

# **Liberia's Integration of SDGs and Climate Action**

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**Presented By:**

**Hon. J. Wellington Barchue, I, Assistant Minister for  
Development Planning &**

**Mr. Foday Couch Bayoh, Jr., Senior Policy Advisor/Climate  
Change & Climate Finance Focal Point  
Ministry of Finance & Development Planning, Liberia**



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# Introduction

## ■ Overview of Liberia's Commitment to the 2030 Agenda and Climate Action

- Liberia has demonstrated a strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement by integrating climate action and SDGs into national policies.
- The country recognizes the urgent need to address climate change impacts and align development processes with global sustainability goals.

## ■ Significance of Integrating SDGs and Climate Strategies in National Development

- Integration ensures that climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts align with Liberia's broader development goals, including poverty reduction, economic growth, and social equity.
- By embedding climate action into the National Development Plan, Liberia strives to create a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future for its citizens.
- Addressing climate change is crucial to build a resilient, sustainable, and inclusive future. By integrating climate considerations into development strategies, Liberia can protect its natural resources, enhance the well-being of its citizens, and foster economic growth while minimizing the impacts of climate change. This approach not only addresses immediate challenges but also contributes to long-term development goals and enhances the overall resilience of the nation against climate-related threats.

## ► **National Climate Change Policy and Response Strategy (2018)**

- This policy provides a strategic framework to guide Liberia's response to climate change, focusing on adaptation and mitigation across sectors like agriculture, energy, and forestry.
- It highlights the need to integrate climate change considerations into development planning and governance structures.

## ► **National Adaptation Plan (2020-2030)**

- The NAP identifies the most vulnerable sectors and outlines a roadmap for building climate resilience over the medium and long term.
- It is instrumental in guiding investments in climate adaptation and provides a clear mechanism for aligning adaptation actions with national development priorities.



## Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

### ► **Revised NDC (2021)**

- Liberia's updated NDC commits to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 64% below business-as-usual levels by 2030, focusing on key sectors like agriculture, forests, energy, and coastal zones.
- The NDC is aligned with SDG targets, ensuring that climate mitigation efforts also contribute to broader development objectives such as poverty eradication (SDG 1), affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), and life on land (SDG 15).

### ► **NDC Stocktake and Launch of NDC 3.0 (2025)**

- The upcoming NDC stocktake will assess Liberia's progress and update commitments in line with the global climate agenda.
- Liberia plans to further enhance the integration of SDGs with its climate strategies in the next phase of its NDC.

# Institutional Arrangements

## ► Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- The EPA serves as Liberia's national regulatory body for environmental management, ensuring the implementation of climate policies and strategies.
- The EPA is also the country's focal point for the UNFCCC, playing a crucial role in coordinating climate action.

## ► National Climate Change Steering Committee (NCCSC)

- The NCCSC, chaired by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning, oversees the implementation of Liberia's climate policies.
- It ensures that climate actions are well-coordinated across sectors and that they align with Liberia's development agenda.

## ► Climate Integration and Financing Office (CIFO), MFDP

- On November 25, 2024, the GoL through the MFDP launched the Climate Integration and Financing office (CIFO).
- The vision is to establish a robust, integrated framework that drives climate resilience and sustainability by embedding climate change considerations into Liberia's national planning, budgeting, and resource mobilization process.
- Its core objectives is to ensure that climate consideration is mainstreamed into national planning and budgeting, while also spearheading resource mobilization efforts to fund climate-resilient projects.
- It endeavors to foster collaboration across MACs and DPs. Collaborating MACs include the MFDP, EPA, FDA, GCSP, MPW, NDMA, LLA, NBC, MoA, LISGIS, MoFA, and MoH. Other entity include the UL.
- From the angle of Development Partners, the World Bank, AfDB, EU, CI, NDC Partnership, UNDP, and **USAID** provide critical support.

