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Liberia Agricultural and Environmental Journalists Network

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FAO Liberia Reaffirms Support Smallholders

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Liberia, represented by Bintia Stephen Tchicaya, along with Liberia's Minister of Agriculture, J. Alexander Nutah, embarked on a visit to various farms in Lofa County over the weekend. The objective was to assess the progress made by farmers in advancing Liberia's journey towards food security.



The visit to Lofa followed a significant milestone where Tchicaya and Minister Nutah concluded a two-day event in Gbarnga, Bong County, to validate the National Agriculture Development Plan (NADP), crucial for Liberia's agricultural development and food security.

Invited by the Ministry of Agriculture to participate in the journey to Lofa, FAO Representative Tchicaya seized the opportunity to showcase one of the institution's numerous initiatives supporting agricultural cooperatives in Foya, Lofa County. [Click this link to read more on this story](#)

USAID Liberia Awards Grants to Farmers to Enhance Productivity

The United States, through its Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission in Liberia, on May 22, 2024, signed co-investment grants to improve food crop production, processing, and marketing. These grants are co-investments made with eleven agricultural cooperatives and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from Bong, Nimba, Montserrado, and Grand Bassa counties. This initiative is a part of the \$20-million "Feed the Future Liberia Food

Security, Nutrition and Resilience" project funded by USAID, which aims to enhance agriculture-led economic growth, food security, and nutrition. Feed the Future is the U.S. Government's global initiative to end poverty, hunger, and malnutrition



This first cohort of co-investment grants, totaling \$450,000, will leverage private sector investment of \$340,000. These grants are designed to enhance food crop productivity and create job opportunities, contributing to Liberia's economic expansion. [Read more on this story](#)

Ministry of Agriculture and Partners Validate Key Policy Documents

The Ministry of Agriculture in Liberia, in collaboration with its strategic partners, on Wednesday, May 15, 2024, commenced the validation process of crucial policy documents aimed at transforming the country's agricultural landscape in Gbarnga, Bong County. The validation marks a significant milestone in Liberia's sustainable agricultural development and food security journey.

The validation process involved comprehensive consultations with stakeholders, including farmers, agricultural experts, researchers, and policymakers. Their inputs and feedback are instrumental in shaping the final versions of the policy documents, ensuring they reflect the realities and aspirations of Liberia's agricultural sector.

At the commencement of the validation seminar, Agriculture Minister Dr. Alexander

Nuetah commended FAO, WFP, IFAD, WFP, World Bank, USAID, and the African Development Bank for their invaluable support to the formulation of the policy documents.



Key documents under review include the National Agriculture Development Plan (NADP) which runs from 2024 to 2029 and replaces the Liberia Agricultural Sector Investment Plan (LASIP-II). It emphasizes private sector engagement and adopts a value chain approach to stimulate significant growth within the agricultural sector. [Get more on this story](#)

WASUDEV Loan Scheme Benefits an Additional 100 Women

With financial support from the Swedish-based NGO Kvinna till Kvinna, the Women in Agriculture for Sustainable Development (WASUDEV) has moved a step forward to announce the expansion of its Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) initiative to four additional communities in Montserrado and Margibi Counties.

This initiative aims to empower more women in rural areas through improved access to financial services, fostering economic growth and sustainable agricultural practices.

The Executive Director of WASUDEV, Hawa Dunor Varney emphasized that the VSLA model provides women with the opportunity to save money, access loans, and receive training in financial literacy and business management. According to her, the expansion is set to benefit one hundred women, enhancing their ability to invest in agriculture, start or grow businesses, and improve their household economic stability.

In Liberia, access to finance is a major challenge facing women in rural areas. Most often, they do not have the required collateral to borrow money from traditional financial institutions, leaving them without the necessary resources to invest in their agricultural activities or start small businesses.

WASUDEV Executive Director indicated that the expansion of VSLAs is expected to have a profound impact on the new communities. “Women participating in these associations can pool their savings and take small loans to support various economic activities.

This financial empowerment helps women invest in better farming techniques, purchase quality seeds, and adopt sustainable agricultural practices, leading to increased productivity and environmental conservation”



WASUDEV Team Lead also emphasizes the importance of capacity building in the success of VSLAs. According to her, new members in the additional communities will receive comprehensive training on managing savings and loans, financial planning, and sustainable farming practices. This education is crucial for ensuring that members can effectively utilize the financial resources available to them.

[Continue reading more on this story by clicking this link](#)

Concern Worldwide Liberia Hosts Annual Agriculture Fair

Concern Worldwide Liberia, a leading international development organization dedicated to reducing poverty and improving the lives of the world’s poorest people in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and other partners recently hosted its annual Agriculture Fair in Liberia. The event, which took place in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, aimed to promote sustainable agriculture

practices, empower local farmers, and foster community development.

