



THE PEPPERBIRD



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**SCNL PARTICIPATES IN THE UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE
CONFERENCE IN BONN, GERMANY**

LFSP GRADUATES 136 CLIMATE SMART AGRIC-FARMERS

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ORGANIZATION'S PROFILE

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) was established in 1986 in response to the Liberian Business Law of 1976 for non-profit organizations with Business Registration Number: 051185951. The organization is a nongovernmental, nonpolitical and non-profit agency.

SCNL, as the Lead National Civil Society Organization for nature conservation has the mandate to educate, encourage and assist civil society understand the need and patterns of conserving nature, build consensus on effective management of biodiversity by ensuring the use of natural resources is sustainable and that biodiversity is effectively managed and appropriately utilized.

SCNL also maintains a membership base as part of efforts to increase voices for nature conservation in Liberia as well within the West African Sub-Region through sustainable partnerships. As part of the activities of SCNL each year an Annual General Assembly (AGA) is hosted in order to deliberate on issues around nature conservation including a review of related policy issues and the advancement and sustainable way forward for the organization.

Vision: We ensure that biodiversity is effectively managed and wisely used.

Mission: We educate, encourage, and assist the public to understand the need to conserve nature, build consensus on the effective management of biodiversity, and ensure that the use of natural resources is sustainable.

Values:

- Increase institutional capacity for effective management of biodiversity.
- Strengthen community structures by providing basic information on the threats, use of other renewable natural resources, and biodiversity
- Increase advocacy for the creation of additional protected areas.
- Increase alternative livelihood opportunities for communities around Protected and potential conservation areas.
- Heighten public awareness of the socio-economic, environmental and aesthetic.
- Cultural values of natural resources.

Motto: *Helping to Conserve Nature*

KNOW YOUR PROTECTED SPECIES

WESTERN CHIMPANZEES



Western chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes verus*) are a subspecies of chimpanzees native to West Africa. They are highly intelligent primates and our closest living relatives, sharing approximately 98% of our DNA. Western chimpanzees have significant conservation significance due to their endangered status, biodiversity value, and ecological role. Western chimpanzees exhibit complex social structures, living in social groups composed of multiple individuals. They communicate through vocalizations, facial expressions, and gestures.

Conservation Value - Chimpanzees, our close relatives, play a vital role in maintaining the diversity of Central Africa's forests. The large seeds they eat and disperse are too big for most other animals. Without them and their fellow great apes and elephants, these forests would be irreversibly changed.

Habitat - Whereas most other chimpanzees live in dense jungles, Western chimpanzees live in forest-savanna mosaics—open grasslands mixed with dry gallery forests.

Feeding - Western chimps tend to feed on termites and ants more often than other subspecies, using tools to scoop the insects out of their nests. Chimpanzees are also known to eat tree bark, gum, honey, flowers, and algae when available.

Behaviors - Western chimpanzees engage in unusual rock-throwing behavior, throwing large rocks into hollow tree stumps or just against trees, presumably as some sort of primitive ritual or perhaps an early form of competitive sport.

Endangered Status - Western chimpanzees are listed as Endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. This classification reflects their high risk of extinction in the wild if appropriate conservation measures are not implemented.

PREFACE



Mr. Alexander Peal, Acting Chairman, SCNL Board of Directors

As the natural resource base deteriorates, environmental issues in Africa, and notably Liberia, continue to worsen. Together, deforestation, desertification, and the underlying drought situation leading to global climate change represent the biggest threat to the ecosystem.

Rising sea levels, altered precipitation patterns, hotter weather, and more extreme weather events, including droughts and heavy rains are all effects of climate change that are already seen in Liberia. Given our reliance on climate-sensitive staple crops like rice, agricultural productivity is already threatened by land degradation and extreme weather events thus undermining the livelihoods of local communities that heavily rely on forests.

In Liberia, in spite of the progress made over the past two decades by conservation groups like the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), etc., coupled with the country's abundant endowment of natural resources and favourable geographic location, Liberia is still challenged with the alarming rate of environmental degradation.

Predicated on these and other factors, SCNL—the oldest local biodiversity conservation organization in Liberia—continues to focus on environmental education, protected areas management, landscape restoration, law enforcement, and resource management, among many other interventions. These interventions have been effective in ensuring a decline in the rate of deforestation, combating climate change, and offering communities alternative means of subsistence. They have also given stakeholders the chance to learn about waste management, conservation, and environmental education, which will help them develop the skills necessary to lessen environmental tension.

Whether you are part of the secretariat, project teams, a member of the Board of Directors, conservationists, environmental activists, or just a member somewhere else, this message is addressed to all of us. The highest decision-making body in SCNL is the General Assembly which comprises the members. Overall, SCNL has been faring well in terms of buttressing the government's efforts in protected areas management, biodiversity conservation, and provision of alternative livelihood activities for communities around protected areas.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MR. MICHAEL F. GARBO



Since its establishment, SCNL has been working to conserve nature in Liberia. The institution finds a great opportunity to stand firm in ensuring the environment is protected for the next generation. Through a competitive process, SCNL emerged as the institution capable of implementing to lead the consortium to implement the North-West Landscape Cluster Project, under the LFSP, through the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), with funding from the Government of Norway.

Following the same competitive process, SCNL again emerged as the winner to prepare the gazettelement package for Kpo and Foya Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs). Within the quarter under review, both consultancies were coming to an end in June of this year, and much was needed to have been done to bring these activities to a close. However, with the strength and technical know-how, SCNL consolidated with its team in the field completed all the activities on time and submitted them to FDA.

SCNL is living up to her goal, of ‘helping to conserve nature’, and worked with all stakeholders including

the communities to successfully complete the North-West Cluster activities and prepared the gazettelement packages for Kpo and Foya and submitted them to FDA on time.

Apart from the LFSP, SCNL hosted its 7th edition of the Liberia Nature Talk. SCNL hosts the Liberia Nature Talk across the country where people with vast experiences in conservation come to share with students (high and universities) to know the importance of environmental science and forestry. SCNL also coordinated with stakeholders, civil society organizations, FDA, the Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and other international partners in implementing programmes for the growth of forest-edge communities. It is our hope at SCNL to have more support in order to further enhance our work in the counties. To team SCNL, our international partners, and donors, (Birdlife International, RSPB), Conservation International (CI), etc. SCNL remains grateful for your support. Let’s continue to work together in conserving nature.

