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**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMISSION  
PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS**

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**WCPFC-SC17-AR/CCM-34**

**LIBERIA**

**2020 ANNUAL REPORT (PART I) OF LIBERIA  
TO THE  
WESTERN CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION (WCPFC)**

**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT: PART I

July 2, 2021

## 1. Abstract/Summary

The Republic of Liberia is situated within the east central Atlantic region of the Gulf of Guinea. With an Atlantic coastline of approximately 570km and a continental shelf averaging 34km in width, the marine fishing grounds of Liberia cover 186 322.2km<sup>2</sup> within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).<sup>1</sup> In 2017, Liberia's Inshore Exclusion Zone (IEZ) was reduced from six to three nautical miles, and is reserved for artisanal and semi-industrial fishing activities.<sup>2</sup>

Liberia's continental shelf area has considerable marine fish species. The main oceanic pelagic resources are tuna and tuna-like species such as yellowfin tuna, bonito and marlin. Demersal fish species are also found in marine waters and are harvested on a commercial basis.<sup>3</sup> Crustaceans such as shrimp, crab and lobster are less abundant, but are of much higher value than finfish species, and are targeted for Liberia's export market.<sup>4</sup>

The coastal counties of Liberia consist of some of the richest fishing grounds in the world, contributing significantly to the livelihood, nutrition and the overall economy. Fisheries currently represent approximately 10% of Liberia's national Gross Domestic Product (GDP).<sup>5</sup> The fisheries sector employs about three (3) million people throughout the West African coast. In Liberia, the fisheries sector provides a means of employment for around 11,250 people, who are engaged on a full-time basis, and thousands more on a part-time basis. During the Ebola outbreak, fish was the main source of food when the agriculture sector was on the verge of collapsing.<sup>6</sup>

Liberia's fisheries has three main subcomponents: 1) Marine (comprises of industrial and artisanal activities); 2) Inland fisheries (mainly artisanal) and 3) Aquaculture (through subsistence fish farming). Artisanal fisheries are a key sector in Liberia. The artisanal fleet comprises the indigenous Kru canoe, operated by Kru fishermen using paddles or sail.<sup>7</sup> The marine industrial fishery is divided into a trawl fishery for shrimp and demersal finfish, which provides frozen whole fish, and shrimp for the local market and an offshore large pelagic fishery. The inland fisheries are based on rivers, lakes and wetlands such as swamps and coastal lagoons. The aquaculture sub-sector, which includes mariculture, is underdeveloped and largely subsistence, with numerous fish farmers engaged in some form of fish culture. About 1,800 ponds of various sizes are distributed in rural communities and are used for farming tilapia and catfish.

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<sup>1</sup> FAO Fishery Country Profile (Republic of Liberia): <http://www.fao.org/fi/oldsite/FCP/en/LBR/profile.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Executive Order No. 84 Pertaining to the Management of Liberia's Fishery Resources (Apr. 22, 2017): <http://www.emansion.gov.lr/doc/scan00.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Liberia Fisheries, Bureau of National Fisheries - Marine Division: [www.liberiafisheries.net/aboutus/marine](http://www.liberiafisheries.net/aboutus/marine)

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> The World Bank: Liberia Sustainable Management of Fisheries (P172012), available at <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/483401576480235332/pdf/Concept-Project-Information-Documents-PID-Liberia-Sustainable-Management-of-Fisheries-P172012.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

The National Fisheries & Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) regulates the fishery sector in Liberia. Major functions of NAFAA include: registration and inspection of artisanal fishing canoes, granting of fishing licenses, record of catch data, and deployment of fisheries enumerators at landing sites. Liberia’s fisheries sector received a major boost in 2017 with the commissioning of the Mesurado Industries Fisheries Terminal, which is equipped with a monitoring system to manage the country’s agreements with the European Union licensed fishing vessels in Liberia’s territorial waters.<sup>8</sup> The Fish Monitoring Center (FMC) works closely in collaboration with the Liberia Maritime Authority (LMA) to monitor vessels in Liberian territorial waters and vessels transshipping in regional and international fishing areas to effectively combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities.

## 2. Tabular Annual (2020) Fisheries Information

Not many Liberian flagged carrier vessels were engaged in transshipment operations during the January-December 2020 period. Below you will find transshipment data for those vessels that transshipped:

- (1) the **total quantities, by weight**, that were transshipped by vessels the CCM is responsible for reporting against, with those quantities broken down by:

a) offloaded and received;	b) transshipped in port, transshipped at sea in areas of national jurisdiction, and transshipped beyond areas...	c) transshipped inside the Convention Area and transshipped outside the Convention Area;	d) caught inside the Convention Area and caught outside the Convention Area;	e) Species	f) Product Form	g) Fishing gear
offloaded		51,501	n/a	ALB	Frozen	n/a
		1,354,956	n/a	BET	Frozen	n/a
		22,023	n/a	MLS	Frozen	n/a
		38,259	n/a	OTH	Frozen	n/a
		139,889	n/a	SWO	Frozen	n/a
		608,917	n/a	YFT	Frozen	n/a
received		51,501	n/a	ALB	Frozen	n/a
		1,354,956	n/a	BET	Frozen	n/a
		22,023	n/a	MLS	Frozen	n/a
		38,259	n/a	OTH	Frozen	n/a
		139,889	n/a	SWO	Frozen	n/a
		608,917	n/a	YFT	Frozen	n/a

