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SCNL'S IMPACTFUL ROLE IN COP28 UNVEILED**



**SCNL SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE INITIATIVE-
TRANSFORMING SMALLHOLDER COCOA FARMING
THROUGH INNOVATIVE REVOLVING**

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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.

Our Vision is a Liberia where biodiversity is sustainably managed for our well-being

Our Mission is to promote biodiversity conservation by inspiring people to value nature through science, forests and climate actions, environmental education, partnership, stakeholder engagements and community development.

Values:

The core values of the organization are:

- * **Passion:** We are inspired by people and nature and driven to lead change for a sustainable future.
- * **Respect:** We build relationships based on trust and mutual benefit, respect each other, and respect the demands, ideals and customs of the communities and cultures around us.
- * **Collaboration and Partnership:** We work with others to reach our goals.
- * **Accountability and Transparency:** We strive to uphold values such as accountability and transparency.

These values inform and guide the actions we take to develop our own programs, policies, and practices.

Motto: *Helping to Conserve Nature*

ELEPHANT FALLS - THE INNER CIRCLE OF THE GREEN GOLD IN LIBERIA



Located in Camp Israel, a small town of approximately 1000 residents in Grand Cape Mount County, is the gateway to Elephant Falls, one of Liberia's inner circles of green gold. Though artisanal gold mining is the main livelihood activity in the neighboring communities of Whanjue and Fula Camp, the inner green gold is embedded far inside the Forest Landscape of the Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) in Liberia. Access is provided by a seven-kilometer forest track currently being maintained by the European Union (EU) funded PAPFor Project, with the support of Camp Israel community and the GFNP Rangers.

Strategically anchored on a stretch of waterfalls and rapids on the Mano River in the heart of the GFNP, the Elephant Fall has been earmarked by [ecologists and field staff] as an ideal ecotourism site. A study commissioned by the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), the government body responsible for forest conservation and management, confirmed that the GFNP, which envelopes Elephant Falls is perfect for forest-based ecotourism.

The Falls presents a remarkable rock gorge which makes water rushing downstream great for sightseeing. The major rapids are in two sections and a top table river setting harbors species of fish waiting for science expeditions and studies. Populations of short-snouted and long-snouted crocodiles live in the river systems of Mano. The high canopy forest landscape around the open waterfalls gives the natural setting a scenic view of great beauty. In its vast plains, comprising forest birds and plants, the Elephant Falls presents an amazing place for bird watching. Walking on the foot trails that lead to the forests on the bank of the Mano River is an eye-catching experience. This spectacular phenomenon in the middle of the forest provides a wonderfully scenic setting for camping.

Under the PAPFor Project, the Society for the Conservation of Nature Liberia (SCNL) has constructed basic bathroom facilities to provide alternative livelihoods for women in Camp Israel. Local foods will be on sale, and visitors can request a guided tour of the forests.

Planning for ecotourism requires high consideration for conservation values and the future of ecotourism lies in its sustainability. The sustainable management of Elephant Fall is one of the components of the integration of forest conservation for the revival of the economy. Keeping the attributes of the Inner Green Gold is equal to saving money for the future of incoming generations of Liberians.

Receiving the bath of nature on weekends at the Elephant Falls in Gola will be an unforgettable pastime for local and foreign tourists.



Mr. Alexander Peal
Acting Chairman
SCNL Board of Directors

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) was founded in 1976 with a mandate to maintain the biodiversity conservation wholesomely, and high environmental standards of living for all Liberians. The SCNL has been a voice of advocacy on conservation and biodiversity issues in Liberia since its establishment.

With the abundance of natural resources Liberia has, one of which is the remaining portion of the upper Guinea Forest, which comprises of several endemic species and a mainstay in green house emission in the fight against climate change and its related consequences, the SCNL advocates with zeal and vigor, the conservation of the remaining upper Guinea forest as well as the several species to whom it provides habitat.

With over 600 bird species, 75 reptiles and amphibian species, 150 small and large animal species, 2900 vascular plant species, and 1000 insect species, Liberia sits at an important crossroads in the fight against climate change, and the SCNL as the lead local biodiversity and conservation organization in Liberia, is proud to complement the efforts of the Liberian government, the international community and its partners across the globe whose tireless efforts have made it possible to count the many tangible achievements that have been made thus far in Liberia and the West African sub-region.