KPO AND FOYA PROPOSED PROTECTED AREAS (PPAS) ESTABLISHMENT IS ON COURSE

BACKGROUND OF THE KPO AND FOYA PPAS



A cross section of district officials at the meeting

During the 1960s, the Kpo and Foya Proposed Protected Areas (PPA) were among the 11 National Forests set aside by the Government of Liberia (GoL). The original sizes at the time were: Kpo 83,000 hectares and Foya 164,000 hectares of forest land.

To set these areas aside as fully protected areas, between June 2018-June 2019, SCNL and Subah-Belleh were hired by the FDA under the Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP) to conduct full biophysical and socio-economic studies building on the rapid feasibility studies conducted by Rainforest Trust between April-July 2017 to understand their current status.

In 2020, SCNL received an EU-funded PAPFor and Rainforest Trust Projects to support the establishment of Foya PA. Additional funding was made available under the LFSP to support ongoing projects for the gazettelement of both Kpo and Foya PPAs. From the several community, district, county, and national consultation meetings held, key outcomes



J. Keyah Saah, Gbarpolu County Superintendent making special remarks

were the resizing of Kpo from 83,000hectares to 27,549.7 hectares, Foya from 164,000hectares to 104,000hectares, renaming of Foya PPA to GbarLo National Park based on communities' negotiation with the Government of Liberia, and the need for tangible livelihoods and social infrastructures for the locals.

FDA, SCNL, AND WCF HOLD NATIONAL A CONSULTATION ON THREE PPAs

GOL OFFICIALS COMMIT TO CREATING NEW NATIONAL PARKS, HOPE
FOR LIVELIHOOD ALTERNATIVES FOR FOREST-EDGE COMMUNITIES



A cross-section of lawmakers at the National Consultation Meeting

The Government of Liberia (GoL), through the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), and the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF) on Wednesday, June 21, 2023, held a National Consultation on Kpo, GbarLo, and Krahn-Bassa Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs). The well-attended high-profile meeting was graced by senators, representatives, and superintendents from the South, North, and Western parts of Liberia, where the PPAs are expected to be established. In attendance also were traditional leaders, conservationists, representatives from civil society organizations, and representatives from international partners such as USAID, the World Bank, EU, British Embassy, etc.

During the meeting, FDA presented an overview of the steps to establish PPAs in Liberia and the relevance of these steps to the establishment of Kpo, Foya, and Krahn-Bassa PPAs; SCNL and WCF presented their pre-gazettement activities and key content of the draft gazettement packages for Kpo, Foya and Krahn-Bassa PPAs. After the presentations, key questions and concerns from the representatives, senators, superintendents, and civil society organizations about livelihood options for forest edge communities were raised, and those questions and concerns were addressed by Hon. C. Mike Doryen, Managing Director, FDA.

Before the presentations, several officials of government, and international partners made special

remarks and special statements. Hon. Joseph J. Tally, Deputy Managing Director for operations, FDA, welcomed the guests and appreciated President George M. Weah for the leadership shown to ensure new PPAs are established. “The country enjoys peace and tranquility, and on behalf of the management of the FDA, we’re glad to welcome everyone to the National Consultation Meeting of the three PPAs (Krahn-Bassa, Kpo, and Foya). We believe our gathering here is to help the FDA carries out its mandate of managing the forest under the ‘Three-C Policy’ (Commercial, Community & Conservation). We hope by the end of the discussions, these proposed areas will be set aside as national parks, under the mandate of setting aside 30% of Liberia’s forest cover,” he said.

“Mr. Jerry Yonmah, Technical Manager for Conservation, FDA, gave the overview of the meeting. He said the National Consultation Meeting was a milestone in achieving the 1.5 million hectares of forests for protection. He shared that the FDA contracted SCNL and WCF under the Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP)-funded by the Government of Norway to separately gazette the Kpo, Foya, and Krahn-Bassa PPAs. “Today, the FDA, in collaboration with its partners, SCNL and WCF, has completed several steps leading to the gazettement of the Kpo, Foya, and Krahn-Bassa PPAs, and has invited you to participate in the national validation of the process after holding a series of discussions with communities for the PPAs. This is about Liberia,

our children, and the larger society. The FDA hopes you, the [officials of government], will validate the process to be submitted to President George Weah". Hon. Doryen's special remarks appreciated local authorities and partners for the efforts put in place for the establishment of the PPAs. He said over 70 years ago, the Liberian Forest Sector was basically into commercial logging, but as years have gone by under then president William V. S. Tubman, who declared Liberia's forests as 'national forest,' things have changed: "There was a myth that conservation can't develop, so the people turned to commercial logging. As it is seen, that is not the case anymore. There is a potential for carbon trade which will generate revenue for the communities and the government".

He expressed joy for the National Consultation Meeting and extended gratitude to international partners, the World Bank, USAID, the Government of Norway, and civil society organizations for their support. For his part, Mr. Harrison S. Karnwea Sr., Chairman, Board of Directors, FDA, said it has been six to seven years of not having a meeting on the creation of a new PPA and to have seen everyone coming together for the establishment of new PPAs was good for the country and people. "No conservation can be successful if the local leadership and people are not involved. There should be a meaningful process in creating wealth for the people residing around the forest areas to make conservation much more meaningful".

Professor Wilson K. Tarpeh, Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA), thanked President George M. Weah for his leadership, including the superintendents, the FDA, and partners for the work done so far in the gazettelement of the three proposed parks. He said Liberia is important when it comes to the forest because of the carbon credit, an asset he says Liberia has that the international partners want.

On the provision of livelihood options for forest-edge communities, he said, "We have to be careful how we handle this...we are a member of the Paris Accord; we have to act responsibly. The point of moving forward is to allow the people to take 'ownership' of the forest. To conserve the forest, a viable livelihood alternative must be provided for the people...this is to our international partners, we can conserve, but provide for the people".

Hon. Lee Nagbe Chea, Sr., Superintendent, Sinoe County, in a special statement, said he was happy to be a part of the event and believes superintendents from other counties are happy for the PPAs. "I say thank you to the FDA and partners for the work. The proposed names of the PPAs need to be changed as recommended by the citizens. We welcome the establishment of the parks. We're willing and available to keep working with the FDA and partners to establish the Krahn-Bassa PPA".

Chief Zanzan Karwor, National Chairman, Chiefs and Elders Council of Liberia, also thanked the civil society organizations, international partners, and FDA for the work. He said local leadership at all times must continuously be a part of the processes until it is fully completed.