# Integration of SDGs and Climate Action

## ➤ Alignment with National Development Plans

- Liberia's National Development Plan, dubbed, the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID) incorporates climate change considerations, ensuring that national policies are both climate-resilient and sustainable.
  - The ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID) is Liberia's fourth post-conflict medium-term National Development Plan (NDP) (2025- 2029), aimed at contributing to Liberia's transition to a lower middle-income country.
  - The AAID is strategically aligned with Liberia's National Vision 2030 and several international, continental and regional development frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Africa Agenda 2063, ECOWAS Vision 2050 and the Doha Program of Action (DPoA).
  - It aligns 83 percent with the SDGs, features 52 programs and 375 interventions. Primarily, 45 interventions of the AAID are aligned with SDG 8 (decent jobs and social protection), 43 interventions are aligned with SDG 4 (quality education) and 39 interventions are aligned with SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).
  - Of the six SDG transitions, education, digital connectivity, jobs and social protection provide the greatest opportunity for accelerating the attainment of the SDGs. The plan amalgamates economic, environmental, and social strategies to address current challenges and ensure resilient development.



# Integration of SDGs and Climate Action

## ► Alignment with National Development Plans Cont'd





- **Vision 2030** outlines a path for economic growth while prioritizing environmental sustainability, ensuring a balance between development and climate action.
- **Sectoral Strategies**
  - In the sectors of **energy**, **transport**, and **waste management**, Liberia has developed policies that directly address climate mitigation and adaptation while contributing to SDG targets.
  - The integration of climate action in these sectors is aimed at reducing emissions, improving resource efficiency, and enhancing resilience to climate impacts.





# NDP Alignment to Global, Continental and Regional Commitments

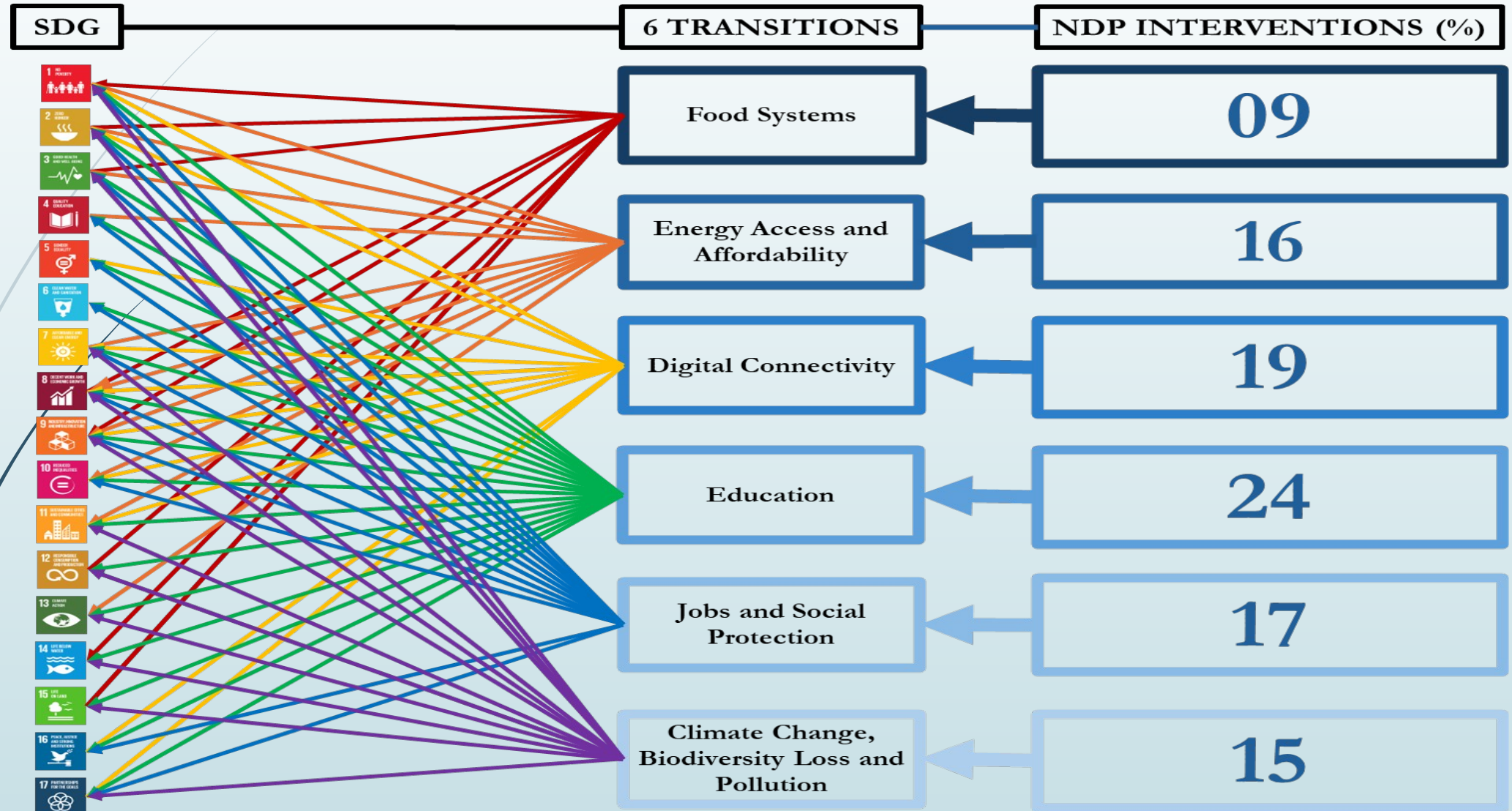
- The NDP is aligned with international commitments, especially the SDGs, Africa Union's Agenda 2063, ECOWAS Vision 2050, and the DoPA.