Established with the primary objective of maintaining a wholesome biodiversity conservation and elevating the environmental standard of living for all Liberians, SCNL stands as a leading national organization in this critical field.

In collaboration with the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and other valued partners, SCNL has played a pivotal role in various conservation initiatives. Noteworthy among them is the establishment of the Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) in Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties. Furthermore, the organization is actively involved in the ongoing process of creating the Foya and Kpo Proposed Protected Areas.

Recognizing the delicate balance between conservation efforts and the socio- economic well-being of local communities residing in forest-fringe areas, SCNL has implemented a range of alternative livelihood programs. These initiatives, encompassing activities such as bee-keeping, village savings loans, forest-friendly cocoa production, and climate-smart agriculture, underline our commitment to supporting communities that have traditionally relied on natural resources for their livelihoods.

SCNL in its quest for sustainability and sustainable financing in biodiversity conservation, brought on board a Sustainable Finance Coordinator, tasked with designing innovative financing mechanisms for the long-term sustainability of the institution and its project-based interventions.

As the world turns to nature-based solutions to address the climate crisis, the role of forests extends beyond biodiversity conservation to include crucial climate regulation. SCNL recognizes this paradigm shift and emphasizes the need to protect forests from threats while capitalizing on emerging conservation opportunities, particularly in carbon markets.

This preface reflects SCNL’s vision and commitment to taking actionable steps for effective biodiversity conservation. While our efforts have achieved significant milestones, we acknowledge that the magnitude of the task requires collaborative endeavors. Hence, we eagerly anticipate partnerships, including those with the corporate and private sectors, to collectively and effectively conserve Liberia’s biodiversity and judiciously manage its natural resources, ensuring a legacy that benefits future generations.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MR. MICHAEL F. GARBO



As we approach the conclusion of yet another remarkable year, 2023, marked by significant achievements for us, our partners, and the communities within the landscapes we serve, we extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all those who have supported our mission. The SCNL family is immensely grateful to our partners and donors whose unwavering dedication to seeing conservation at the forefront of decision-making and investment across industries and government institutions has propelled us forward despite the numerous challenges we have faced. In our Liberian way, we say thank you plenty!

We take this moment to celebrate the collective accomplishments of the past year, recognizing that none of it would have been possible without the invaluable contributions of our partners, donors, and the communities we serve. Your support, both financial and moral, as well as your expertise and resources, have been instrumental in our shared success.

As we eagerly anticipate the promise of a new year, 2024, amidst the escalating global impact of climate

change, we at SCNL approach the future with excitement, enthusiasm, and optimism. The next chapter of our partnerships holds great promise, and we stand ready to confront the challenges that lie ahead with determination and resolve.

We call upon all our stakeholders—donors, staff, partners, and communities—to join us in scaling up our efforts and embracing a renewed spirit of collaboration as we tackle the climate-related challenges of 2024 together. While the road ahead may seem daunting, we remain confident that through collective action and a shared commitment to conservation and biodiversity, we can overcome any obstacle.

In closing, we express our deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for your unwavering support, dedication, and commitment. Your contributions are invaluable, and we cherish the opportunity to continue this journey together. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year filled with hope, progress, and success.

CHARTING A SUSTAINABLE COURSE

SCNL'S IMPACTFUL ROLE IN COP28 UNVEILED



In the bustling city of Dubai, from November 30 to December 12, 2023, representatives from around the globe convened for the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Among the participating nations was Liberia, committed to addressing climate change through mitigation and adaptation strategies.

The SCNL delegation, led by Michael E. Taire, Program Manager of the SCNL, played a crucial role in the discussions that unfolded at COP28. With the support of partners such as the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and funding from the Rainforest Trust, SCNL aimed to contribute to Liberia's climate change solutions as Liberia leaves a lasting impact on the global stage. One of the focal points of SCNL's engagement was the negotiation on loss and damage, a contentious issue at COPs. Notably, the UAE Presidency announced the operationalization of a dedicated fund and funding arrangements, pledging over \$700 million towards addressing loss and damage in vulnerable countries. This decision, which led to the creation of the Climate Impacts Fund, marked a significant step forward in providing financial assistance to communities grappling with the impacts of climate change.