When it was first launched in June 2022, the crafter of the Northwest Cluster approach coined out a total of 3.1 million United States dollars to support what was termed "sustainable Livelihood" for the Counties of Lofa, Gbarpolu, and Capemount Styled the Northwest Cluster.

One year on, the approach has provided livelihood to nearly 3,000 plus forest fringe community members with safe drinking water through the construction of hand pumps, renovation of clinics and schools, and provision of motorbikes to cooperatives to save as transportation under the innovative business approach, amongst others. Farmers were provided training and over 165,000 cocoa seedlings which they transplanted to their various farms.

"What the FDA has done today with the support of the World Bank under the Liberia Forest Sector Project tells you that we are moving from just protecting the Forest and wildlife to making our people the center of the forest and conservation. Their life matters as the same as the forest and wildlife. So, we are doing everything to support a sustainable livelihood."

Michael F Garbo, Executive Director, SCNL, and the lead of the JV along IDH-The Sustainable Trade Initiative implementing the Northwest Cluster approach.

Whatever the situation, the cluster approach, gains, and achievements must be maintained by SCNL in their new roadmap for sustaining the gains made. The Norwegian Government and people will be at the center of the ordinary people who benefit from this project."

IN GRAND CAPE MOUNT, GBARPOLU, AND LOFA COUNTIES, SCNL TURNED OVER RENOVATED SCHOOLS, HAND PUMPS, AND CLINICS TO FDA AND COMMUNITIES

BENEFICIARIES APPRECIATE SCNL, FDA, THE GOVERNMENT OF NORWAY, AND THE WORLD BANK



MD Doyen also cutting a ribbon on the newly renovated school in Fornor

The Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP), funded by the Government of Norway, through the World Bank, implemented by the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), through the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), and IDH-the Sustainable Trade Initiative, under the Joint Venture (JV), North-West Landscape, on June 30th, 2023, turned over several newly renovated schools, handpumps, and clinics to FDA and the communities in Fornor, Kwelahun, Grand Cape Mount and Lofa Counties. The turnover ceremony was in the completion of the 18-month intensive LFSP implementation in North-West Liberia.

The programme was marked by huge celebrations from the communities, which included traditional Mende and Lofa songs, and they danced in appreciation of what SCNL and its partners have done to empower the communities. The Managing Director of the FDA, C. Mike Doyen, SCNL Executive Director, Mr. Michael F. Garbo, the commissioner, the District Education Officer (DEO), the District Health Officer (DHO), and town chiefs made remarks. MD Doyen said Fornor and Kawelahun, two forest-edge communities were reluctant to keep a portion of their

forests, with the notion that conservation doesn't bring development. "Today, the story is different because, through conservation now, the construction of bridges is taking place, the renovation of schools, clinics and even the provision of loans and other livelihood opportunities for the communities. The oxygen we breathe comes from the forests. Let's keep protecting the forests because it is not only important for Liberia but the whole world".

Mr. Garbo, in both towns, thanked the FDA, the Government of Norway, the World Bank, and in particular, forest-edge communities for embracing conservation. "Today, I am very happy to turn over Schools, handpumps, and clinics to you, [Mr. Doyen]. Please present them to the people of Fornor and Kawelahun so they can use them for the benefit of the communities. SCNL will continue to work in conserving nature while developing forest-edge communities," he said.

Commissioner Lawrence Brown, DEO, Johannes F. Belle receiving the keys to the school and the clinic in Fornor and Kawelahun, appreciated SCNL, FDA, and partners for thinking about the people of Fornor and Kawelahun. They encouraged residents, parents, etc., to take good care of the school. "The school has been renovated. It leaves with you, the (community dwellers) to take good care of it...don't allow your children to play around it. Train them to keep the place clean," Mr. Belle added.

Fornor has over 100 students attending the Dowe Public School (elementary), and thousands take treatment at the clinic in Kawelahun. Other facilities renovated by SCNL through the LFSP are the Kongbor Clinic, Gbarpolu County, Than Clinic, Grand Cape Mount County, and several others in Kolanahun, Lofa County. Now that both facilities in Fornor and Kawelahun have been renovated, students now have a clean and decent environment to learn...while patients in Kawelahun, and nearby communities will now receive treatment under a similar condition.

SCNL APPRECIATES THE GOVERNMENT OF NORWAY, THE WORLD BANK, AND THE FDA



Norway-funded Liberia Forest Sector Project implemented by the Forestry Development Authority comes to an end in the Northwest Cluster of Capemount, Gbarpolu, and Lofa, making significant gains in building sustainable infrastructures and connecting people at the center of the forest in Liberia. On June 28, 2023, the communities of Karwelahun and Fornor in Capemount, which share a common boundary with the Gola Forest National Park in Liberia, opened their newly renovated school and clinics door to school-going kids and women seeking treatment in prenatal care at their new facilities. The smiles on their faces show appreciative they are for their new centers.

“One year ago, we had no good health facility, the building was leaking, everything had fallen apart, and we could not afford to fix this place...thanks to the FDA and the Government of Norway for fixing this place. Our children can now sit in a better building,” Jacob Fornor, a prominent member of Fornor Town, said.

“ONE YEAR AGO, WE HAD NO GOOD HEALTH FACILITY, THE BUILDING WAS LEAKING, EVERYTHING HAD FALLEN APART, AND WE COULD NOT AFFORD TO FIX THIS PLACE...THANKS TO THE FDA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF NORWAY FOR FIXING THIS PLACE. OUR CHILDREN CAN NOW SIT IN A BETTER BUILDING”

“We have come a long way, and to say that the project was successful is an undertone. We at the REDD+ Implementation Unit that oversaw the Liberia Forest Sector project believe the immense success of the Northwest Cluster Project was overwhelming. It was implemented in a short period of time with all the expertise provided by the JV (SCNL and IDH) to reach the communities and deliver the impossible is a true color and reflection of what the Liberia Forest Sector Project stands for.” Saah A. David, head of the RIU at the FDA. SCNL appreciates its partners for the project and hopes for more opportunities to keep empowering forest-edge communities

SCNL AND CBFM TRAIN COMMUNITY ECO-GUARDS

ENHANCING CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT AND BIOMONITORING TECHNIQUES



The beneficiaries with their certificates

The need for strong participation of local communities in the management of natural resources is well understood and recognized in Liberia. The Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and partner organizations have made considerable efforts in recent years by establishing Protected Areas. However, the forests are threatened by illegal hunting, mining, subsistence farming, etc. In order to understand the distribution of the key landscape species and the threats affecting them, the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) and Community Based Forestry and Protected Area Management (CBFM) trained 27 community members on May 12-17, 2023 as [Community Eco-guards] in Conservation Management and Biomonitoring Techniques in Lofa County.