Organization	Description
	The alignment of the NDP with the UN SDG and its Six transitions framework is essential for ensuring that Liberia's development trajectory is sustainable, inclusive, and globally connected. The Six transitions are an organizing framework to spotlight investment pathways for Liberia to accelerate the achievement of SDG commitments in the last six years of Agenda 2030. They offer a roadmap that can help Liberia focus on key areas that drive long-term growth and human well-being. The transitions span various sectors critical to holistic development and aim to foster equity, sustainability, and resilience.
 AFRICAN UNION	Aligning the NDP with Africa's Agenda 2063 is crucial for ensuring that Liberia's long-term development goals are consistent with the continent's broader aspirations for inclusive and sustainable growth. Agenda 2063 is the African Union's blueprint for transforming Africa into a global powerhouse of the future, and aligning national development strategies with this vision ensures coherence, solidarity, and shared progress across the continent.
ECOWA 	The ECOWAS Vision 2050 is crucial for ensuring that Liberia's national development strategy is integrated with regional objectives, fostering economic growth, peace, and sustainability within the West African subregion. By aligning its NDP with ECOWAS Vision 2050, Liberia can maximize the benefits of regional cooperation and advance its national goals in a way that is consistent with broader West African priorities.
Doha Program of Action 	The Doha Program of Action (DPoA) for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) 2022-2031 is crucial for ensuring that Liberia maximizes its development potential while addressing the specific challenges it faces as an LDC. The DPoA outlines a comprehensive framework to support LDCs in achieving structural transformation, sustainable development, and integration into the global economy. Liberia's alignment with the DPoA ensures that its national development goals are aligned with international efforts to uplift the most vulnerable economies.

# NDP Alignment to Global, Continental and Regional Commitments Cont'd

- In the specific case of the SDGs, the NDP programs and interventions have been aligned with the SDGs at 83 percent level.
- The Plan has 52 programs and 375 development interventions of which most of them (45) are directly aligned with SDG 8 of decent work and economic growth.
- Following in second and third positions are SDGs 4 (Quality Education) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) with 43 and 39 interventions respectively.
- This concentration of interventions in SDGs 8 and 16 is confirmed by the UNDP SDG Push diagnostics that showed the above SDGs to be the most fundamental ones for Liberia.
- Looked at closely, these three top-ranking SDGs bring out the aspirations of the Liberian people and these are means to sustain livelihoods (employment), human capital development and sustainable institutions which can foster inclusion, peace, stability and prosperity.
- The NDP has further incorporated the six SDG transitions with the aim to create holistic and integrated synergies, ensuring that interventions are sustainable, inclusive, and resilient to future challenges.
- This approach fosters a comprehensive understanding of the interconnections between environmental sustainability, economic growth, and social equity.
- Education is the highest ranked of the six transitions constituting 24 percent of the total interventions followed by digital connectivity, at 19 percent and closely followed by the transition on jobs and social protection with 17 percent of the total SDG – aligned interventions.
- Further, Energy access and affordability transition has 16 percent, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution have 15 percent and lastly food systems entail 9 percent of the interventions (Figure 33).
- The implication of placing education and digital connectivity high up based on the transitions approach is that investing in the two development areas provides the most feasible pathway for accelerated SDGs attainment in the remaining period and overall progress.