At COP28, the first Global Stocktake (GST) emphasized the urgency of transitioning away

from fossil fuels, signaling a global commitment to combat climate change. Additionally, parties agreed to a framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation under the Paris Agreement, encouraging efforts through ecosystem-based approaches, nature-based solutions, and climate-resilient food production. Despite positive developments, challenges persisted. No agreements were reached on Article 6.2 and 6.4 (international carbon market) of the Paris Agreement. However, parties did reach a consensus on Article 6.8, pertaining to non-market mechanisms. SCNL, in collaboration with the EPA and the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), co-hosted a high-level side event at the Liberia Pavilion.

Under the title "Leveraging Conservation for Climate Action: Exploring the Benefits and Synergies," the event featured distinguished speakers, including Ambassador Tosi Mpanu Mpanu, Climate Ambassador for the Democratic Republic of Congo, Hon. Harrison Karnwea- Board Chair, Forestry Development Authority, Liberia, Elijah Z. Whapoe- REDD+ Focal Point, Environmental protection Agency of Liberia, Lina Barrera- Senior Vice President for Global Policy & Government Affairs, Conservation International, Melanie Coath- Head of Global Policy, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and Michael E. Taire- Program Manager, Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia.

In attendance were representatives from international conservation organizations and the civil society.

The event highlighted the multifaceted benefits of conservation efforts in mitigating climate change and fostering sustainable development. The side event concludes with a glance at Liberia's efforts to establish a clear source of funding for loss and damage.

Although the proposal for a Glasgow Loss and Damage Facility faced opposition from developed

countries, a Glasgow Dialogue on loss and damage was initiated to pave the way forward. SCNL's active participation at COP28 showcased its commitment to addressing climate change, fostering conservation, and engaging in critical global dialogues.

As the world grapples with the challenges of climate change, SCNL stands as a beacon of determination and collaboration in the pursuit of a sustainable future.

PICTORIALS OF SCNL DELEGATION AND PARTNERS AT COP28



VERAGING CONSERVATION FOR CLIMATE ACTION: EXPLORING THE BENEFITS AND SYNERGIES

08 DEC 2023
4:30 – 6:00 pm. GST
LIBERIA PAVILION BA BLDG 73

Guest Speaker
Amb. Tolé Mpanu Mpanu
AMBASSADOR FOR CLIMATE CHANGE
Democratic Republic of Congo

PANELISTS

Mr. Charles F. GLOBA
SCTY.
FOR THE PRESIDENT

E. Ojoh Whoope
REGIO FOCAL POINT
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES
AGENCY, US

Muhamad S. Taha
PROCURER MANAGER
LIBERIA NATIONAL SOCIETY OF
WOMEN (LNSW)

Hon. Haribon Kanneo
BOARD CHAIR
LIBERIA NATIONAL SOCIETY OF
WOMEN (LNSW)

Yvonne D. Darbar
SUSTAIN
FINANC
CDORES
SECRET OF
CONSERVATION
BARRIO DE

ORGANIZED BY SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE OF LIBERIA

COPIED BY COP28 UAE

REFRESHMENT WILL BE SERVED

SCNL ENHANCES EXPERTISE IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM THROUGH COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY TRAINING



Participants in one of several sessions

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) reached a milestone in capacity building as it participated in a rigorous 16-month training on Sustainable Tourism Management at the Center for PA Management, Colorado State University, USA. Running from December 2022 to March 2023, this comprehensive program was organized in collaboration with the United States Forest Service (USFS), catering to conservation professionals worldwide.

Twenty participants from 13 countries, including Liberia represented by SCNL and the Forestry Development Authority of Liberia (FDA), underwent the seminar. The training covered a spectrum of topics crucial to sustainable ecotourism, including:

- 1 Introduction to Sustainable Ecotourism
- 2 Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion (JEDAI) in sustainable tourism
- 4 System Thinking and Leadership
- 5 Financing Management Skills and Fundraising Mechanisms
- 6 Project Development Skills

In addition to online sessions, participants had the unique opportunity to visit over 10 parks, historical sites, and ranges across the United States.

The visits aimed to provide tangible experiences, enabling participants to observe, interact with park management staff, and gain insights into land management systems. The sites included renowned locations such as Badlands National Park, Black Hills National Forest, Grand Teton National Park, and Yellowstone National Park.