The Community Eco-guards, which comprises 13 females and 14 males, are to provide support for conservation initiatives, Sustainable Livelihood Incentives for forest fringe communities, build local capacities, and provide direct cash benefits for those community members participating in conservation and monitoring activities and thereby reducing the threats to the forests. The newly trained Eco-guards will carry out regular Surveillance and awareness patrol within the now proposed GbarLo National Park (GNP), collecting biodiversity and threats data.

SCNL, UNDP, FAO, SWEDISH EMBASSY, AND FDA VISIT PROJECT SITES IN LOFA COUNTY

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT, FORESTS PROTECTION



SCNL Executive Director, Mr. Michael F. Garbo holding a conservation with some community dwellers in Lukasu

Meanwhile, on May 16, 2023, SCNL Executive Director, Mr. Michael F. Garbo, led very high-profile delegations from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Swedish Embassy, and FDA to Lofa County. Lukasu, where the team arrived on May 17, 2023, and was warmly received by the local officials including, the District Commissioner, Hon. Anthony S. Armah.

The guests were welcomed traditionally, with a white chicken and kola nut folded in a white sheet, presented precisely to Mr. Garbo, as a token of clear heart from the traditional leaders to the guests. The town Chief of Lukasu Mr. Blama Kollie, said they were happy to receive the high-power delegates in Lukasu.

“This is the first time we have received high-profile guests. We are happy and we really love the project that SCNL and partners have established here in Lukasu. Our citizens are really happy about the livelihood project, and we will take care of the project, we are happy that SCNL passed by all the other towns to come to Lukasu, far in

the jungle, it is a blessing from Allah to us, we appreciate SCNL and partners a lot for this opportunity,” he said.

Representatives from UNDP, FAO, Swedish Embassy, making remarks thanked the people of Lukasu for the warmest welcome. UNDP Program Manager, Abraham Tumbey, said, “We will make sure what we have started here is sustainable, UN cares for the people of the world we will continue to support the people of Lukasu”.

FAO Assistant Representative for Program, Octavius Quarbo, promised that FAO will continue to work with partners UNDP, FDA, and SCNL to sustain these livelihood projects SCNL has established in Lukasu. “I feel really happy to be here in Lukasu... when the commissioner was speaking, he made mentioned livestock (cattle rearing), we will work with our partners to join you, the (beneficiaries) to make an impact here”.

Swedish Embassy, I want to say thank you again, there is a certain thing we are key with, which is women’s participation, if you plan a program we can’t see women in that program we don’t really think good about it, but

today I was very impressed to see more female Eco guards, we say thanks to SCNL, FDA, UNDP, & FAO, we will continue to do what we can to help support the project, UNDP, FAO & SCNL thanks for choosing Lukasu town to be part of the CBFM project. Program Officer, Environmental Climate Change and Natural Resources appreciated the willingness of the people of Lukasu to work with the FDA in protecting the forest. “We will continue to ask our partners for more livelihoods to come to the various communities. My advice to you is, as those livelihood projects come into your community, please make them your own, Lukasu people you need to show ownership of the project”.

Mr. Garbo assured the people of Lukasu that SCNL is here to stay. “We will continue to provide the necessary support, let’s work together to conserve the forests”. The high-power guests then toured the various livelihood nursery sites, (cocoa, plantains, pigeon beans, rice), and were impressed with the level of work done at various nurseries.

Jusu B. Kannah, and Famata Kanneh, Eco-guards, were among the 27 eco-guards who participated in the training. they expressed joy and appreciated SCNL and its partners for the opportunity to learn about forest management. Kannah said, “The training made us get new knowledge on camera trapping, compact and Global Positioning System (GPS). These materials will help us when patrolling the forest to monitor animals and human activities”.

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Representatives from UNDP, FAO and the Swedish Embassy made remarks and thanked the people of Lukasu for the warmest welcome. UNDP Program Manager, Abraham Tumbey, said, “We will make sure what we have started here is sustainable. UN cares for the people of the world, and we will continue to support the people of Lukasu”.

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Swedish Embassy, I want to say thank you again, there is a certain thing we are key with, which is women’s participation. If you plan a program, and we don’t see women in that program, we don’t really think good about it. But today, I was very impressed to see more female Eco guards. We say thanks to SCNL, FDA, UNDP, & FAO. We will continue to do what we can to help support the project. UNDP, FAO & SCNL, thanks for choosing Lukasu town to be part of the CBFM project.