# NDP-SDG ALIGNED INTERVENTIONS





# The 2022 VNR Process

- Liberia officially launched the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2016 and conducted its first VNR in 2020;
- In 2018, Liberia aligned its Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) with the SDGs;
- This is Liberia's second VNR. Unlike the first VNR, the 2022 review benefited from evidence-based reporting, early planning, and better stakeholders' engagement;
- The review was further informed by a readiness assessment and the development of a VNR implementation framework;
- The 2022 VNR focused on 11 priority SDGs as follows:
  - SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals).



# The 2022 VNR Process – Best Practices and Lessons Learned

## ■ Best practices

- In March 2022, the Government of Liberia held the Liberia 2022 Action Dialogue with development partners, CSOs, and the private sector to discuss issues on:
  - Strengthening development coordination;
  - Increasing alignment;
  - Improving results; and
  - Promoting mutual accountability.

## ■ Lessons Learned

- Cooperation and partnerships with development partners, civil society, and the private sector remain vital for accelerating national development and the implementation of the SDGs;
- Increasing capacity for domestic resource mobilization is essential to the protection of the economy against external shocks;
- Improving the national data ecosystem is paramount to reporting on national development and the SDGs;
- It is crucial to the success of the VNR to start early with the requisite financial resources so that data collection, analysis and reporting can be concluded in time.





# Achievements and Progress

## ► Policy Formulation

- The government has successfully developed and implemented policies to address both climate change and sustainable development, with a focus on integration into national development strategies.

## ► Institutional Strengthening

- Significant capacity-building efforts have been made within the EPA and other key institutions to ensure effective climate governance and policy implementation.

## ► Sectoral Initiatives

- Key sectoral projects in agriculture, forestry, and energy have contributed to Liberia's progress in meeting NDC commitments, particularly through improved land-use management, forest conservation, and renewable energy deployment.



# Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Despite these encouraging trends, Liberia faces structural challenges due mainly to past conflicts, corruption, and mismanagement.
  - The overall progress towards attainment of the desired outcomes for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is less than satisfactory.
  - Only 20.3 percent of SDGs indicators are on track as of 2023.
  - Additionally, Liberia's development agendas are challenged by the country's ineffectiveness in programming, planning, developing, and utilizing human capital with the requisite tools to diversify and expand development outcomes.
- Introducing digital technologies to shift governance behavior, enabling the private sector to drive local production to achieve socio-economic progress goes a long way in addressing the human capital deficit challenge.



# Challenges and Lessons Learned

## ► Financial Constraints

- Limited access to financing and resources has been a significant barrier to the full implementation of Liberia's climate action plans. This underscores the importance of climate finance and international partnerships.

## ► Technical Capacity Gaps

- A shortage of skilled professionals in climate change adaptation and mitigation, particularly in local governments and community-based organizations, hinders more widespread action.

## ► Institutional Coordination

- Ensuring effective coordination between ministries, local governments, and other stakeholders has proven challenging. However, efforts are underway to improve inter-agency collaboration and information sharing.

## ► Weak M&E System

- Weak monitoring, evaluation, and reporting system in the public sector.





# Future Directions

## ► NDC 3.0 Implementation

- Liberia's NDC 3.0 will outline further steps for achieving enhanced climate resilience, with an emphasis on increased capacity building and policy integration across all levels of government.

## ► Strengthening Synergies

- Liberia aims to deepen synergies between climate action and SDGs by embedding climate goals into all sectors of its national development planning, promoting a holistic approach.

