

Conservation Society of Sierra Leone

Connecting people to nature.



From the CSSL President

Dear Friends and Partners,

The last quarter of 2022 brought important decisions for the protection of global biodiversity and species. With COP27 in Egypt and COP15 in Montreal - Canada, the global community committed itself to conservation and more clearly defined measures to mitigate climate change and its numerous attendant effects on man and the environment. We are very proud that our Program Manager, Edward Sesay, was part of the Sierra Leone Delegation.

The Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) was also engaged in environmental protection and conservation work at national level through



Charles Showers,
President of CSSL

the publication of a White Paper on oil and gas pollution on the marine environment, our traditional Wildlife Week celebration and our Annual General Meeting for accountability to our members. We planted more seedlings during the wildlife week event for future conservationists.

As we start a new year, I am sincerely wishing readers, donors, partners, members and friends of CSSL a happy and prosperous 2023!!!
Happy reading!

In this issue

TOPIC 1

CSSL Publishes Whitepaper to Mitigate Hazards from Oil and Gas Activities in Sierra Leone

TOPIC 2

Wildlife Week Celebration 2022: Protecting forests saves lives.

TOPIC 3

Nature Artwork of School Nature Club Children

TOPIC 4

Edward Sesay, CSSL Program Manager, Gives Insights into COP27

TOPIC 5

For Peaceful Elections: Hate Speech Training and CPS Mano River Conference

TOPIC 6

CSSL Holds Annual General Meeting in Freetown



CSSL Publishes Whitepaper to Mitigate Hazards from Oil and Gas Activities in Sierra Leone

The Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) is the leading organisation in the implementation of commitments of the Coalition on Oil and Gas Pollution on the Environment (COGaPE) in Sierra Leone. With funds from MAVFA Foundation through the Regional Partnership for Conservation of the Coastal and Marine Zone in Africa (PRCM), CSSL was able to implement various activities in collaboration with the Environment Protection Agency – Sierra Leone (EPA-SL), Sierra Leone Maritime Administration (SLMA) and the Institute of Marine Biology and Oceanography (IMBO) in the University of Sierra Leone.

One of the outcomes of this work is the now published White Paper on the Shortcomings of National Institutions in the Oil and Gas Sector with Key Recommendations for Future Actions.

The White Paper includes challenges in the oil and gas sector in Sierra Leone as well as key recommendations for the government and the oil and gas industry. The information was collected from government bodies, civil society and oil and gas companies in the country.

"We are very sure that if the recommendations of the White Paper are fully implemented, the hazards and impacts associated with oil and gas pollution on the environment will be significantly minimized. We want to thank all partners again who were part of the development of the White Paper".

**Dr. Sheku Kamara,
Executive Director, CSSL**

You can download the Whitepaper on our website:

<https://cs-sl.org/white-paper-on-oil-and-gas/>

If you want to have a printed copy, please contact us through email:

info@cs-sl.org





Every year in the first week of October, the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) celebrates Wildlife Week with School Nature Clubs (SNCs). This year, our theme was “Why is the forest important to us?”

As it is our tradition, we invited representatives from our SNCs to a field trip to experience nature and learn more about the importance of forests and the protection of ecosystems. Girls and boys from 15 SNCs around the Western Area took part in our field excursion to Big Water community, near the Western Area Peninsula National Park. During the field trip on 5th October, 2022, the Biodiversity Officer at CSSL educated participants about wildlife conservation, followed by a role play that was facilitated by the organization’s Environmental Education Officer, about the importance of forests to plants, animals and humans.

Furthermore, CSSL organized a radio discussion program involving school pupils and a teacher coordinator representative on 6th October 2022, where they shared their experience to the listening public. It was so pleasing to hear them explain to the public in their own ways and words about what they learnt with anxiety. The young ambassadors for nature and conservation also shared their experiences with their colleagues and friends in their respective schools.

