



# **PROGRESS AND STATE OF WASTE MANAGEMENT IN LIBERIA**



**PRESENTED BY: MARGARET M. BEYSLOW**  
**ASSISTANT MANAGER/ WASTE AND REMEDIATION UNIT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND RADIATION SAFETY**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY OF LIBERIA**

# INTRODUCTION

Liberia is a small west African country bordered by Ivory Coast, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and the Atlantic Ocean. The 2022 LISGIS population and census reported the population of 5,250,187, with Monrovia which is the Capital of Liberia having the highest population of 1,920,965. It is the economic and political hub of Liberia, thereby attracting people seeking opportunities and services. This high population has contributed to the increase of waste in and around the city.



# OVERVIEW OF WASTE MANAGEMENT

- The present Management of solid waste in Monrovia is unsatisfactory, posing serious hazards in most parts of the country. The waste generated in Monrovia is far more than the capacity to clean up, leaving piles of wastes for days or weeks. Consequently, inhabitants have resorted to burning of wastes, dumping solid wastes in water bodies, and wetlands, drainages and leading to clogged drainages and resulting to flooding in most communities during the rainy season.
- There are also issues of internal and external illegal dumping of waste in Liberia. Up until now, the fate of ship waste remains unknown, as there is no Port Reception Facility for offload of ship waste generated during voyages.



# WASTE GENERATION RATE

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According to the World Bank, Liberia generates approximately 1.5 million kilograms of solid waste daily, with a waste generation rate of 0.44 kg per capita per day. Alarming, about 84.4% of this waste is inadequately managed, placing Liberia among the countries with the worst solid waste management practices in Sub-Saharan Africa.

A study by Paco revealed that 64% of solid waste is illegally dumped in non-designated areas, contributing to poor storm water drainage and flooding in urban centers. Additionally, improper waste disposal is the fifth-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the country.

# KEY STAKEHOLDERS

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- Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia has regulatory jurisdiction of the waste sector under the environmental protection and management laws
- Monrovia City Corporation which is responsible for managing the affairs of the city, including waste management among others
- Paynesville City Corporation, responsible for managing the affairs of the city, including waste management as well
- Waste service providers
- Community Based Enterprises/Organizations(CBEs/CBOs)
- Small, Medium Enterprises(SMEs)
- Ministry of Health and the National Public Health Institute
- WASH Commission
- Informal Sectors(waste pickers, “Unfortunate Youth”(zogos)

# PROGRESS AND ACTION TAKEN

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- On October 17, 2024, the National Solid Waste Management Policy (NSWMP) was Validated under the ARREST Agenda, emphasizing interagency cooperation and local government responsibilities.
- For Methane and Green House Gas mitigation measures,
  - a. Liberia signed the **Global Methane Pledge** in 2021, aiming to reduce methane (waste sector target of 7.6% below BAU by 2030)
  - b. **A World Bank-supported project is** underway to build a landfill in Cheesemanburg, with **gas capture technologies**, as the one landfill in Whein Town has out lived its usefulness.
  - c. A strategy to reduce **black carbon emissions** from open burning is expected to kickoff soon

# ACTIONS TAKEN

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- The Cities Alliance, an EU-funded project, set up a loan scheme as a Pilots with Community-Based Enterprises (CBEs) to improve waste collection and introduce waste-to-energy solutions.
- Conservation International, with support from the Swedish Embassy and the Blue Oceans Project also provided grants for CBEs for plastic recycling.
- Support for SMEs and CBOs (like Ever Green Recycling Institute, Green Cities) to promote recycling, Circular Economy, and Waste-to-Wealth models.
- The Government through the Monrovia and Paynesville City Corporations has launched the Integrated Waste Management System, seeking a firm for the proper management of waste .

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- ❑ Under public awareness activities, the EPA has established environmental clubs in schools and communities in Monrovia, “under the palava hut”, a one hour radio program of awareness on environmental issues, including waste, wetlands, land degradation, etc.
  - ❑ Environmental Campaigns include activities such as the World Environment Day, celebrated every year June 5, with the 2025 theme: "End Plastic Pollution"—local theme: “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. There is also the world wet land day celebration every February, among others.
  - ❑ For the circular economy, there is a “VALUE ADDITION SCHEME”, where the recycling firms **buy** waste materials (scrap metals, plastic/rubber) from the informal sector (zogots) and CBEs/CBOs/SMEs, which is then produced into new products and sold.

# CHALLENGES

- Limited Funding from Government of Liberia to improve the solid waste sector
- Besides the EPML, Liberia only has the National SWM Policy which was prepared and validated in October 2024. Besides these there's no specific regulation on waste management. Plastics, hazardous and other special kinds of wastes still remains a challenged to be management;
- Lack of a National solid waste management strategy;
- No defined Solid waste management plan by each Municipalities;
- limited public awareness on reduction of waste, and source management of waste;
- Weak enforcements
- Poor infrastructure for waste collection/management
- no routine collection of solid waste
- inadequate methods of waste management.
- The Environmental Protection Agency is constrained with low budgetary allocation, no dedicated funding for waste management
- limitations of adequate human resource and Technology.
- Lack/limited dumping facilities(landfills)

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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- Funding support and capacity building for the proper management of organic/perishable waste, to reduce GHG emissions.
- Training on GHG Inventory to provide the necessary knowledge and skills to report, mitigate and accurately account for GHG emissions, as well as training for waste service Providers, to ensure efficient and environmentally responsible waste management practices
- Development of policies such as Extended Producer Responsibility(EPR) and clear regulations regarding waste management practices
- That a Port Reception Facility be built in order to manage ship waste, as this is very crucial for protecting the marine environment and for being MARPOL compliant.
- To deepen the involvement of women, especially women led initiatives, (SBEs/SMEs) and youth with capacity building training, funding and organizational capacity.

# WHEIN TOWN LANDFILL FIRE OUTBREAK

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WASTE IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS, AS A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT MAKES A HEALTHY AND HAPPY PEOPLE. THEREFORE, GOVERNMENT, CIVIL SOCIETY, DONOR ORGANIZATIONS, PRIVATE SECTOR, AND CITIZENS ALL PLAY KEY ROLES IN BUILDING A CLEANER, HEALTHIER AND MORE RESILIENT LIBERIA AND ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

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