The Agriculture Fair served as a platform for farmers, agricultural experts, government officials, and other stakeholders to come together to exchange knowledge, showcase innovations, and discuss strategies for enhancing agricultural productivity and food security in Liberia.



One of the highlights of the fair was the exhibition of various agricultural products, including crops, livestock, and agro-processing techniques. Farmers had the opportunity to display their produce and value-added products, demonstrating the diversity and potential of Liberia's agricultural sector.

[Follow this link to read more.](#)

A Young Aquaculture Practitioner Wants More Support for Inland Fish Farming

In a bid to address food security challenges and promote sustainable agricultural practices, a passionate agriculturalist is advocating for increased support and investment in inland fish farming initiatives across Liberia

Ezekiel Kennedy believes inland fish farming represents a viable solution to the pressing issues of food insecurity and malnutrition in Liberia. He asserted during a recent interview on agricultural innovation. "By harnessing the vast water resources available in our inland areas, we can cultivate a diverse range of fish species that not only provide essential nutrients but also generate income for local communities," Kennedy emphasized.

He indicated, that Liberia endowed with abundant rivers, lakes, and reservoirs, holds immense promise for the expansion of inland fish farming ventures. However, despite its potential, the sector has remained largely underdeveloped due to a combination of factors, including limited technical expertise, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient investment.

The aquaculture practitioner underscored the urgent need for coordinated efforts to overcome these barriers and unlock the full potential of inland fish farming as a driver of rural development and poverty alleviation



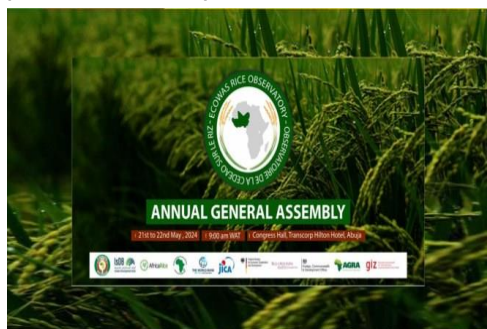
"We must prioritize investments in infrastructure, research, and capacity building to empower small-scale fish farmers and enhance their productivity," Kennedy emphasized. "This requires targeted policies, financial incentives, and technical assistance tailored to the needs of inland fishing communities." Additionally, he mentioned there is a need for greater collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and private sector stakeholders to drive innovation and knowledge sharing in the sector. [Keep reading by clicking here.](#)

ECOWAS Rice Observatory to Hold its First Annual General Assembly

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Rice Observatory (ERO) has announced hosting its first Annual General Assembly, scheduled from May 21st to May 23rd, 2024, in Abuja, Nigeria.

The assembly is a forum organized to allow participants from across the sub-region to share views on best practices towards aligning

goals and charting a roadmap to accelerate the growth of a competitive rice sector in West Africa. According to the ECOWAS Rice Observatory (ERO), though domestic rice production has improved in West African



countries since the 2008 food crisis, it only meets 60% of the region's increasing demand and preference. To address this, in 2014, the Economic Community of West African States

(ECOWAS) Commission adopted the ECOWAS Rice Offensive – a strategic framework of the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) in line with the Continental Agenda – Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) to engender a sustainable and sustained revival of rice cultivation in West Africa and support National Rice Development Strategies (NRDS) of member states. The objective of this scheme is to achieve rice self-sufficiency by 2025. [Read more on this story](#)

Liberia Environmental News Digest

EPA Boss Attends Global Environment Facility (GEF) Meeting

The Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA) and the Operational Focal Point for the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Dr. Emmanuel Urey King Yarkpawolo, is currently attending the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Joint Constituencies meeting, which brought together West African Coastal and Sahel Countries in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire from May 20 to 21, 2024.



The Joint Council Meeting is designed to review important documents and assess Liberia's country programs/projects in preparation for the GEF Council Meeting in Washington, DC, USA in June. [Read more.](#)

Environmentalists Alarms Over Wetland Degradation

Liberian Environmentalist— Mark E. Tambah is concerned about the massive degradation of wetlands, one of the country's most productive ecosystems now facing serious threats from its growing population.



Tambah is a trained environmentalist, registered Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and a satisfied expert to review developing countries. Since 2013, Tamba has taught at various universities in Liberia including the University of Liberia and the United Methodist University.

The IPCC was created to provide policymakers with regular scientific assessments of climate change, its implications, and potential future risks, as well as to put forward adaptation and mitigation options. Through its assessments,

the IPCC determines the state of knowledge on climate change. [Follow this story here](#)

Farmers in Bong County Shift to Charcoal Production Amid Climate Change Impact

Amid the adverse effects of climate change on agriculture, farmers in Bong County situated in central Liberia are increasingly turning to charcoal production as an alternative source of income, exacerbating concerns over deforestation and environmental degradation.