Following the training, SCNL and FDA collaborated to develop a project focusing on Elephant Falls in the Gola forest area, Gbarpolu County. The project aims to conduct at least two visitor management training sessions, involving 6 Rangers and 10 community members. This initiative seeks to apply the knowledge gained during the training to enhance sustainable tourism practices in Liberia.

SCNL's participation in this extensive training program not only strengthens its expertise in sustainable tourism management but also aligns with its commitment to effective conservation practices. This international exposure and collaboration open doors for implementing best practices learned abroad to enhance Liberia's conservation and tourism efforts. As part of the rigorous 16-month Sustainable Tourism Management training at the Center for PA Management, Colorado State University, participants from the Society for the Conservation of Nature

of Liberia (SCNL) had the invaluable opportunity to visit a selection of distinguished historic sites in the United States. This hands-on experience complemented the comprehensive online seminar and provided participants with a firsthand understanding of historical, cultural, and conservation aspects at each location.

Historical sites visited include:

1. Badlands National Park
2. Black Hills National Forest
3. Bridge Teton National Forest
4. Custer State Park
5. Devil's Tower National Monument
6. Fort Laramie Historic Site
7. Grand Teton National Park
8. Little Bighorn National Monument
9. Mount Rushmore National Monument
10. Pine Ridge Reservation
11. Yellowstone National Park



SCNL's James P. Mulbah during a visit of historic sites visited in the USA.



*Comfort Sakui-Tweh
Forestry Development Authority (FDA)*



Evangeline Yantee of the FDA during the Black Hill National Forest.



Participants during one of the visits at the Devil's Tower National Monument, USA.

SCNL JOINS PARTNERS IN BUCHANAN CITY FOR WORKSHOP ON GREEN CLIMATE FUND PROJECT VALIDATION



“ ENHANCING INTEGRATED FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION, STRENGTHENING FOREST RESOURCE GOVERNANCE, BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE, AND INCREASING ECONOMIC AND LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LIBERIA FOREST SECTOR ”

In the bustling port city of Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) collaborated with various partners in a week-long workshop focusing on the Validation of Draft Concept Notes for the Green Climate Fund.

The project, titled “Enhancing Integrated Forest Landscape Restoration, Strengthening Forest Resource Governance, Building Climate Resilience, and Increasing Economic and Livelihood Opportunities in the Liberia Forest Sector,” was



organized by the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).

The initiative addresses the multifaceted impacts of climate change on socioeconomic, ecological, and physical aspects of life in Liberia. The country grapples with challenges in adapting to climate change, exacerbated by inappropriate agricultural practices and over-exploitation of forests.

The project aims to reforest 50,000 hectares of forests and mangroves, restore degraded land, and promote food security and adaptation to climate change. With a total grant amount of US\$70,500,000.00, comprising a US\$35,500,000.00 grant from the Green Climate Fund and US\$35,000,000.00 as co-financing from the Government of Liberia, the project relies on collaboration with national public institutions and affected populations.

The project encompasses five components, each with specific outputs and activities, focusing on institutional strengthening, community livelihoods, forest landscape management, value chains, carbon markets, impact assessment, and coordination.

The project's theory of change integrates technical and socioeconomic paradigms, targeting sustainable land development and diversifying production. It envisions achieving change by encouraging private sector investment in sustainable practices, aligning with national regulatory frameworks.

Aligned with six key criteria, the Green Climate Fund's investment assessment includes impact potential, paradigm shift potential, sustainable development potential, responsiveness to recipient's needs, promotion of country ownership, and efficiency and effectiveness.

This project, consistent with national regulations and environmental standards, signifies a paradigm shift towards sustainable land development and climate-resilient practices.

SCNL AND RSPB COLLABORATE IN INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING WEEK-LONG PROCUREMENT AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING WORKSHOP



A pictorial of a day's section of the Procurement and Financial Management Training workshop

In a strategic move towards institutional fortification, the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), in collaboration with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), orchestrated a comprehensive week-long workshop on Procurement and Financial Management. This initiative aligns with their commitment to operational excellence and program effectiveness.

With a keen focus on institutional strengthening, SCNL engaged a qualified and seasoned Financial Management Specialist. The specialist's mandate encompassed reviewing, training, and developing operational manuals and procedures for financial and procurement management. The goal was to Liberia Forest Financing Strategy and GCF Concept elevate the standard of institutional quality and program implementation.

