



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

STATEMENT

by

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Minister of Water Resources

At the

UNITED NATIONS 2023 WATER CONFERENCE

Held at the General Assembly Hall

on

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Mr. Chairperson
The President of the General Assembly,
Colleague Ministers,
Excellences,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

1. Your excellencies, I bring you warm greetings from the President HE Retired Brig. Julius Maada Bio, his government, and the People of Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone align itself with the statement delivered by Cuba on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. The Government of Sierra Leone under the astute leadership of His Excellency the President Julius Maada Bio, is committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 6 through the Urban WASH Road Map and a National Rural Water and Sanitation Programme consistent with **the Government's National Medium Term Development Plan**. Accordingly, the condition of the water supply and sanitation infrastructure in the capital was assessed culminating in the development of a Master Plan and Priority Investment Studies, highlighting the need for the construction of 3 new dams for domestic water supply in Freetown within the next 5 years with the view to meeting the water supply demand of the population.

Key Achievements

3. Using the plans indicated earlier, the following are being achieved:
 - The bulk water supply infrastructure in Freetown, has been largely rehabilitated with help from development partners. This has created some level of resilience and reliability in the system. Rehabilitation of critical infrastructure is ongoing;
 - Government has completed water infrastructure projects in three Regional Headquarter cities. Water Supply facilities are being constructed in 7 District Headquarter Towns and a peri-urban community. Construction for 4 communities is soon to start;

- In addition, 22 gravity water supply systems, 150 solar powered boreholes have been completed for rural communities nationwide. Further 200 boreholes are planned for this year.
4. Most of these activities will not be sustainable if the environmental degradation that adversely affects the water catchment areas remains unchecked. The Government of Sierra Leone is determined to prevent further deforestation of the water catchment areas.
 5. Therefore, His Excellency the President has constituted an Inter-ministerial Task Force, chaired by the Chief Minister and comprising 9 Cabinet Ministers, for Protection of the Water Catchment areas. The Task Force amongst other key activities, established the Water Fund (the first in West Africa) as a priority area of collaboration and to facilitate investments in nature-based solutions for the protection and restoration of the Western Area Peninsular Forest Reserve, as a means to address the growing water security challenges facing Freetown and its environs.

Access to Financing

6. Developing countries like Sierra Leone, will not easily mobilize the necessary financing to implement the infrastructure projects it needs to achieve SDG-6. We are therefore calling on the UN to engage the Developed Countries and donor partners to consider the following:
 - i. increase grants and providing interest free loans for water and sanitation projects;
 - ii. cancellation of debts for Least Developed Countries and the savings used to finance water and sanitation projects;
 - iii. review of Non-Concessional loans schemes and the imposition of debt ceiling on developing countries in order to address restrictions on the type of loans available for water and sanitation projects.

7. In conclusion, your excellencies, trade imbalance between the developed and developing nations has long been a real cause for concern. We therefore call on the UN and development partners to address this anomaly without any further delay.