The region renowned for its agricultural productivity, has been grappling with erratic weather patterns, prolonged droughts, and declining crop yields attributed to climate change. Faced with mounting challenges to traditional farming practices, many farmers have sought alternative livelihoods to sustain their families and mitigate the impacts of climate variability.



“Climate change has disrupted our farming cycles and made it increasingly difficult to rely solely on agriculture for our livelihoods,” explained James Mulbah, a farmer in Salala District, lower Bong County. “In search of more stable income opportunities, many of us have ventured into charcoal production as a means of survival,” he narrates in desperation. [Follow this story here](#)

EPA Hosts First Policy Council meeting

The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia has concluded its 1st sitting of the newly established policy council consistent with the Act establishing the EPA in 2003 at Farmington Hotel in Margibi County.

The policy council convened from May 3-4, 2024 with technical support from the EPA and UNDP with funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

The EPA Policy Council members were drawn from Government line Ministries and Agencies, Members of the Liberian Senate and House of Representatives, the Liberia National Students Union, the Liberia National Bar Association, and the Liberia Marketing Association.



The policy council of the EPA is charged with the responsibility of setting the policy direction of the agency, as well as coordinating the vetting process that will lead to the top three (3) applicants being selected from a competitive process for onward submission to the office of the President for selection of one (1) person to be named as Executive Director/CEO of the Agency with a tenure of 7 years. [Read more](#)

Urgent Call to Address Climate Risks in Liberia

Like many other nations, Liberia is facing a formidable challenge of climate change. With its vulnerable geography, limited resources, and gradual increase in population, Liberia stands at a frontline to climate-related risk.



The impact of climate change is intense with the high humidity experienced during the dry season. Urgent action is not just necessary, it is crucial to safeguard the nation's future. This piece highlights the need to invest in the ecosystem and pay more attention to preserving the environment. [Read More](#)

Editorial: Our Commitment to Agricultural Journalism in Liberia

Agriculture stands as the backbone of Liberia's economy, providing livelihood for a significant portion of the population and contributing substantially to the nation's GDP. In this context, robust and dedicated agricultural journalism is not just beneficial—it is essential. At Liberia Agricultural and Environmental Journalists Network, we recognize the critical role that informed, insightful, and impactful journalism plays in the development and sustainability of the agricultural sector. Our commitment to agricultural journalism is rooted in several key principles and objectives:

Empowering Farmers with Knowledge

Farmers are the heart of Liberia's agricultural landscape. Our mission is to equip them with the latest information, trends, and best agriculture practices. Through detailed articles, interviews with experts, and coverage of new agricultural technologies, we aim to provide farmers with the tools they need to improve productivity and sustainability.

Highlighting Innovations and Success Stories

Agriculture in Liberia is evolving, with innovative practices and success stories emerging across the country. By highlighting these positive developments, we not only provide a platform for sharing valuable knowledge but also inspire others to adopt successful strategies. Our coverage includes everything from modern farming techniques and sustainable practices to success stories of local farmers who have made significant strides in their agricultural endeavors.

Advocating for Policy Support

Effective agricultural policies are crucial for the growth of the sector. We are committed to advocating for policies that support farmers, enhance food security, and promote sustainable agricultural practices. Our investigative journalism will scrutinize existing policies, highlight gaps, and provide recommendations for policymakers, ensuring that the voices of the farming community are heard and considered in the national agenda.

Connecting the Agricultural Community

Creating a sense of community among farmers, researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders is vital. Our platform serves as a bridge, connecting various players in the agricultural sector. By fostering dialogue and collaboration, we aim to create a more cohesive and supportive agricultural network in Liberia.

Addressing Challenges Head-On

Liberian farmers face numerous challenges, from climate change and pest infestations to market access and financial constraints. Our journalism will delve into these issues, providing

in-depth analyses and potential solutions. By addressing these challenges head-on, we hope to contribute to the resilience and adaptability of the agricultural sector.

Championing Sustainable Practices

Sustainability is at the core of our commitment to agricultural journalism. We understand the importance of promoting practices that protect the environment while ensuring economic viability for farmers. Our coverage will emphasize sustainable farming techniques, the importance of biodiversity, and the need for conservation efforts, helping to safeguard Liberia's agricultural future.

Building Awareness and Education

Education is a powerful tool for change. Through our articles, reports, and special features, we aim to educate the broader public about the significance of agriculture in Liberia. Raising awareness about the critical issues facing the sector and the importance of supporting local farmers will help garner public and private support, driving collective action towards a more prosperous agricultural landscape.

Conclusion

At Liberia Agricultural and Environmental Journalists, our commitment to agricultural journalism is unwavering. We believe that a well-informed agricultural sector is a strong and resilient one. Through our dedicated efforts, we aim to empower farmers, influence policy, foster community, and champion sustainability. Together, we can build a thriving agricultural sector that not only feeds our nation but also secures a prosperous future for all Liberians.

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