The workshop unfolded from November 11 to November 16, 2023, marking a dedicated week for honing skills and refining policies.

The Procurement and Financial Management training delved into various crucial topics, including:

- * Introduction to Procurement Management
- * Procurement Cycle
- * Procurement Planning
- * Management Procurement Risks
- * Contract Management
- * Management Conflict of Interest

This initiative is a testament to SCNL's commitment to operational excellence, transparency, and adherence to best practices in financial and procurement management. The collaboration with RSPB underscores the organizations' dedication to continuous improvement and ensuring the highest standards of governance.

As SCNL and RSPB embrace these enhanced policies and procedures, the organizations are poised to navigate future challenges more effectively, reinforcing their ability to drive impactful conservation efforts.

EMPOWERING YOUTH, ENHANCING NATURE

SCNL LAUNCHES ECO-BRIGADE PROGRAM IN VOINJAMA AND ZWEDRU



Pictorials of Ecobrigades during the launch

Under the Livelihood & Employment Creation project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Liberia, the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), in partnership with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), has initiated the Youth Eco-brigade Programme. This flagship initiative aims to incentivize young people in Voinjama and Zwedru to actively engage in environmental preservation while creating sustainable livelihoods.

SCNL, founded in 1986, is Liberia's leading civil society conservation organization and the Liberia partner of BirdLife International. Contracted under the UNDP project, SCNL established the Wologizi and Zulu Eco-brigades following the success of previous initiatives in Piso, Gbehzohn & Snokri.

In August 2023, SCNL conducted a week-long Environmental Stewardship and Small Business Start-Up and Management training for the Eco-Brigades. Facilitated by Johnson G. Koikoi and Yuconjay Noyue Barchue, the training aimed to equip 120 volunteers, aged 18 to 35, with knowledge in team building, leadership, environmental stewardship, and community-based adaptation initiatives.

A one-day intensive Business Start-Up & Management Training workshop was also conducted, focusing on improving basic business management skills. The Eco-brigades expressed appreciation for the facilitators' efforts in enhancing their knowledge and skills. At the conclusion of the training, each of

the 120 Eco-brigade members received a grant of USD\$400.00 to start their businesses. Approximately 95% of these youths are now engaged in profitable ventures such as motorbike transport, soap making, petite shops, used clothes, dry goods, and gasoline sales.

SCNL, in collaboration with stakeholders and local authorities, officially launched the Eco-Brigade program sponsored by UNDP, with working tools and safety gears provided to the Voinjama and Zwedru city councils to ensure the success of the Eco-brigade cleaning campaigns.

SCNL Eco-Brigade project staff raised awareness on local radio stations and published project updates on social media. MOCI/UNDP, through SCNL, successfully trained 180 Eco-brigade members in the Village Savings Loan Program, ensuring the sustainability of the long-established Eco-brigades. Leadership evaluation, constitution development, and business registration were facilitated for the Piso, Gbehzohn & Snokri Eco-Brigades.

The Eco-Brigade program stands as a testament to SCNL's commitment to youth empowerment, environmental conservation, and community development. Through strategic partnerships and initiatives, SCNL continues to make a lasting impact on both nature and livelihoods.

SCNL'S LIBERIA NATURE TALK PROGRAM

ELEVATING CONSERVATION AWARENESS AND EXPERTISE



Pictorials of participants of the Nature Talk program in Voinjama, Lofa County and Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County.

The Liberia Nature Talk Program, a quarterly Biodiversity Conservation awareness initiative sponsored by the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), stands at the forefront of environmental education and sustainability. Designed to engage primary and secondary schools, as well as the general public, the program aims to disseminate knowledge for the sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources. SCNL's broader vision involves empowering the future generation with access to biodiversity and fostering a sense of responsibility in battling environmental challenges.

In 2023, the Environmental Education Unit of the SCNL, led by Johnson G. Koikoi, reached out to 622 students from 15 schools, spanning two cities - Voinjama and Zwedru. The focus was on environmental capacity building for Eco-brigades and Site Support Groups. Students from potential School Nature Clubs of the SCNL, also actively participated, gaining insights through biodiversity conservation awareness and the quarterly Liberia Nature Talk sessions.

