

**CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF SIERRA LEONE
PRESS RELEASE**



As the eradication of the county's forest ecosystem continues unabated, Conservation Society of Sierra Leone is calling for critical Reflection by government, or hold your institutions and yourselves accountable for imminent, catastrophic climate event.

Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) is calling on all responsible government institutions and agencies to take immediate actions to halt illegal logging of *Pterocarpus species*, and gold mining in Outamba Kilimi National Park; to cease mining in Lake Sonfon which is a Protected Area; to stop the encroachment in the Western Area Peninsular National Park; halt poaching in the Gola Rainforest National Park; to stop dumping of garbage in drainages leading to flooding; and to realize that countries all over the world are facing the reality of climate change, manifested by increased volatility of extreme weather events, where Sierra Leone had been classed as one of the most vulnerable countries.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change defined climate vulnerability as 'the degree to which a system is susceptible to, and unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate stress, including climate variability and extremes.' With its rich biodiversity, Sierra Leone has high potentials to raise funds through sales of biodiversity resources, ecotourism, genetic modification and other ecosystem services.

The nation's biodiversity can contribute to and promote its health through diverse natural capacity to mitigate both natural and anthropogenic stresses. The role of biodiversity conservation in the nation's development is manifested in several forms, including food production/harvesting, bio-prospecting/biotechnology, eco-tourism, agro-forestry, and essential environmental services. In his statement, "Sierra Leone can thrive on these measures while maintaining the survival and safety of our future" Dr. Sheku Kamara Executive Director of CSSL said.

The country has become highly vulnerable to climate change mainly because of its strong economic dependency on climate-related activities and products and low adaptive capacity. The socioeconomic progress made after the end of civil war in 2002 has been undermined by:

- the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak that killed over 11,000 people
- the August 14th 2017 flooding and mud slide that took the lives of over one thousand in a single day and;
- now the Global Pandemic of Corona Virus (COVID-19) has changed the way we operate and interact, with no sight of returning to the old normal.

These events have contracted all economic activities, leaving the country in a weakened position to address the impacts of climate change.

Water, agriculture, health sector and the entire ecosystem are extremely sensitive to changing climate, including changes in the magnitude and frequency of extreme weather events.

The conservation work of CSSL acknowledges the support of all partners (government and non-governmental); Bread for the World, Birdlife International and the Royal Society for the

Protection of Birds (RSPB). We are therefore calling on all well-meaning leaders in authority to join the fight against forest and biodiversity destruction – Noting that, this is a call Sierra Leone can no longer afford to ignore.

For more details go to <https://germanwatch.org/en/crj> ; or <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/sl/sl-nr-05-en.pdf> or contact Dr. Sheku Kamara, CEO, CSSL; Email: cssl_03@yahoo.com , ***Business as usual should not be an option.***