We were very impressed when one of the pupils, who was part of our radio discussion after the outing, advocated very strongly for nature conservation and explained to listeners some important terms like extinction, biodiversity, and conservation, among others. We are proud of our young generation who are already starting to take leadership role in conservation and advocacy for climate change actions.

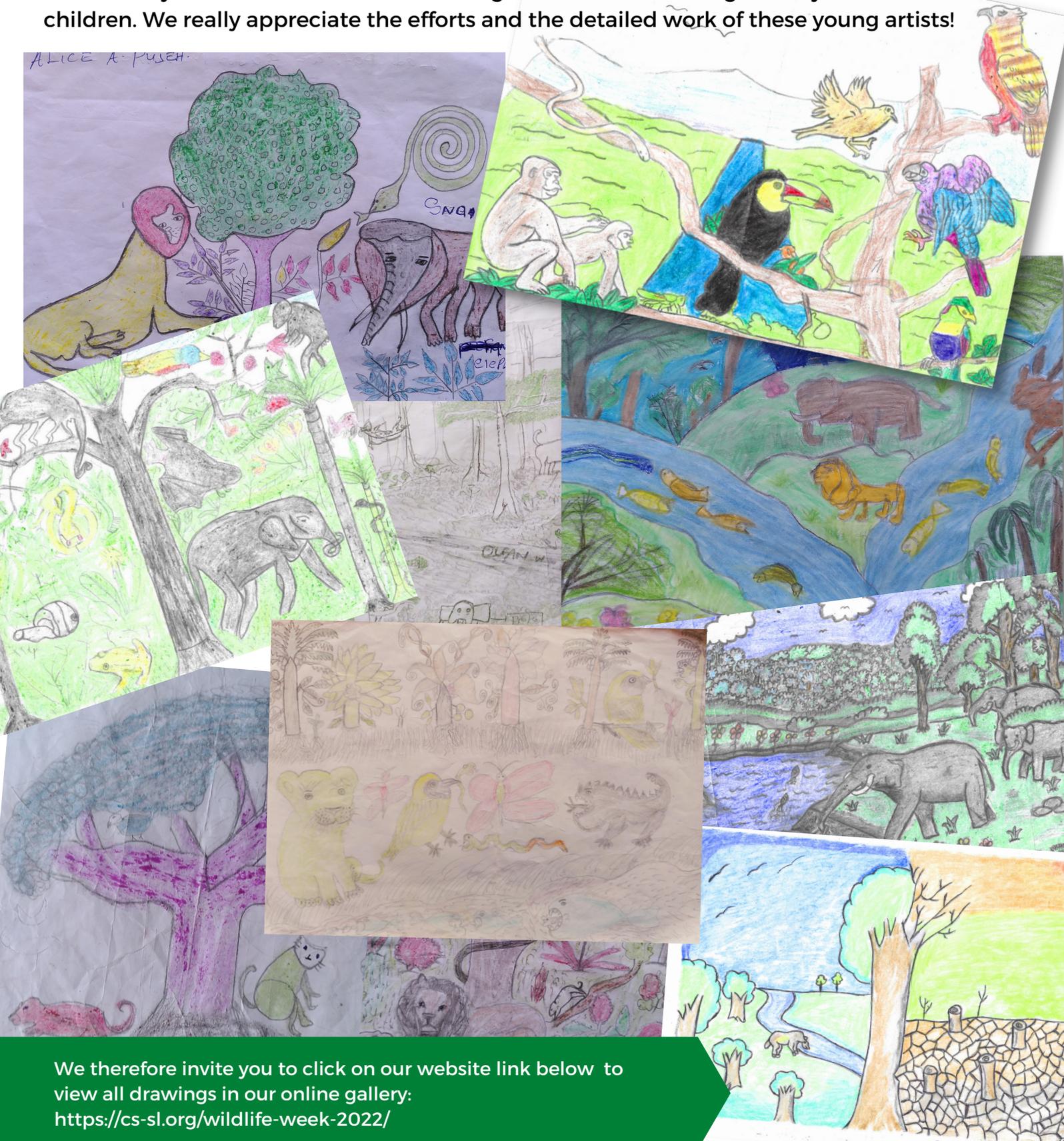




Nature Art

CSSL CONCLUDES 2022 WILDLIFE WEEK CELEBRATIONS WITH NATURE ARTWORK

This year's Wildlife Week was also celebrated with a drawing competition organised for all CSSL School Nature Clubs. In total, pupils from 26 schools nationwide participated in the competition. One cannot really say which ones are the best, which is why CSSL is happy to share with you all these wonderful drawings about nature through the eyes of the children. We really appreciate the efforts and the detailed work of these young artists!



We therefore invite you to click on our website link below to view all drawings in our online gallery:
<https://cs-sl.org/wildlife-week-2022/>



Signing of the official Declaration
of the Africa Sustainable
Commodities Initiative
at CoP27



AFRICA
SUSTAINABLE
COMMODITIES
INITIATIVE

INITIATIVE
DES PRODUITS
AGRICILES DE
BASE DURABLES
EN AFRIQUE

Forests



Edward Sesay, CSSL Program Manager, Gives Insights into COP27

Edward Sesay, Programme Manager of CSSL gives insights into what happened at the COP27 in Egypt and its significance to Sierra Leone.

We heard several important messages coming out of CoP27, relevant for Sierra Leone and for the rest of Africa. At the Africa Leaders reception on 6th November, 2022, speakers from financial institutions and leading non-profit organisations discussed some of the inspirational work happening across Africa to benefit people, nature, and climate. This included important investment plans and the successes of the work done by the ten West and Central African countries under the Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative. The event was held in the Nature Pavilion, hosted by Proforest and Nature4Climate, in partnership with IUCN, the UN High Level Climate Champions team and Global Evergreening Alliance.

Momentum had been steadily building for this year's CoP27, where ten African governments signed the declaration for the Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative (ASCI) on 9th November 2022.