Themes covered in 2023 included "Knowing the Status of Protected Animals Species in Liberia" and "Insight on Wetlands and Conservation in Liberia."

The 7th edition featured distinguished speakers, Abednego Gbarway, Wildlife Manager of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), and Dr. Susan Wiper, Director of the Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary. They shared experiences, scientific data, and an overview of successes and challenges faced by the sanctuary, leaving participants astonished about Liberia's wildlife and the imperative to conserve it. In the 8th edition, Mr. Levi Z. Piah, National Ramsar Focal Point of Liberia, emphasized wetlands conservation, discussing the environmental significance and the role



of public education in mitigating environmental risks. The second speaker, Mr. Dickarmien Alvis Deemie, SCNL's Science and Conservation Coordinator, delved into the status of conservation in the Gola Landscape, enlightening students about Liberia's environment and its roles in the fight against climate change and potential for increased domestic resource mobilization through ecotourism.

The SCNL remains committed to environmental education through the Liberia Nature Talk program. The engagement with School Nature Clubs and communities continues to raise conservation awareness and instill a sense of responsibility. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is our main Donor.

EMPOWERING CONSERVATION EXCELLENCE

SCNL'S DICKARMIEM ALVIS DEEMIE ENHANCES EXPERTISE IN
CITIZEN SCIENCE ANALYSIS AND COMMUNICATION OF RESULT



From December 4-7, 2023, Dickarmien Alvis Deemie, SCNL's Science and Conservation Coordinator, participated in a comprehensive training course on Analyzing and Interpreting Citizen Science Data, as well as Communicating Results. The event, organized by the esteemed Tropical Biology Association, took place in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Tropical Biology Association stands as a cornerstone institution dedicated to safeguarding biodiversity. Its mission revolves around cultivating expertise among conservationists, enabling them to manage natural resources sustainably. At the heart of their approach is a commitment to placing people at the forefront of conservation, equipping them with the necessary skills and support to be effective on the ground.

The training equipped participants with essential skills, focusing on:

- * **Planning for the impact of citizens science project**
- * **Formulating precise questions from citizens science data**

- * **Analyzing citizen science data and interpreting results**
- * **Effectively communicating citizen science findings**

Deemie's attendance at this training signifies SCNL's dedication to staying at the forefront of conservation methodologies. Such initiatives not only contribute to the personal and professional development of individuals but also reinforces SCNL's commitment to advancing biodiversity conservation efforts.



Dickarmien Alvis Deemie being certificated at the end of training, Nairobi, Kenya.

SCNL PARTICIPATES IN THE AFRICA CLIMATE SUMMIT / AFRICA CLIMATE WEEK



The first-inaugural Africa Climate Summit was held in parallel with Africa Climate Week from the 4th-6th September, 2023, at the Kenyatta International Convention Center (KICC) in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme “Driving Green Growth and Climate Finance Solutions for Africa and the World.” The summit brought together World Leaders from across the continent and beyond, development partners, international organizations, United Nations Agencies, the private sector, academia, indigenous peoples, and civil society to craft innovative solutions and discuss the continent’s interest in the global climate change fight. The summit consisted of several plenaries and side-events encompassing several topics from the blue, green, and circular economies. The Sustainable Financing Coordinator from the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), Miss Sylvia Dorbor, represented the institution in Nairobi.

The summit, chaired by the head of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) and President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Williams Ruto, mobilized approximately USD 23 Billion in investments from the public and private sectors, multilateral development banks and philanthropists. In his opening statement, Hon. Ruto mentioned that the summit was not a place to catalogue grievances but scrutinize ideas and unlock solutions.

As an outcome from the summit, African leaders adopted the Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change signed by 19 African Head of States. The Declaration will serve as the basis of the continent’s common interests and goals in the global climate change process towards COP28 and beyond. It also outlines

a number of commitments to progressing towards net zero and meeting international climate goals on finance and adaptation. As part of conservation efforts, African leaders recognized the important roles of forests in Africa and committed to ‘integrate climate, biodiversity and ocean agendas into national plans and processes in order to ensure their contribution to sustainable development, livelihoods and sustainability objectives, and to increase the resilience of local communities, coastal areas and national economies.’