## ► Stakeholder Engagement

- The government plans to intensify stakeholder engagement, ensuring the inclusion of marginalized communities, the private sector, and civil society in the decision-making processes, to ensure no one is left behind in the transition.

## ► Climate Change

- Promoting investment in infrastructure that is resilient to climate risks, particularly in agriculture and coastal communities and encouraging climate-smart agricultural practices to boost productivity while reducing environmental impact.
- Prioritize investments in climate-resilient infrastructure and adaptive measures that address gendered impacts of climate change, particularly for communities reliant on local ecosystems and natural resources.



# Future Directions

## ► Over-Reliance on Cars

- Liberia overly relies on vehicles, which has serious implications for congestion, safety, health, and the environment. This trend is contributing to climate change and is evident in various parts of the country, particularly in urban centers. To address these challenges, Liberia urgently requires:
- Mass transit solutions: Developing mass transit solutions is critical to reducing congestion and providing an alternative to private car use. This could include bus rapid transit systems or other forms of public transportation that are efficient, affordable, and accessible to all citizens; and
- Integrated land use and transport planning: An integrated approach to land use and transport planning is essential, especially in urban areas. By coordinating transportation development with urban planning, Liberia can create environments that support public transport and reduce dependence on personal vehicles, ultimately leading to a more sustainable urban transport system.

## ► Climate Change Risks

- Infrastructure that can withstand climate shocks (e.g., floods, rising sea levels) will be developed and an early warning systems and community-based disaster preparedness will be implemented.



# Future Directions

- Scale up the implementation of the country's domestic resource mobilization strategy;
- Increase support for monitoring and evaluation, and the national statistical system;
- Scale up the implementation of the recommendations from the PAPD Mid-term review and recalibration;
- Strengthen collaboration with the civil society; and
- Increase participation at the county level for the implementation of the SDGs and VNR.
- **Key targets by 2029:**
  - Reduce the national deforestation rate by 50%
  - Restore at least 10,000 ha of degraded forestlands including coastal wetlands and mangrove ecosystems
  - Catalogue 100% of water catchments in forest areas
  - Increase urban canopy cover in 5 cities (Paynesville, Monrovia, Buchanan, Gbarnga and Gompa) to 50%
  - Strengthen and enforce forest regulations
  - Plant 2,000,000 trees along major roads in six counties
  - Increase the sustainable production of value-added wood products by 20%



# Responses to Guiding Questions

## 1. How do Liberia's national planning instruments and mechanisms facilitate NDC implementation?

- Liberia's national planning instruments, including the National Climate Change Policy, the National Adaptation Plan, and the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID), are central to the implementation of the NDC. They provide the necessary framework and coordination mechanisms for climate action, ensuring that climate mitigation and adaptation are integrated into national development processes.
- The National Climate Change Steering Committee (NCCSC) ensures coordination and alignment between climate policies and broader development objectives, while the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) leads the technical implementation of climate-related policies.

## 2. In what ways do these instruments and NDCs promote SDG localization, ensuring a just transition and inclusivity?

- Liberia's NDC and national development plans prioritize both climate resilience and sustainable development, ensuring that local communities are empowered to participate in climate action, particularly in vulnerable areas such as agriculture and forestry.
- By embedding SDG localization into national policies, Liberia ensures that climate actions do not exacerbate inequalities but instead create inclusive opportunities for growth. For example, Liberia's emphasis on sustainable agriculture aligns with SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) while fostering climate resilience.
- The country also aims to promote a just transition, which is reflected in its climate policies that consider the needs of vulnerable populations, ensuring they benefit from the green economy and that no one is left behind.



# Conclusion

- **Reaffirmation of Liberia's Dedication to Sustainable Development and Climate Resilience**
  - Liberia is committed to building a climate-resilient and sustainable future that aligns with both its national development goals and the global climate agenda.
- **Call for Continued Collaboration and Support from International Partners**
  - Liberia seeks continued support from international partners to ensure the successful implementation of its climate action plans and SDGs, particularly through technical assistance and financing.



**THANKS FOR LISTENING**