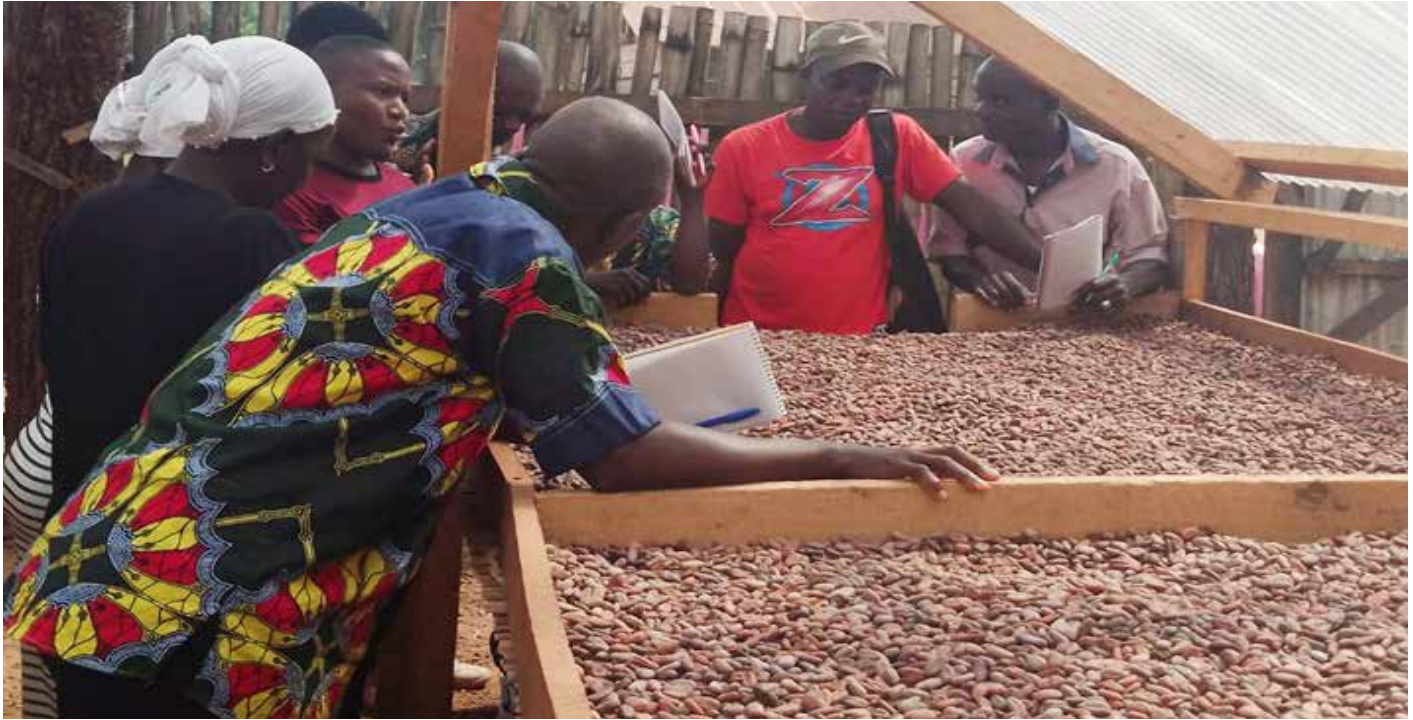
Jenkins Flahwor, Program Officer, Environmental Climate Change and Natural Resources at the Swedish Embassy appreciated the willingness of the people of Lukasu to work with the FDA in protecting the forest. “We will continue to ask our partners for more livelihoods to come to the various communities. My advice to you is, as those livelihood projects come into your community, please make them your own, Lukasu people, you need to show ownership of the project”.

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EXPANDING TRADING OPPORTUNITY FOR GOLA COCOA

SCNL AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR FORESTS PROJECT TAKE INITIATIVE TO LOFA COUNTY



Master farmers inspecting cocoa in Lofa County

The Society for the Conservation of Nature (SCNL) is implementing a one-year project with cocoa cooperatives in Lofa County. The project is being sponsored by the Partnerships for Forests through the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). The project aims to ‘explore and expand’ the trading opportunity for Gola cocoa to ensure its marketability within and beyond the craft “Chocolate Market”.

The Key outputs of the project are: Improving the quality of Gola Cocoa, improving the marketability and trading of Gola Cocoa, onboarding new cooperatives into the Gola Cocoa supply chain, and building the capacity of the Gola Rainforest Conservation (GRC) Cocoa Business Unit, including sharing lessons with cooperatives (producer organizations) in Liberia.

From 3-10 December 2022, a cross-exchange visit was led by Matthew Williams, SCNL Cocoa Coordinator. Master Farmers from Liberia and SCNL Cocoa team visited the GRC to share lessons learned. On 5 December 2022, SCNL and the P4F Team visited the GRC Cocoa office in Kenema city, Sierra Leone.

Mr. Boima Musa, the Administrative Superintendent, welcomed the team to GRC headquarters. Mr. Asinu Janneh presented Conservation Enterprise’s achievements, objectives, structures, traceability, adaptability, and challenges of the entity. The SCNL Team also learned about forest-friendly activities, quality control, and access to the international market from conservation enterprises. The Farmers also learned about tracking cocoa farmers under the NGOFU Cooperative. Mr. Janneh informed the SCNL Cocoa team to come together in order to be successful as a cooperative and to have good access to the market.

The team travelled to Malema to meet with the cocoa cooperative members and visited a cocoa farm. At NGOLEAGORBU (meaning forest edge community) Cocoa farmers’ cooperative, the chairman of the cooperative, Mr. Michael Kanneh, discussed with SCNL on the establishment of the cooperative, the processes involved in becoming a cooperative, and the steps and activities within the cooperative.

SCNL THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS FOR FORESTS TRAINS MASTER FARMERS ON FOREST FRIENDLY STANDARDS

EXPANDING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GOLA COCOA FARMERS



Guma Mende Cocoa Farmers after receiving agriculture inputs

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), through Partnerships for Forests (P4F), on May 25-26, 2023, conducted a four-day intensive training on “Forest Friendly Standards” for ten (10) master farmers from Sebehill Cocoa Cooperative in Massabolahun. Similar training was conducted on May 28- 29, 2023, for 10 Master Cocoa Farmers from Guma Mende Cocoa Cooperative in Vahun, Lofa County.

The objective of the training was to teach cocoa farmers the good agriculture practices of cocoa farming using the [Forest-Friendly] approach around forest areas. The farmers were taught how to maintain shade trees in their cocoa farms, plant a 5km Buffer Zone away from the forest areas, farm sanitation, quality control, and pest and disease control.

The Forest-Friendly Standards training conducted by the SCNL Cocoa team for the master farmers was not

only for ‘Good Forest-Friendly Standards’ practices on cocoa farms maintenance but on organic quality control management of cocoa production.

The practical aspect of the training was conducted on May 29, 2023, to identify forest-friendly practices and make recommendations to cocoa farmers in their communities.

Mr. Blama Dukuly, Guma Mende Cocoa Cooperative, expressed joy and happiness to have received such agriculture inputs from SCNL-P4F Project. According to Mr. Dukuly, they always sell their cocoa to Sierra Leone but have not received such a kind gesture in return from their proceeds. The farmers extended heartfelt thanks and appreciation to SCNL-P4F Project for the farming materials and promised to sell their cocoa to Guma Mende Cocoa Cooperative for trading expansion opportunities of Gola Cocoa.

Madam Gaydou Kawolo (Agronomist), Atlantic Cocoa Export and Processing Company, informed both cooperatives to practice good fermentation and proper sun drying when preparing cocoa beans for sale. She also said that Atlantic will provide quality organic training to the cooperative cocoa farmers in Lofa County. She added that Atlantic Cocoa Export and Processing Company wants to buy 100 metric tons of cocoa during this cocoa-harvesting season. After the training, 50 cocoa farmers from Sebehill Cocoa Cooperative received agriculture inputs in Massabolahun, while another 50 cocoa farmers from Guma Mende Cocoa Cooperative received agriculture materials from SCNL-P4F Project. The materials were distributed among potential cocoa farmers to maintain their cocoa farms in order to produce quality cocoa during each harvesting season.

