



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

336 East 45th Street, New York NY 10017

STATEMENT

by

H.E. DR. MOHAMED GIBRIL SESAY
Minister of State I
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation

at the

United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation
of Sustainable Development Goal 14

New York, Wednesday - 7th June, 2017

Check Against Delivery

Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring you warm greetings from the People of Sierra Leone and the President of our Republic, His Excellency, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma.

I thank the Co-Presidents of this conference, Sweden and Fiji, the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly for convening this all important event.

Sierra Leone welcomes the voluntary commitments made so far, and urge the adoption of the Call to Action at this conference, to further the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. We endorse calls for treating the Ocean with our respect, our care and our love; and we reaffirm the centrality of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

We also call for the recognition, in this conference, of issues of piracy and transnational crime and ocean security in relation to narcotic trafficking through the Ocean which constitute major new growing threats for our region of the world.

Excellencies,

As a country with an Atlantic Ocean coastline measuring 210 Nm, the Ocean hosts a huge proportion of our natural resources, thus the sustainable economic exploitation, utilization and conservation of our Ocean resources remain critical to the development aspiration of Sierra Leone.

Issues of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing, marine pollution, coastal erosions, acidification of the ocean, sea level rise as a result of climate change and climate change denial from significant leadership communities, present significant risks to the marine environment. Considering the 2030 timeframe to implement SDG 14, the risks of all these factors will increase with several of the factors moving from 'significant' to 'high' risk with inaction. We all know, the elephant in this room is the withdrawal of leadership in these discussions by friends with the resources and expertise and networks to support the implementation of our global programs. In this regard, we stress the importance of implementing the Paris Climate Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We call on friends who may want to put themselves in an axis of deniers to re-engage the world with the proof of their expertise, leadership and concern. We applaud all actors at

international, national and sub-national levels who are standing firm for the environment and our oceans. These actors abound in every nation, and we endorse calls for the strengthening of networks of these concerned actors. The causes of the degradation of our oceans are not only restricted to the actions of national governments, they also come from the cumulative actions of neighbors, workplaces, corporations, municipal councils, and other sub-national bodies. Engagements at these levels are as important as engagements at the national state levels. We must not lose sight of this, and we must applaud efforts and commitments at these levels. Even Nations that are withdrawing from our common agreements have significant players at these levels to support the achievements of our global goals. I repeat we must not lose sight of this.

The Government of Sierra Leone, has embarked on several efforts aimed at implementing SDG 14:

SDG 14 has been aligned with Pillar II of the national development programme, the Agenda for Prosperity. A4P), The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources is building the capacity to fight IUU. Also legal instruments have been updated to make better provisions for the sustainable management, development and conservation of the fisheries and marine resources of the country; just last week we have ratified the Port States Measures Agreement as a means to combat IUU.

Also, we have conducted assessment of the State of the Marine environment in 2015; developed integrated coastal zone management plan in 2016; and designated four marine protected areas. We are equally committed to adopting and ratifying four new additional protocols within the framework of the Abidjan Convention. These include the protocol concerning cooperation in the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment from Land-Based Sources and Activities in the Western, Central and Southern African Region (LBSA); the additional protocol to the Abidjan Convention on environmental norms and standards for offshore oil and gas activities; the additional protocol to the Abidjan convention on sustainable mangrove management; and Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

We are prioritizing interagency collaboration and Joint Maritime Operation with a view to conforming with Article 94 (1) and (2) of UNCLOS which provide that every state shall effectively ensure jurisdiction and control over ships flying its flag.

Sierra Leone is also implementing certification measures to enhance traceability of fish and fish products and to ensure that all fish traded in Sierra Leone and internationally are not caught by IUU fishing vessels.

Sierra Leone is a party to the International Convention for Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation 1990 (OPRC 90), the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage 1992 (CLC 92), the International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage 1992, (FUND 92). As an obligation to preserve and protect coastal and marine environments from the risk of oil spills from vessels, terminals, ports and off shore platforms and vessels, we have developed the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan for Sierra Leone, to provide for safe, timely, effective and coordinated response to an oil spill affecting Sierra Leone's marine and coastal environment.

Excellencies,

Sierra Leone is a small, developing state. In view of this we support the promotion and strengthening of sustainable ocean based economies which build on sustainable fisheries, tourism, maritime transportation and renewable energies as a means to achieving the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Our ongoing progress has been met with many challenges ranging from domestic revenue shortfalls, unpredictable external assistance; limited expertise and capacity to handle the local consequences of these global phenomena, and credible data shows that Sierra Leone one of the countries most vulnerable to the challenges of climate change.

We strongly believe that sustained international commitment and enhanced partnerships, stepping up fiscal investment and technology transfer to the least developed states would help us meet these challenges. We believe that no environmental degradation is local, no pollution is local, no waste dumping is local in the medium to long term. In view of this, we stress the importance of the full and timely implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and other similar action plans, and we emphasize the need to enhance scientific knowledge and research, scale up capacity building at all levels and facilitate transfer of technology.

I thank you for your kind attention.