While we request your support and collaboration, let me use this moment to re-echo Sierra Leone’s commitment to fully abide by the Paris Agreement. My Government’s current five-year development plan incorporates inclusive green growth as an integral part of our development agenda.

To further underscore my government’s commitment to the course of a better and safer environment, I established the Environmental Protection Agency under my direct supervision. My Government, in collaboration with our development partners is also implementing projects on adaptation, including climate information and early warning systems. We remain committed to these efforts, and we seek further collaboration in confronting this global threat.

Mr. President, distinguished Heads of State and Government, fellow delegates, it is our moral duty to work together to sort out the problem of climate change because it will be very unfair to pass on this danger to the next generations without concrete efforts to resolve it.

Let me conclude, ladies and gentlemen, with the commitment that my Government will ensure the timely ratification and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement”.

I thank you all for your attention.
Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Heads of State and Government,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring you warm greetings from His Excellency, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone who, with deep regret, could not attend this historic moment. I am therefore honoured to deliver his message as his special envoy and I quote:

"Your Excellencies, in December last year, we met in Paris to agree on a plan to drive down global emissions, and to avoid the disruptive impacts of climate change. We committed ourselves to drastically cut down global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius. We also agreed to meet every five years to review our progress in respect of our various pledges and to strengthen our commitments to the achievement of our common goal. The Paris Agreement demonstrates an increasing momentum that we must build on our achievement of our common goal and also an increasing momentum that we must build on our collective effort to address the threats of climate change.

We must maintain this momentum in the face of the continuous reality that no country is secure from the impact of climate change. Our world will only achieve its goal on climate change if we remain united in this fight. Our world will win this battle only when we act upon what we have agreed on in Paris.

Some countries may be able to stave off some of the effects, but our globalized world has also increased the routes through which these effects move from country to country, from one region to another, and with very disproportionate consequences. It is therefore not in any one country’s interest to regard the effects of climate change as a problem for a particular country or region alone.

Sierra Leone is ranked as one of the world’s most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change. And it is all too obvious that we are increasingly experiencing adverse impacts of climate change in almost all sectors. This poses a huge challenge to our development. Changes in weather patterns in the Pacific Ocean and in the North Atlantic continue to unleash devastating floods all too often. Last year, Sierra Leone was hit by unprecedented floods in our capital city, Freetown as well as in other major cities in the Southern and Eastern regions. Thousands of people were displaced including women and children. Also many household farms and businesses were destroyed; and several people lost their lives. This dim reality poses a huge threat to our development.

We are also aware that climate change affects countries that are hard pressed in terms of technology and resources to be able to adequately address adaptation and mitigation mechanisms. The capacity of our populations to adapt to climate change is also inadequate. This is why we should continue to encourage developed countries to provide the required financial and technological resources to assist developing countries combat this looming global disaster.

We are therefore calling for action not only to lower emissions of greenhouse gases, but also to strengthen the capacities of developing countries in order to deal with the impacts of climate change and to save our planet.
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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STATEMENT

by

H.E. Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma
President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

delivered by

Dr. Samura M.W. Kamara
Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation

High level Signature Ceremony for the Paris Agreement

United Nations, New York, Friday 22nd April 2016

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