Being an African owned and led initiative, ASCI is a single set of principles for the responsible production of agricultural commodities in Africa; protecting forests, good governance, and transparency, while ensuring social benefits for farmers, communities, marginalised peoples and their human rights. It builds and expands upon the 'Marrakesh Declaration for Sustainable Development of the Palm Oil Sector' signed by seven African governments in 2016, operationalised through the Africa Palm Oil Initiative.

Sierra Leone is one of the ten countries forming the APOI, and the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) is the facilitator of the national platform, co-chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, and the Ministry of Trade and Industry, reflecting the dual focus of both the forest communities and farmers with the private sector.

On the ground, the Sierra Leone platform has been involved in setting up five alternative livelihood programmes to reduce dependence on its forests, including beekeeping and aquaculture. And at the national level also, the country's RSPO National Interpretation was endorsed in 2021 following public consultation, forming a legal guide for all oil producing companies, including smallholders.

Sierra Leone has signed the Declaration to expand to the Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative, and this offers a huge hope to our country as we strive for the responsible production of agricultural commodities – all the time protecting our forests and ensuring good governance and transparency, whilst ensuring social benefits for our farmers, communities and marginalised peoples.

"We have been on a journey, encompassing many of my esteemed colleagues..., which demonstrates our commitment to sustainable agriculture and private sector development. As Minister of Environment in Sierra Leone, I am proud to take this next step to sign the Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative, providing a single platform for all future development."

Prof. Foday Jaward, Minister of Environment



For Peaceful Elections: Hate Speech Training and CPS Mano River Conference

The Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) is part of the Civil Peace Service (CPS) Network of Bread for the World (BftW). The network partners in Sierra Leone meet at least four times a year for quarterly meetings to update themselves on projects successes, challenges and also find solutions together. BftW offers trainings for peace work in different contexts. The last training in 2022 as well as the annual partners meeting with network partners in Liberia was under the influence of the upcoming elections in 2023 in both countries.