The Declaration also includes calls to reform the multilateral financial system and global financial architecture for world leaders to rally behind a global carbon taxation regime and for the establishment of a new financing architecture that is responsive to Africa’s needs, including debt restructuring and relief, as well as establishment of a new Global Climate Finance Charter. They also called for the operationalization of the Loss and Damage funds and funding arrangements established at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. Going forward, the Africa Climate summit will be held as a biennial event convened by the African Union to set the continent’s vision, taking into account emerging development and climate issues.

Following the summit, Miss Dorbor visited the Birdlife International-Africa office in Nairobi on September 11, 2023. During her visit, she attended the Birdlife Africa Partnership meeting with colleagues from Kenya, Tanzania and Sao Tomé. Below is Miss Dorbor, along with the Regional Director of Birdlife International-Africa, Dr. Kariuki Nding’ang’a.

EMPOWERING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

TRAIL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT IN GOLA NATIONAL PARK
AND LAKE PISO MULTIPURPOSE RESERVE



In collaboration with the Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP), the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), undertook a significant trail construction initiative in the Gola National Park and Lake Piso Multipurpose Reserve. Funded by the World Bank, this project, implemented through a subcontract with Solimar International, aims to enhance ecotourism, foster biodiversity conservation, and contribute to the well-being of local communities. The World Bank, through the Liberia Forest Sector Project, allocated \$33,944 USD for the development of the Elephant Falls area within the Gola National Park and the Warkolor forest which is part of the Lake Piso Multipurpose Reserve. SCNL, recognized

for its longstanding commitment to conservation, was entrusted with the trail construction project, reflecting its visibility and expertise in the landscape. The contractual agreement between Solimar and SCNL encompassed key activities such as flagging trail networks, community engagement, staff training, and the construction of specific hiking trails. Communities in proximity to the project areas (Camp Israel and Lake Piso MUR) were actively engaged through informative sessions, involving discussions on the project's impact, benefits, and potential contributions to biodiversity conservation and livelihoods of local communities.



A pictorial of signage at the Lake Piso Trail, Grand Cape Mount County.

Thirty-six individuals, including both skilled and unskilled workers, were selected from the local communities to participate in corridor clearing and technical activities. This inclusive approach aimed to involve the community in the project's execution. A comprehensive one-day training session was conducted on June 17, 2023, involving fifty members of the clearing crew and seventeen technical crew members. The training covered practical aspects of trail construction, including legal environmental regulations, measurement techniques, and the construction of bridges and stairways. The trail construction in the Gola National Park, comprising four main loops, is now 95% complete. The trails have been interconnected, bridges and stairs constructed, and gravel laid in wet areas. Similarly, the trail construction in Lake Piso MUR is at 95% completion, with all loops connected, bridges and stairs in place, and gravel spread across wet regions. The Elephant Falls viewing deck is fully completed in the Gola National Park, while the brushing phase of the Elephant Falls road project is completed, while bridge construction is underway.



Eco-guards listened attentively during a session on trail construction, Lake Piso, Grand Cape Mount County.



A pictorial of a trail under construction.

Despite a 90% completion of signage preparation, technical challenges and artistic considerations have slightly delayed the process. A total of fifty-three directional sign pieces have been crafted for installation. Trail-heads for the Gola National Park and the Lake Piso MUR are under production and expected to be planted by July 14, 2023.

The trail construction project not only contributes to sustainable tourism and biodiversity conservation but also emphasizes community engagement

and empowerment. The strides made in the Gola National Park and the Lake Piso MUR, tell the SCNL story in ecotourism, a commitment to responsible ecotourism, ensuring a harmonious balance between environmental preservation and community well-being.

FOSTERING EQUALITY

INSIGHTS FROM GENDER MAINSTREAMING TRAINING
IN NAIROBI, KENYA



A pictorial of Mrs. Hawa Biddle-Dugbeh, Gender and Safeguard Officer, SCNL, at the Gender Mainstreaming training, Nairobi, Kenya.

SCNL's Gender and Safeguard Officer, attended transformative five-day training on Gender Mainstreaming and related topics, held in Nairobi, Kenya, from September 18-22, 2023, conducted by the renowned Perk Group Africa. The intensive course delved into the critical concept of Gender Mainstreaming, emphasizing the importance of ensuring equal participation, rights, and influence for women alongside men. The sessions were carefully designed to empower participants with the tools and knowledge necessary for fostering gender equality. Among the enthusiastic participants was our esteemed Gender and Safeguarding Officer, Ms. Hawa Biddle-Dugbeh. This training attracted professionals from the SCNL and professionals from diverse backgrounds in East and West Africa.

