

**Liberia's Statement at the  
Second Meeting Ad Hoc open Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics:**

**IMPROVE ECONOMIC, INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
ADDRESSING IUU FISHING CHALLENGES AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN LIBERIA**

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The coastline of Liberia is approximately 350 miles long, includes 9 coastal counties out of 15. The coastal areas of Liberia are mostly under-developed with little or no economic development.

Liberia is heavily dependent on natural resources such as fisheries, rubber and timber. Although Liberia is endowed with these resources, it has a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) below US\$1,000 – which ranks among the lowest in the world.

Recently, the coastal areas of Liberia are strongly considered a driver of change and an engine of economic growth. Degradation of the coastline due to marine and coastal pollution affects both water quality and coastal and marine life. Hence, estimated 80% of litter in the ocean is from land-based sources.

Degradation and depletion of coastal resources such as the fishery and mangrove resources are increasing due to population growth, pressure on the resources, coastal development, climate change and – to an extent ocean acidification.

The small-scale fishery sector provides 90 percent of fish on the local market, whereas the industrial fishery sector has strengthened over the years due to interventions by the World Bank and the European Union. Climate change, however, is predicted to further exacerbate biological, physical and ecological stresses already affecting the coastal areas.

The West Africa Regional Fisheries Program (WARFP) was created in response to coastal countries in the West African region to rehabilitate and revamp the fisheries sector by finding solutions and finance to address IUU fishing, fisheries governance and value addition: leading to the establishment of the Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC); Liberia Scientific Observer

Program; Trained Fisheries Inspectors; Construction of Fishing Piers and Fish Landing Site Clusters; Drafting of Legal Framework – and an increase in annual revenue for fisheries since 2010.

Similarly, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia in partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is working on several climate initiatives over the years to protect coastal areas vulnerable to coastal erosion and rising sea-levels: leading to the development of National Adaptation Plan (NAP); National Adaptation Program of Action; Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); Climate Change Policy and Response Strategy; Ratification of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); among others – which are expected to support the strengthening of resilience of coastal communities.

To add up to the propagation initiative, the Environmental Protection and Management Law of Liberia and the Fisheries Regulations also help to regulate and protect the fishery, environment and related ecosystems including the mangroves.

The Government of Liberia, however, commits to developing Blue Economy Initiatives consistent with its Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PPAD) by improving Ecosystem Services, Environmental Services to Optimize Human Benefits and Wellbeing without Compromising Ocean Health.