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## PRESS RELEASE

### SIGNIFICANT DONATION OF MONITORING EQUIPMENT IN THE MPA OF THE GAMBIA AND SIERRA LEONE

[Dakar, 20-11-2023] - The West Africa Marine Protected Areas Network in (RAMPAO) has held a ceremony to donate monitoring equipment to the rangers of the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) of The Gambia and Sierra Leone. The ceremony, held from November 08 to 15, 2023 in these respective countries, is one of the flagship actions in RAMPAO's Strategic Operational Plan.

The Directors of Sierra Leone's National Protected Areas Authority (NPAA) and The Gambia's Department of Parks and Wildlife Management (DPWM) received a large package of equipment including patrol motorcycles, GPS units, boots, headlamps, cameras, reflective vests and camping tents.

According to RAMPAO's Executive Secretary, Marie Suzanna Traoré, " *RAMPAO is responding to the needs of its members through this equipment handover, and is also encouraging eco-guards to continue their daily efforts to preserve endangered species such as Marine Turtles. We believe that each monitoring device deployed in the field becomes a tangible symbol of our commitment to preserving marine and coastal biodiversity*".

According to Mamadou Lamine Kassama, Director of Gambia's Department of Parks and Wildlife Management (DPWM): " *The provision of this equipment came as a great surprise to us, as we weren't expecting it. They will be very useful for marine monitoring, not only for sea turtles, but also for other activities linked to the preservation of biodiversity. More importantly, we have received a motorcycle that will undoubtedly facilitate monitoring activities in our MPAs*".

For the National Protected Areas Authority of Sierra Leone (NPAA), Yatta Hellen Kamara, in charge of wetlands and marine ecosystems, : " *These materials have come at the right time, as we had a real need in terms of monitoring equipment. The professional cameras we have just received will certainly help us to carry out optimal monitoring during our field activities. We've also received reflective vests to show that RAMPAO is present in our Marine Protected Areas. It's significant for us!* "

In line with its mission to effectively manage and preserve biodiversity in and around protected areas, RAMPAO has been working for years to preserve endangered species and restore degraded ecosystems. By improving the working conditions of the rangers who are at the heart of the day-to-day management of the network's MPAs, RAMPAO is contributing to the recognition and enhancement of those who, sometimes at the risk of their lives, ensure the protection of our natural legacy.

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#### About RAMPAO

The Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas in West Africa (RAMPAO) is an organization working for the conservation and sustainable management of Marine Protected Areas in the West African region. It covers the coastal countries of West Africa, and currently includes some 50 Marine Protected Areas. RAMPAO works closely with MPA managers to promote the conservation of marine biodiversity. More details on our website: [ <https://rampao.org/> ].