LFSP GRADUATES 136 CLIMATE SMART AGRIC-FARMERS

TRAINING FARMERS FOR CASH CROP PRODUCTION



A cross-section of graduates in Marbon

The production of cocoa is of significant economic importance, both for producing and consuming countries. It generates export revenues and income and creates employment for local communities. It also acts as a forest cover, connecting patches and buffers in degraded areas. In an effort to empower farmers at the forest-edge, the Society for the Conservation of Nature (SCNL), under the Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP), funded by the Government of Norway through the World Bank and the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), trained over 100 farmers in Cocoa Intensification and Integrated Crop Pest Management (ICMP) known as the Cocoa Farmers Field School (FFS). The training, which was the first of its kind under the project, took place in six project communities (Marbon, Kawelahum, Jenemana, Zuie, Ganglota, and Telemu) located in three Counties (Grand Cape Mount, Gbarpolu, and Lofa). The Cocoa FFS graduation took place from April 6-10, 2023, with a total of 136 farmers who were certificated.

Matthew Williams, SCNL Livelihood Officer at the graduation ceremony, thanked the farmers for their participation in the Cocoa FFS training and advised them to engage in more forest-friendly cocoa

production, mainly focusing on degraded areas in the landscape. The graduation ceremonies were comprised of singing, remarks, special statements, and acknowledgment from the graduates. The town chiefs, elders, youth, chair ladies, etc., appreciated SCNL, the Government of Norway, the World Bank, and the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) for the seven months of intensive training in cocoa production.

Bob M. Jallah, Town Chief, Marbon, and the General Town Chief, Mr. Boimah Quoi, also expressed joy for the opportunity rendered to the farmers. They said it was a great day in Marbon to see for the first time farmers being trained in cocoa production as a livelihood for the people, not only in Grand Cape Mount County but across Liberia.

“Since birth, this is the first time to see such an opportunity in this part of Liberia. To see our brothers and sisters graduating today in Cocoa FFS is so wonderful. Families will benefit from the outcome of the training, including future generations. Thanks to SCNL and its partners for this,” Jallah said. The town chief then asked that the program continues so other farmers who weren’t part of the first training can have



The graduates happily display their rainboots received from SCNL after graduation in Ganglota

similar opportunities to know about cocoa production and best practices.

Quoi promised to keep working along with the farmers to ensure the project objectives are met. “As the general town chief, I’ll make sure I work with the farmers to monitor the cocoa farms after the planting process. Let’s work hard for the growth of the county. The government can’t do everything”.

SCNL Program Assistant, Queenette P. Johnson, making a special statement on behalf of SCNL Executive Director, Mr. Michael F. Garbo, congratulated the graduates and encouraged them to use their knowledge by engaging in climate-smart agriculture of cocoa production while protecting the forest.

“You have to start putting what you have learned about coco production into practice. This Cocoa FFS Program is about livelihood under the LFSP. The Cocoa FFS is a part of many programs being implemented to empower the farmers around forest-edge communities. Besides the Cocoa FFS, the Honeybee Keeping Project and the construction of handpumps, bridges, and renovation of schools and clinics are key programs to help the communities and people. Thanks to all the farmers who went through the training; it wasn’t easy, but you stood strong, and today, you are graduating. On behalf of the Program Coordinator, Mr. Richard Hoff II, and the Executive

Director, SCNL, Mr. Michael F. Garbo, thank you”. Implementing partner, Vainga Agriculture Development and Management Consultancy (VADEMCO) National Program Manager, G. Ambullai Perry, on behalf of VADEMCO, extended thanks and appreciation to SCNL, partners, and farmers for the successful completion of the training. “Certificates will be provided to each of you to show your participation in the training. Your benefit isn’t about the certificates you have received. It is about what you’ll use the knowledge for. Serve as ambassadors in your towns and communities by empowering other farmers who didn’t have the opportunity to participate in the Cocoa FFS training.” Rita Cooper and David Dennis are Farmers and were among the graduates. They expressed heartfelt gratitude to SCNL and its partners for the Cocoa FFS Program. “I give God the glory for everything. I tell the Government of Norway, the World Bank, the FDA and SCNL, the facilitators, and the trainers thank you for ensuring the Cocoa FFS Program was successful”.

David promised to use his new knowledge in the next few years to produce more cocoa. “What we have learned, in the next few years, when SCNL and partners visit Grand Cape Mount County, they will see my cocoa farms everywhere and making lots of profits,” he said.

SCNL LOAN PROGRAMME IMPROVING LIVES IN NORTHERN LIBERIA

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH MICROCREDIT: A CASE STUDY FROM NORTHERN LIBERIA



Madam Baindu S. Brima and children in Vahum displaying their goods

Nature preservation requires the provision of functional programmes for forest-edge communities. The fact is, communities closer to the forest, especially protected areas, most times depend on the forest for their livelihoods. It is against this backdrop that the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) provides close to 12 million Liberian Dollars in the form of revolving loans to farmers and small business owners who are mostly women residing in forest edge communities in Northwestern Liberia, in an effort to build and strengthen their capacity.

As an expansion to the loan program, SCNL, under its Rainforest Trust-sponsored project, reached out to nine (9) other forest communities. Between October 25th, 26th, and 29th 2022, ninety (90) women, comprising farmers and small business owners from Yallahun, Yanohun, Kolahun, Pasulahum, Lukasu, Pasulahum, Dukor Gbongo, and Vahun (Lofa County), received LD\$20,000.00 each as loan to improve their local businesses. SCNL Communication, Policy, and Advocacy Officer Clara K. Mallah, in May 2023, visited loan beneficiaries in Lofa County to see ‘first-hand’ how the women are managing the loan programme. Before the loan program, most women were only into farming, but with the availability of the loan, beneficiaries have expanded into new businesses.

It is early morning in Vahun, and the beautiful district is surrounded by a community forest, with the morning dew thick in the sky like a cloud, and the sun takes time to rise. As students make their way to school, loan beneficiaries Baindu S. Brima and Jatta Mustapha are heading to the market to sell. Brima said the LD\$20,00.00 received, she purchased additional goods and added the goods to her current business. She sells rubber dishes, tubs, bows, rubber spoons, etc. She said, “I have 12 children, both biological and adopted I am taking care of, so the loan received has been an extended help in improving my business. The profit may be small, but I am working hard to ensure I repay the loan so I can continue being on the loan program”.

