



Protecting Our
Environment for a
Better Future



COMMUNIQUÉ A CALL FOR INTEGRATED ACTIONS TO BUILD A CLIMATE-RESILIENT SIERRA LEONE

Introduction

We, the partners of the Climate Action Conference 2024 themed Integrated Actions to Build a Climate-Resilient Sierra Leone (SEND-SL, WHI, EPA, PI-CREF, and MECC), organized a two-day climate change conference on May 22nd and 23rd, 2024 held at Freetown City Council Hall. The conference brought together over 200 participants, including representatives from MDAs, CSOs, the private sector, youth, academic institutions, development partners, women farmers, and community members across Sierra Leone.

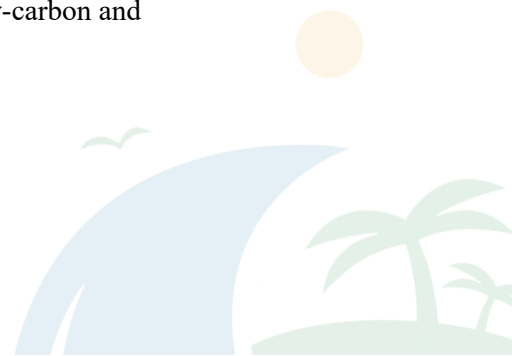
The conference focused on four critical topics: "Fortifying Governance for Effective Policy and Implementation," "Navigating Climate Challenges for Sierra Leone's Food Future," "Exploring Opportunities and Overcoming Challenges in Renewable Energy Solutions," and "Engaging Communities in Climate Actions."

Recognizing that long-term shifts in temperature and weather systems pose a significant threat to the socio-economic fabric of our nation, Sierra Leone is ranked as the third most vulnerable country to the adverse effects of climate change, following Bangladesh and Guinea-Bissau¹. This vulnerability is primarily due to a high level of multi-dimensional fragility caused by human activities such as illegal mining, timber logging, illegal mining, inappropriate farming practices, and weak policy implementation.

Sierra Leone future hinges on our ability to adopt and implement comprehensive strategies to combat environmental degradation. A video documentary on climate impact in coastal and rural communities and the recently released climate incidents report of 2023 by SEND Sierra Leone, in partnership with World Hope International, highlights the vulnerability faced by the most vulnerable communities. Climate change exacerbates economic, environmental, geopolitical, public health, and societal threats, specifically threatening food security and the livelihoods of Sierra Leonean. Changes in precipitation and temperature, along with increased risks of droughts, floods, coastal erosion and rising sea levels, negatively impact the country's agriculture, water resources, energy supply, infrastructure, and coastal areas. These risks are disproportionately increased due to the ineffective implementation of policies and the absence of climate laws to regulate human activities.

Sierra Leone lost 550 hectares of forest in 2023 and 520 hectares in just the first four months of 2024 due to human-driven activities such as coal mining, illegal logging, and unsustainable farming. These losses are not merely environmental issues but existential threats to our socio-economic stability and public health. Collaborative efforts are crucial to addressing climate issues and building a resilient Sierra Leone. The Government of Sierra Leone must demonstrate leadership by recognizing the risks posed by climate change, adopting appropriate policies, and facilitating the development of a climate law to seize the opportunities of low-carbon and climate-resilient growth.

To sustain a climate-resilient Sierra Leone, immediate actions such as restoring mangroves and fish populations, improving energy management, and transitioning to renewable energy sources are non-negotiable. The conference calls for proactive government leadership, recognizing the inevitable effects of climate change and committing to a robust climate law that supports low-carbon and





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Climate-resilient development. Integrating climate change education into school curricula and ensuring climate change messages are accessible in local languages will foster broad-based understanding and active participation in climate initiatives, enhancing a blueprint towards achieving a climate-resilient Sierra Leone.

Next Steps:

Addressing the challenges of climate change requires collaborative efforts from the government, international partners, and local communities. This includes:

- Developing policy frameworks such as the Energy Transition Plan, Clean Cooking Strategy, and Climate Bill to institutionalize climate resilience efforts and guide the country's journey towards a more sustainable and resilient environment.
- Fostering public-private partnerships through sharing policy ideas on climate change intervention for sustainable, reliable, and affordable climate resilience in Sierra Leone.
- Mainstreaming climate issues across governance structures and implementing agroforestry and climate-smart agricultural practices.
- Collaborating with international organizations to manage long-standing climate-induced challenges.
- Promoting community involvement, enhancing education and awareness, and developing local regulations to support mitigation efforts.
- The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change should popularize research documents for national awareness and action.
- Developing and implementing laws to promote accessibility and affordability of renewable energy in rural communities.
- Disseminating climate-sensitive information, education, and communication messages tailored in different local dialects in schools, communities, and cities, targeting all ages.

Together, we can build a resilient and sustainable Sierra Leone that effectively addresses the challenges of climate change.

ⁱ <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/sie214139>.

