering from adverse effects of irreversible climate change impacts. In view of this, we support a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol since it is the centerpiece of the climate change regime.

We fully recognize the Cancun Agreements which should be seen as an effort to advance the objectives and principles contained in the UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol, the Bali Action Plan and are indications of the collective commitment by developed countries for new and additional resources for developing countries to strengthen adaptation and mitigation measures. We fully support the two negotiating tracts of the Long-term Cooperative Action (LCA) and the Kyoto Protocol (KP) and sincerely hope that meaningful progress will be achieved in Durban before the closure of this conference. In particular, the following issues are of specific concern to my delegation.

1. The lack of functionality of the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation fund;
2. Low stabilization target of 350 ppm should be the long-term goal for all Parties;
3. Adaptation to and mitigation of climate change should be given high priority for LDCs, while assisting in the promotion of sustainable development, poverty reduction and achieving the Millennium Development Goals;
4. The inadequate financial and technological support to vulnerable countries to offset the adverse impacts of climate change through technological cooperation and building of the necessary human and institutional capacities;
5. Sierra Leone recognizes the crucial role of REDD including REDD-Plus. However, the indecisiveness of Parties on a binding

agreement for REDD implementation and funding mechanism is worrisome;

6. The lack of adequate support for the implementation of clean development mechanism (CDM) projects for countries such as Sierra Leone; and
7. The promotion of Research and systematic observation and Education, Training and Public Awareness is crucial for LDCs.

Madam President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Despite the economic and environmental challenges, Sierra Leone is not waiting for global actions, but is using its own meager financial resources to promote climate-friendly policies and activities within the poverty reduction strategy. These include:

1. Installation of 10,000 solar powered street lamps in all its major cities and towns;
2. Completion of a 60-70 MW bio-energy plant using sugar residues within the next five years;
3. Installation of energy efficiency bulbs in households in its main cities and towns;
4. Tree planting programmes as a means of combating deforestation alongside controlled logging practices;
5. Sustainable agricultural practices to cope with climate variability; and

6. The Gola Forest, which is one of the biodiversity hotspots in Africa, has been officially declared as a National Park by the President of Sierra Leone in November, 2011.

Madam President, Your Excellencies, ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, I want to assure everyone here that the Sierra Leone Delegation is here to contribute positively to a successful outcome of this 17th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 7th meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

I thank you for your kind attention.