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High Level Segment of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change

Statement Delivered by
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On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Liberia
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Gracias Madam President
Honorable Ministers and Heads of Delegation
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Government and People of the Republic of Liberia. I am very pleased to extend my Government's heartfelt thanks, appreciation and gratitude to the UNFCCC Secretariat for organizing the United Nations Climate Change Conference here in Cancun, Mexico. Thanks also to the Federal Government and people of Mexico for hosting COP 16 and extending to us warm greetings and hospitality since the arrival of my delegation in the beautiful city of Cancun. It will forever be remembered as a COP that made herculean effort to rebuild trust after Copenhagen.

As member of the global family, Liberia wishes to associate itself with the statements made by Yemen on behalf of G-77, Democratic Republic of Congo, on behalf of Africa, Lesotho, on behalf of The Least Developed Countries(LDCs) and Grenada, on behalf of AOSIS.

Madam President,

Allow me to present some national issues. Liberia, as you may know, is a country that is endowed with numerous natural resources. Our environmental assets are high, for example, our forest, which makes up approximately 50% of our land area of 9.5 million hectares. My country is a post conflict country that has just emerged from civil war. The war led to the loss of thousand of lives, destruction of nearly all the infrastructures. In short, the war had a great toll on the livelihood of the people of my country.

Madam President,

Climate Change has been identified as a threat to our rehabilitation and rebuilding efforts. It is impacting all the sectors that are critical to the growth and development of Liberia.

For example, agriculture, forestry, health, fisheries and others are all impacted heavily by climate change. These sectors are climate sensitive. The overall performance of these sectors depends on how we adapt and mitigate to climate change.

70% of the 3.5 million population of my country continues to depend on traditional agriculture, is now being disrupted by erratic weather pattern (characterized by early rain, prolong rain and slight increase in temperature. This pattern has disrupted the calendar of farming activities as well as the rebuilding or roads around the country.

We are also subject to flooding and erosion of our coastline.

A recent national vulnerability study has revealed that Liberia will experience slight increase in temperature, which has the potential to give rise to bush fire destroying our biodiversity. Additionally, rising temperature will also destroy our fish population, a protein resource that Liberia highly depends on.

This is only few examples of the negative climate change impact on my country.

Madam President,

As stated by the SBI, Capacity Building is crucial to fulfilling the country's obligation under the Convention and Protocol. Capacity is one of the priorities interest to Liberia. My delegation is disappointed and frustrated that we could not produce a binding SBI's decision under Capacity Building under the Convention and Kyoto Protocol. In the absence of a decision that does not adequately address this issue, vulnerability to climate change will continue to be exacerbated.

Liberia welcomes the extension and broaden of the mandate of The Least Expert Group(LEG). The LEG has been very helpful in assisting LDC Countries in their NAPA Preparation and Implementation.

Some of the actions already taken By Government to Address Climate Change are as follows:

At Copenhagen, we stated at the high level segment that Liberia is committed towards emission reduction. In this regards, a low carbon economy document was produced. That document is presently being studied by the Cabinet for integration into our carbon economy development strategy. I am very pleased to inform this august body that prior to our coming to Cancun, the Cabinet of my country endorsed the establishment of a National Climate Change Steering Committee. This multi-sectoral Committee is task with the responsibility to provide national guidance in addressing climate change at the national level and, importantly it is housed in the Office of the President of Liberia, demonstrating my government's commitment to addressing climate change not only at the national but also at the regional, sub-regional and international levels.

On the issue of **REDD+,** Liberia is working with the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility to preparing our REDD+ Readiness Plan. It is envisaged that our REDD Readiness Plan will not only sequestrate carbon, but will provide another approach to utilizing our forest for economic development and to enhance the livelihood of the people who depend on the forest..

Madam President,

To conclude, I want to report to the people of Liberia positive outcomes out of Cancun. Therefore, I urge developed countries to come out with a balance package that includes:

- Clear emission reduction targets,
- Predictable and adequate financial resources that will address the following: deployment and diffusion of technology, adaptation, mitigation, REDD+ and capacity building.

If Cancun can not give us a legally binding deal, we will accept binding decisions that will address short, medium and long term interventions.

Finally, Madam President,

My delegation assures you of our cooperation and support under your presidency tremendous success especially in the spirit of able women solidarity. On that note, Madam President, a special message from my President, Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's, is: "***that all decisions must reflect gender equity and that gender, as cross cutting as it is, does not fall between the cracks***."

I thank you.