The August 10 massacre of demonstrators and police officers showed all how fragile the peace in Sierra Leone could be, and how easy people can be influenced and used for violent actions and chaos in the streets. Hate speech is not a new phenomenon; but it is becoming a bigger challenge through the misuse of social media channels. Information can be shared anonymously and fast, and people tend to say things on social media that they would never verbally say to another.

In October, partners were invited for a two-day training on “How to react and stop Hate Speech”. Participants learned what hate speech is, how to identify it and why it is dangerous even when it is meant as a joke.

During the workshop, participants learned what hate speech is, how it is identified, and why it is dangerous even when it is meant as a joke. They practiced how to react to hate speech through real life situations. Trainees were divided into three different groups. While two groups were tasked to accuse each other using hate speech, the third group was required to intervene and try to stop the use of hate speech. It was realised at the end that, it is very challenging to stop hate speech on social media because messages are posted very fast. However, constant engagement along with peace messages across the media was seen as one of the means to diffuse tensions and build peace.

There is no final definition of Hate Speech, but we can say that, “Hate speech uses words as a weapon – aimed at specific groups of people. The expressers devalue people in comments, verbally attack them or call for violence. These devaluations are based on stereotypes or the assumption that certain groups of people are worthless than others. It violates people's dignity and rights and can intimidate entire groups”, Juliane Westphal, BftW-CPS Support in Mediation, Open Space and training

Especially for the next months, when tensions might raise and communication might get harsh, we should keep in mind that hate speech is an instrument to divide the society and to create chaos. We advise everyone: Think before you click. Don't forward any message you receive without verifying the content and thinking whether it is hate speech or not. For peaceful elections 2023!

For further information and to prepare yourself,

You can visit the following website:

<https://www.un.org/en/hate-speech>

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/no-hate-campaign/publications-on-hate-speech>



CSSL Holds Annual General Meeting in Freetown

"I am very happy and pleased to see so many of your faces again. The COVID-19 pandemic stopped us from meeting and interacting last year. But now, we are back to our annual tradition and are meeting in person again to continue to work together, affirm our membership to keep our environment intact." With these words, the Honorary President of the Board of Trustees of the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL), Mr. Charles Showers, welcomed members to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for 2022.

On 26th November 2022, CSSL members met at the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) Conference Hall at King Harman Road in Freetown to get information about ongoing development, including achievements, challenges of the Society in the year under review. The meeting was also meant to outline to membership some key opportunities identified, and strategies that CSSL has forged to sustain its operations amidst all prevailing global challenges. It was also an opportunity for members to provide meaningful contributions in the form of comments, recommendations and feedback on updates provided by management.

Among the presentations made was one delivered on CSSL's Annual Audit Report by the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees, Madam Augusta Foday-Kalone. She said, the auditors' financial report gave a true and fair view of the financial position of CSSL as of 31st March 2022, and its financial performance and cash flows were in accordance with international financial reporting standards.

The Executive Director, Dr. Sheku Kamara, also presented on the programmatic performance of the organisation over the reporting period. Among other things, he updated membership on the Society's achievement in developing a five-year strategic plan (2021 - 2025), which he said would serve as the road map of CSSL's operations over the lifespan of the strategy.

After the presentations, members raised several questions and comments, which were adequately responded to by Dr. Kamara. The deliberations at the AGM spoke volumes about the relevance of membership to CSSL. The discussions further confirm the assertion that, in order to make a real difference for our environment and the future of our children, CSSL depends on its diverse membership, including Corporate partnership, Patron and Distinguished membership.

If you want to make a difference and help to protect our planet, contact us today to apply for membership. With your membership, you will help to advocate for the environment and protect nature!

JOIN US AND HELP TO SAVE NATURE!

Do you want to support our work and help to protect nature?
Call us or write to us and **become a member of CSSL!**

Contact us via Email info@cs-sl.org
or whatsapp 076 325732

text: Abdul K. Dumbuya, Kathrin Prinzing



We thank our partners for their great support in 2022! We look forward to fruitful actions for nature in 2023!



WE FOR NATURE,
NATURE FOR US.



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