

Speech by Honorable Jeremiah Kpan Koung, Sr. Vice President of the Republic of Liberia At the Commissioning of Liberia's First Semi-Industrial Fiberglass Fishing Vessel- The Sea King Organized by the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) Supported by the World Bank Held at the Mesurado Pier, Bushrod Island, Montserrado County.

Monday, November 24, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.

Madam Georgia Wallen, Country Manager of the World Bank

Officials of Government

The Acting Director General and Officials of NaFAA

Development Partners

Members of the Fishing Community

The Media

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I bring you greetings on behalf of His Excellency Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr, President of the Republic of Liberia. The President had hoped to personally grace this important event but due to international engagements, he has asked me to represent him and reaffirm his unwavering commitment to the growth and transformation of Liberia's fisheries sector.

Today marks another proud moment in our nation's journey toward self-reliance and inclusive development. The commissioning of Liberia's first semi-industrial fiberglass fishing vessel is not just a milestone for the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA), it is a historic step forward for our nation under the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development.

This vessel represents far more than an addition to our fishing fleet. It stands as a direct pathway to create jobs for our people, growth for our economy, and hope for our coastal communities. It symbolizes the determination of this Rescue Government to harness the vast potential of Liberia's marine resources for the benefit of all Liberians.

Through this vessel, we are paving the way for increased local fish harvest, reducing our dependence on imported fish, and ensuring that more of the wealth from our waters remains right here, in the hands of Liberians.

This is how we grow our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through fisheries. This is how we create sustainable jobs for our young people, women, and coastal communities.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

As part of our ongoing efforts to alleviate the many burdens faced by Liberians, this Government remains deeply committed to making life easier for our people. The fishing community is no exception. Therefore, by directive of the President of the Republic of Liberia, I am pleased to announce today a reduction in the annual license fees for all artisanal canoes across the country.

Effective January 1, 2026, the new structure will be as follows:

- For those using paddle canoes, the annual fee will be USD 30, reduced from USD 50.
- For those using 1 to 15 horsepower engines, the annual fee will be USD 175, reduced from USD 250.
- For those using 16 to 40 horsepower engines, the annual fee will be USD 350, reduced from USD 450.

These reductions are a clear demonstration that this Government listens, and that we stand with our fishermen and women. The President is hereby directing the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) to put in place the necessary modalities to ensure that these new fees are well communicated and implemented effectively across all coastal counties.

For many years, our fishermen have asked for relief and today, your voices have been heard!

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me emphasize that Agriculture remains a Priority for this Government, and the Fisheries Sector is an integral part of that national priority. Fisheries represent a low-hanging fruit for job creation, food security, and private sector investment. With the right policies, infrastructure, and partnerships, this sector can become one of the key drivers of inclusive economic growth and shared prosperity.

As Liberia celebrated World Fisheries Day on November 21, I want to take this moment to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to all our fisherfolks across

the country for your service in ensuring that our nation is fed, and that we never lack that vital protein ingredient on our tables.

Let us use this vessel wisely for learning, for production, and for empowerment. Let it serve as a source of pride and inspiration for young Liberians to see fisheries not as a struggle for survival, but as a pathway to prosperity.

To Our Development Partners, especially the World Bank,

I extend my deepest appreciation for your continued confidence in this Government and in the people of Liberia. Your support has been instrumental in making this day possible. But let us not stop here. Let us build upon these gains and begin the construction of the fishing port, expand our aquaculture and inland fisheries programs, and develop modern artisanal landing sites across the country.

This sector can and must provide the volume of jobs our country needs when the right infrastructure is in place and the private sector is fully engaged.

Together, we can build a fisheries sector that truly works for the Liberian people.

May God bless our fishermen and women,

And may God continue to bless the Republic of Liberia.

Thank you.