The sessions proved to be not only enlightening but also highly interactive. Attendees had the opportunity to actively engage, share experiences, and contribute to knowledge sharing.



A pictorial of Mrs. Hawa Biddle-Dugbeh being awarded certificate at the end of Gender Mainstreaming training, Nairobi, Kenya.

The content was thought-provoking, ensuring that every participant left with a deeper understanding of Gender Mainstreaming and its real-world applications, which is crucial for ensuring that women have equal voice and influence in decisions affecting their lives.

This training has equipped our staff with valuable insights to champion gender equality within our organization and beyond. We extend our gratitude to the Perk Group Africa for their expertise and guidance throughout the course.



A session of participants at the Gender Mainstreaming training, Nairobi, Kenya.

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND COMMUNITIES

MARKAFIE BILITY'S JOURNEY WITH SCNL'S INNOVATIVE LOAN SCHEME



A pictorial of Markafie Bility at her shop, Kungbor, Gbarpolu County.

In pursuit of fostering financial inclusion and empowerment, the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) is making a tangible difference in the lives of individuals, especially women, through its innovative Loan scheme. Markafie Bility, a proud member of the 106-strong Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) network spanning Gbarpolu and Lofa Counties, exemplifies the transformative impact of the SCNL Loan scheme. Markafie is an integral part of the 30-member Female VSLA Group in Kungbor, Gbarpolu County, where she received specialized training on establishing VSLA groups and developing alternative livelihoods.

This training equips community members with the skills needed to oversee a sustainable community loan scheme. VSLA operates as a structured system that encourages saving, borrowing, and lending money generated from village contributions. The SCNL's training initiatives, such as the "Selecting, Planning and Management of Income Generating

Activities," cater to semi-literate farmer group members, systematically enhancing their savings within VSLAs.

Markafie's success story showcases the practical application of VSLA benefits. With the loan obtained from the VSLA, she expanded her petty trading business in the community. The profits generated not only supported her business aspirations but also contributed to the education of her eight children, all of whom are currently enrolled in school, thanks to the VSLA program the SCNL implemented. Despite Markafie concerns about the adequacy of the loan for her business ambitions, she remains hopeful. She expresses a desire for continued support from SCNL and other partners, emphasizing the potential for significant results with additional startup capital. Her story illustrates the tangible impact of the SCNL Loan scheme in driving economic growth and resilience within small forest-edge communities.

SCNL SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE INITIATIVE

TRANSFORMING SMALLHOLDER COCOA FARMING THROUGH INNOVATIVE REVOLVING



Pictorials of cocoa beans from the cooperatives

In conjunction with our steadfast commitment to sustainable agriculture, the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) has embarked on a journey to transform smallholder cocoa farming through a revolving fund that facilitates the purchase of forest-friendly cocoa from the Sebe Hill and Guma Mende Cooperatives, setting the stage for a robust cocoa business enterprise and connecting smallholder farmers to markets.

During the initial phase of the project, SCNL took the reins in managing the fund, with strategic plans to enhance cooperative capacity as additional investments are injected into the cocoa business.

Under the agreement, SCNL will play a pivotal role in capital disbursement, cocoa bean evacuation, arrangements for drying and sorting, identification of buyers, negotiation of prices, and the overall financial





management of the program. Income generated will be use as a revolving fund for future seasons.

The Sebe Hill Cooperative, situated in Massabolahun, Lofa County, and the Guma Mende Cooperative in Vahun, Lofa County, were the focal points of SCNL's efforts. Extensive awareness campaigns and farm-to-farm sensitization were conducted by SCNL's Cocoa team, reaching every cocoa farmer in the cooperatives. The goal is to educate farmers on optimal harvesting and drying practices.

In October, a centralized drying process took place, utilizing solar dryers provided by the P4F Project. Notably, the RSPB's contribution of GBP 10,000 in October 2023 played a crucial role in facilitating the purchase of 5 metric tons of cocoa beans from Sebe Hill and Guma Mende Cooperatives. These funds were received on December 2, 2023.





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