<sup>8</sup> New Fishing Site, Terminal in Liberia Brings Better Fish and More Jobs:  
<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/06/08/new-fishing-site-terminal-in-liberia-brings-better-fish-and-more-jobs>

(2) the **number of transshipments** involving highly migratory fish stocks covered by this measure by fishing vessels that is responsible for reporting against, broken down by:

a) offloaded and received	b) transshipped in port, transshipped at sea in areas of national jurisdiction, and transshipped beyond areas of national jurisdiction	c) transshipped inside the Convention Area and transshipped outside the Convention Area	d) caught inside the Convention Area and caught outside the Convention Area	e) fishing gear
offloaded		41		
received		41		

### 3. Background

Liberia is a Cooperating Non-Member (CNM) of the WCPFC and currently has several flagged carrier vessels registered on the WCPFC Record of Vessels.

### 4. Socio-economic Factors

Fisheries play a vital role in the livelihood of the coastal population. It is moreover an essential sector in the agricultural framework of Liberia as, well as in the national economy. In recent years, fisheries have contributed approximately 10% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the sector provides full or part time employment for about 37,000 people.<sup>9</sup>

With the reduction of Liberia's IEZ from six to three nautical miles (*see* Executive Order No. 84), industrial and semi-industrial fishing is expected to be revitalized, thereby increasing fisheries contribution to the national economy.

### 5. Disposal of Catch

Liberian flagged vessels operating in the WCPFC Convention Area are carrier and/or receiving vessels, not fishing or catching vessels.

### 6. Onshore Developments

In December 2015, Liberia and the European Union (EU) signed a 5-year Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) and associated protocol, which set out fishing opportunities for EU vessels in Liberian territorial waters. The SFPA further expands the EU's network of tuna fisheries agreements in West Africa. The related protocol offers opportunities to a number of purse seiners and surface longline vessels to fish for tuna and tuna-like species in waters under Liberia's jurisdiction, based on a reference tonnage of 6,500 tons.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> World Food Program, *The State of Food and Nutrition Insecurity in Liberia* (2010). Available at: <http://home.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp231357.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Liberia (Dec. 12, 2015):

In August 2019, the Government of Liberia, through NaFAA, signed a Fisheries Research Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. The MoU entails fisheries independent stock assessment using a fisheries research vessel. The MOU supports the application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management considering the impact of climate change and pollution.<sup>11</sup>

In October 2019, Liberia signed the Cape Town Agreement, committing to complete implementation of the international fisheries protocols. The Agreement provides standards on the design, construction and equipment of fishing vessels, and includes regulations designed to protect the safety of crew and observers, and provide a level playing field for the industry.

## **7. Future Prospect of Fishery**

The future of Liberia's fishery looks promising. The Government and people of Liberia look forward to a sustainable managed fisheries sector, capable of:

- providing increased profitable fisheries employment opportunities while offering an enabling environment for upgrading technical skills for enhanced value added fisheries vocations;
- engaging participatory fisheries management institutions based on community and stakeholder structures for the creation of opportunities for socio-economic development;
- contributing to GDP, national food and nutritional security and improving living conditions, by upgrading and adopting appropriate, modern and efficient fisheries capabilities for increased fish production while reducing losses through illegal fishing; and
- deriving net benefits from a vibrant fish trade supported by, value addition systems and fisheries infrastructure for fish landing and export, as well as efficient fishing input supply and distribution systems.<sup>12</sup>

## **8. Status of Tuna Fishery Data Collection Systems**

Liberian flagged vessels operating in the WCPFC Area and foreign vessels operating in Liberian waters are required to install satellite-based vessel monitoring systems (VMS), which are capable of providing static unique identifier; real time geographical position of the vessel; and date and time. Moreover, Liberian flagged vessels operating in the WCPFC Area are equipped with VMS tablets, which are capable of transmitting transshipment data to the FMC and RFMOs.

## **9. Research Activities Covering Target and Non-Target Species**

Liberia has not conducted any research activities covering target and non-target species.

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[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22015A1212\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22015A1212(01)&from=EN)

<sup>11</sup> NaFAA, FAO Strengthen Collaboration, available at <https://nafaa.gov.lr/index.php/medias/press-release/nafaa-fao-strengthen-collaboration>

<sup>12</sup> Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy & Strategy: Republic of Liberia (2014).