Across SCNL’s projects sites, roads leading to the forest-edge communities are challenged with bad conditions, but for forest edge community dwellers in Dukor Gbongo, and Vahun, the bad road conditions have created a condition where they are no longer getting access to the city center areas in Liberia for transactions. Most of the residents go to neighbouring Sierra Leone to purchase their [goods and services]. Brima and Mustapha fall into that category. They go to Sierra Leone for transactions, and it is difficult because the transactions are done in ‘The Leone’, the official currency of Sierra Leone.

“When travelling to Sierra Leone, we go through a lot due to the bad roads, at the checkpoints, customs fares are taken from us, and we also have to pay for transportation fare to bring our goods, once all this is deducted using the Leone, the profit remains small, but we have to keep working because we have the loan to repay, and take care of the children,” Brima stressed.

Just like the rest of the other women in Vahun, Baindu Brima sells from 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., and sometimes, she makes between LD\$2,000.00- 3,000.00, approximately USD\$25 or USD\$ 30 per day. On difficult days, she goes home without making a sale. Besides the bad road conditions, the currency issues, the lack of internet, and the decrease in population in most forest edge communities, etc., also create difficulties for businesses.

Despite the constraints, the 60-Year-Old extended thanks and appreciation to SCNL and its partner for the loan. “I am a widow; all I have is the business to take care of my children. And we have many women who want to be a part of the loan program, so SCNL and partner. They should kindly increase the loan for other women to benefit,” she said.

Jatta Mustapha, in a joyful and energetic mood, said she sells lappa, rubber slippers, hats, clothes such as dresses, blouses, etc. Just like Brima, the bad roads challenge and the usage of the Leone were highlighted by Mustapha. “We can’t travel to Kolahun side (Liberian side) due to the bad road, and no Liberian Dollars are coming to Vahun because of the bad road conditions, so we go to Sierra Leone to purchase the goods. Though the loan is helpful, and I am working hard to repay the loan, these are the conditions we are faced with”.

The mother of five, and three grandchildren, thanked SCNL and RFT for the loan program. “Atleast we are eating soup now, unless before, we only ate dry rice... We want SCNL and the partner to increase the loan,” Mustapha added.

Jongbeh Konneh, Yandohun, and Yatta Kabbeh Yallahun aren’t only into the traditional daily market business. The women sell in their respective towns but go out on the general weekly market days to sell wholesale goods. Konneh used the LD\$20,000.00 loan received and purchased dry goods to sell, including planting beans and peanuts. She explained that

A cross-section of some loan beneficiaries in Yandohun with the help of the loan programme, the business is improving. She and Kabbeh travel on bikes for two



A cross section of some loan beneficiaries in Yandohun
hours or so to the nearby general market every Friday to sell red palm oil (wholesale).

“Things are a bit difficult, but we’re trying. Every Friday is Kamatahun Market Day. We leave home by 6:00 am and return home by 4:00 pm. We sell red palm oil, peanuts, beans, etc. Sometimes business is good; other times, it is difficult. In all, we are grateful...because we have something to do to take of our children”.

The 50-Year-Old is the mother of four and three grandchildren. She added that the loan program is profitable because it helps to pay her children’s school fees, pay medical bills, etc. she also firstly appreciates SCNL and the RFT and kindly requests an increment in the loan programme for other women to benefit as there is a growing demand from other women to participate in the programme.

Kabbeh, a mother of six and three grandchildren, also used the loan to expand on agricultural activity, just as Konneh, by planting peanuts and beans. “When I harvest the crops, I take them to Kamatahun Market to sell...Before the loan came, I used to farm, but today, the loan program has helped me to start a business while at the same time farming. I’m grateful,” the 60-Year-Old said.

The women appreciate the loan programme and promise to keep making their respective businesses after the project ends. SCNL Loan Officer, Yuconjay Noyu Barchue, is proud of the women’s groups that have been established. She said, “From my experience, these savings groups bring together communities with one objective, taking the loan to expand their businesses. Even though they repay the loan, it also helps them to pay their children’s school fees and support households

SCNL PARTICIPATES IN THE UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE IN BONN, GERMANY



Cross section of participants at the Workshop

The 58th Session of the Subsidiary Bodies (Subsidiary Body for Science and Technology & Subsidiary Body for Implementation) was held at the World Conference Center in Bonn, Germany, from June 5-15, 2023. The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) was represented by its Sustainable Finance Coordinator, Miss Sylvia Dorbor, who led the negotiations on loss and damage for Liberia. For a little over a week, items were discussed based on a provisional agenda. As usual, developing countries wanted finance as a means of implementation to be a standalone agenda item, but developed countries' counterparts prefer finance and support discussed under other agenda items. For loss and damage, the second phase of the Glasgow Dialogue on Loss and Damage was held from June 8-10, 2023. Parties expressed their views on what they want to be included in the new funding arrangements and a dedicated fund for loss and damage. Developing countries called for a fund based on grants rather than loans to avoid exacerbating the debt crisis already hitting vulnerable developing nations. For a country such as Liberia, whose Loss and Damage impacts are mainly felt through floods and sea-level rise, the country is calling for priority to be given to both extreme events and slow onset events. Civil society

at the conference has been demonstrating and calling for the Loss and Damage funds to be filled. After the parties agreed to establish funding arrangements and a fund for loss and damage at COP-27, a transitional committee was set up to make recommendations for the fund at COP-28. In addition to the loss and damage negotiations, Miss Dorbor also attended events and meetings relevant to SCNL's conservation work. She attended the Rainforest Finance Day event hosted by the Coalition for Rainforest Nations (CFRN) at the Steigenberger Grand Hotel in Bonn on June 11, 2023. The financing day event was attended by REDD+ focal points and private sector actors. High on the agenda at the meeting was coordinating private sector investment and support for the implementation of activities related to mitigation actions in the forest sector. As the Sustainable Finance coordinator, Miss Dorbor expanded her networks at SB58 to form possible partnerships relevant to moving the organization forward. This SB meeting is important to set the agenda for the upcoming 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) in Dubai, UAE, later this year, from November 30- December 12, 2023.



