



Village-to-Village Sensitization

Climate Change Action Plans through Environmental Awareness

Introduction

The Sinkunia community in Falaba District is facing environmental challenges because of human activities. These challenges are deforestation, charcoal production, timber logging, bushfires to name but few.

In an effort to effectively protect, sustainably manage the environment and natural resources to ensure a quality of the environment adequate for human health, a team of Youth Movement for Sustainable Development Sierra Leone (YoMSuD-SL) officials have organized a sensitization meeting at the Sinkunia Community Barray Saturday 9 September 2018.

Objectives

- To raise awareness on environmental challenges
- Encourage chieftom people to stop negative environmental practices
- To encourage chieftom people to embark on best environmental practices
- To develop environmental bylaws in their communities with respect to sound environmental management practices

Methodology

- Opening prayers (Muslim/Christian)
- Introductions
- Purpose of the sensitization visit
- Statement from YoMSuD-SL
- Displaying of documentary evidence of some environmental disasters
- Question and answer session

Team Members

Name	Designation
Mamoud B.Kamara	Executive Director (ED)
Mariama B.Sesay	Program Managing Coordinator
Kadiatu Fofanah	Member



The Meeting

The meeting started with Muslim and Christian prayers. Mariama B.Sesay did introduction of the YoMSuD-SL staff while the Youth Chairman Mr. Balla S.Kamara introduced stakeholders. In making his statement on behalf of the Organization, Mamoud B.Kamara thanked the people of Sinkunia for attending the environmental sensitization meeting.

He informed the people that the purpose of the meeting is to sensitize and raise awareness on the environmental challenges that are of national and global concern. He made mentioned on the August 14 disaster that took place in Freetown as an unfortunate occurrence that killed hundreds of people and prayed for the departed souls of our dear brothers and sisters who died during the mudslide to rest in peace.

He told the audience that because of environmental challenges facing the country, the government in its wisdom thought it fit to establish the Environment Protection Agency in 2008 as amended in 2010 charged with the responsibility to sustainably protect the environment.

He therefore encouraged all participants to be very attentive in order to participate and make meaningful contributions.

In his explanation, he highlighted the aims and mission of the organization and some of the unsustainable environmental practices such as deforestation, mining (especially those mining close to the rivers), logging, charcoal production, slash and burn agriculture, bush fire, use of chemicals, Mangroves harvesting and backfilling of swamps to erect buildings in urban areas. These activities pose heinous environmental challenges and loss of lives and property worth millions of Leones.

He said women are vulnerable towards environmental challenges because they are caretakers of homes adding that climate change is not only real but it is under our feet.

He also talked on the consequences of bad environmental practices. These include loss of biodiversity, loss of revenue, land degradation, water contamination, erosion and flooding which have some adverse effects on the livelihood of the people because the community's socio-economic activities depend on this same environment.

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The environment he went on is owned by three categories of people such the ancestors, the present generation and the future generation that is why the environment should be treated with all the respect it deserves as if it is on loan to us because we have to give the same environment to those that will come after us.

He ended by calling on all and sundry to work with YoMSuD-SL so that environment can be sustainably managed for the betterment of Sierra Leone.

Highlights of the environmental Documentaries

From the various documentaries displayed, the people were able to highlight the activities that are prevalent in their chiefdom which are as follows:

- Deforestation
- Natural disasters
- Mining
- Bush Fire
- Flooding

Comments/questions by community members after the documentary

- Saio Sawaneh said the neglect of community people in terms of protecting the environment is a serious challenge especially deforestation.
- Pa Balla Kamara Town Chief thanked YoMSuD-SL for the sensitization and made it clear that deforestation at Sinkunia Chiefdom is very challenging for them. Asked YoMSuD-SL to help them set environmental byelaws in the community.
- Pa Sidikie Mansaray chiefdom elder requested the Organization to do more sensitization.
- Mr. Balla S.Kamara youth chairman thanked the YoMSuD-SL for the sensitization and urged the Organization to do more sensitization in remote communities as well as using the radio to pass on environmental messages.

Sheku Tenneh Mansaray did the vote of thanks representing women's group.

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Pictures showing cross section of attendees on the sensitization program at the Sinkunia Community Barray on 9 September 2018.