Miss Dorbor representing SCNL in Paris

During the trip, Ms. Dorbor participated in a two-day summit for a New Global Financing Pact, which was held at Palais Brongniart in Paris, France, following an announcement from the French President, Hon. Emmanuel Macron, at the UNFCCC 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) in Egypt. The summit, which comprised fifty thematic events and six official round tables, captured topics encompassing climate change, biodiversity loss, and inequality. High on the agenda at the meeting was the reform of multilateral banks, the impact of special drawing rights for developing countries, global debts, and the financing of public goods. There was a strong signal towards coordinating private sector investment and support to fight the climate and debt crisis.

As part of SCNL's sustainability framework, one of Miss Dorbor's interests at the summit was expanding her networks to form possible partnerships relevant to moving the organization forward. The summit was an opportunity to discuss and meet with other actors to address key issues and propose innovative

financing instruments relevant to fighting the climate crisis. It fits into the international context marked by the cascading effects of climate change and the economic crisis. The goal is to reform the global financial architecture to enable funds to flow to vulnerable developing countries that need them the most. And SCNL, as a civil society group, works as an intermediary between the government and communities to increase the resilience of frontline communities.

The summit set a platform for many countries to reiterate their need for structural reform and closed with a release of the Paris Agenda for People and Planet and a proposed roadmap to put forth commitments from the summit on the international agenda. The Paris Agenda for People and the Planet proposed to increase the lending capacity of Multilateral Banks by \$200 billion over the next 10 years. But what are the odds when the initial \$100 billion per year goal has not been reached?

SCNL HOLDS 7TH LIBERIA NATURE TALK FOR STUDENTS

ATTRACTING YOUNG MINDS TO CONSERVATION



Students, guests, and SCNL staff after the Liberia Nature Talk Programme

On June 23, 2023, the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) had the incredible opportunity to hold its 7th Liberia Nature Talk. This environmental and educative programme took place at the Ezekiel H. Guti High School in Barnesville under the theme: “Knowing the status of protected species in Liberia”. The Liberia Nature Talk brings together people with vast experiences in conservation to share with students in high school the importance of environmental science and forestry. It is also meant to create awareness among biodiversity conservation students at universities to enhance their learning.

Johnson G. Koikoi, SCNL Environmental Education Officer and lead on the programme said the primary objective of the event was to spread conservation messages through the Liberia Nature Talk to inform the students and the schools with extensive experience in conservation, allowing them to share their knowledge with the public and students. “The aim of the programme was to emphasize the importance of environmental management and forestry while raising

awareness among students from various universities and high schools about biodiversity conservation,” he said.

The well-attended event was a success, and brought together passionate conservationists and excited students from different conservation organizations and high schools in Montserrado, and provided them with the opportunity to ask questions and understand the importance of biodiversity conservation and how they can serve as ambassadors in spreading the message about protecting the environment.

It was remarkable, with two exceptional speakers who captivated the audience with their insightful presentations. Mr. Abednego Gbarway, the Wildlife Manager of, Forestry Development Authority (FDA), shared valuable information regarding the current status of protected species in Liberia. His expertise shed light on the challenges and opportunities faced in conserving these precious creatures. He said the FDA was established in 1976, while the National Forestry Reform Law was established in 2006.



A pictorial view of SCNL staff at the validation workshop

Dr. Susan Wiper, Manager at the Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary provided an insightful overview of the remarkable successes and challenges faced by the Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary (LiWiSa). Dr. Wiper went on to highlight the sanctuary's dedication to the care, rehabilitation, and release of animals confiscated from the bush meat and pet trade in Liberia. She further emphasized the sanctuary's commitment to educating and raising awareness about the laws protecting wildlife in Liberia while also promoting the crucial need for wildlife to remain wild. She said Libassa Wildlife is the only sanctuary in Liberia and neighboring countries. It has 70 species of animals and was officially opened on May 6, 2017.

Earlier on, the welcome remark was done by the Vice Principal for Instruction, Mr. Moses N. Moniba, Ezekiel H. Guti High School. In his remarks, he expressed happiness for the school to have been chosen to be the host for such an educative program which will broaden the minds of many people on the importance of conservation. In his opening remarks, Mr. Koikoi gave an overview of the Liberia Nature Talk and its purpose.

The Liberia Nature Talk Program is a quarterly Biodiversity Conservation awareness platform sponsored by the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL). This program encourages the participation of primary and secondary schools as we, the general public, need to ensure knowledge is passed on to all for the sustainable and effective use of biodiversity and the wise use of natural resources that will enable the future generation to have access to biodiversity. There were 78 participants, 47 females and 31 males, from six schools (First Apostolic Foundation High School, Sister Shirley

Kolmer Memorial Catholic School, G. Edwin Bryant Academy, WAT Daycare, Canterbury Episcopal High School, and Ezekiel H. Guti High School) in Barnersville, Liberia as well as partners from Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary, Liberia Geographical Society and the Forestry Development Authority (FDA).

The students, like everyone who attended the 7th Edition of the Liberia Nature Talk through their Lead Teachers/Administrators, saluted SCNL for the programme, which is captivating to students who are future biodiversity conservationists and environmentalists. Several students and the general audience asked questions regarding the importance of the protected animals in Liberia and some livelihood alternatives that can balance and discourage humans from eating/killing these animals? What is the plan of the Government of Liberia to protect wildlife habitats (forests) that humans are cutting down for living and other usages? How does Libassa manage to save some of these animals without harming them? These questions were addressed by the speakers appropriately.

5th grader Larine K. Toure from Shirley Kolmer School and others promised to educate students and their communities about conservation. "If our parents stop buying them, those hunting them will stop hunting them. So, I will tell everyone not to kill wild animals," student Toure promised. At the close of the programme, the school administration thanked SCNL for the establishment of the School Nature Club and promised to always work with SCNL for the betterment of the future for the children. SCNL Boahen Gorden Sambola, in his vote of thanks, appreciated the speakers and students for their participation and promised SCNL's commitment to keep working with schools for the expansion of the School Nature Club.

On April 11, 2023, in Monrovia, the final Validation Workshop of the Teachers' Guide for Nature Club for Schools in Liberia and Sierra Leone was held. The workshop co-organized by the implementing partners of the Gola Transboundary Landscape of the European Union (EU) funded Support Program for the Preservation of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa (PAPFor) aimed to build consensus for the Teachers' Guide, designed to be used for conservation education for school going children in both countries



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