



# Leh we make Salone grow!

The President's Recovery Priorities Newsletter | [www.presidentsrecoverypriorities.gov.sl](http://www.presidentsrecoverypriorities.gov.sl) | August 2016



THE PRESIDENT'S  
RECOVERY  
PRIORITIES

*The President's Recovery Priorities represent a multi-stakeholder investment programme, led by the Government of Sierra Leone, focused on education, energy, governance, health, private sector development, social protection and water. The programme is intended to drive sustainable socio-economic transformation in Sierra Leone following the twin shocks of the Ebola Virus Epidemic and falling iron ore prices.*

## Message from Saidu Conton-Sesay, the Chief of Staff



**W**elcome to the first issue of 'Leh we make Salone grow'. Our regular newsletter is intended to help keep you informed about the progress of the President's Recovery Priorities. We started tracking delivery of the second phase of the process in June 2016. To date, most of our work has been behind the scenes – plan-

ning, researching, conducting training and setting up the systems that will support development in areas of education, energy, governance, health, private sector development, social welfare and water. However, there is also increasing visibility to the progress that is being made.

The Anti-Corruption Commission is rolling out its new 'Pay No Bribe' on-line reporting mechanism, which will allow ordinary citizens to add momentum to the attack on corruption in the public sector. In the months to come, we can expect a more productive rice harvest following the Ministry of Agriculture's nationwide rice seed and fertiliser distribution initiative, combined with training in improved farming techniques.

The nationwide Water Point Mapping survey will provide critically important data which will support the provision of safe drinking water to 700,000 people in the provinces. More trained midwives in our hospitals and health centres takes us closer to our commitment to reduce maternal and child

mortality rates.

The support of our development partners continues to be important to our success. In July's Development Partner Committee meeting, it was encouraging to hear the World Bank country director commend the President's Recovery Priorities for progress to date, and highlight in particular the positive effects of the cash transfer system which he had seen first hand in Moyamba.

We continue to encourage a participatory approach to the process which is anchored in transparency and we are working on providing information on our progress through the use of the traditional media, social media, this newsletter, and our website [www.presidentsrecoverypriorities.gov.sl](http://www.presidentsrecoverypriorities.gov.sl), as well as direct community engagement. In the near future, a nationwide radio programme will improve the information-flow to our rural and hard to reach communities.

By 30th June 2017, the Government intends to have delivered 142 sub-initiatives that will combine to create a visible and positive difference for everyone across Sierra Leone. Our dedicated delivery team has the responsibility of driving the recovery process, but its success also depends on engagement and feedback from stakeholders across the country. The delivery of the President's Recovery Priorities is not business as usual. This is a unique opportunity for our country's development.

**Leh we make Salone grow!**

# Almost two million trees to be planted to reduce environmental damage and improve water situation



**T**he first of 1,818,540 trees was planted in Sierra Leone on 3 August 2016, as part of the President's Recovery Priorities' drive to improve access to water through the reforestation of vital water catchment zones.

Deforestation has emerged as one of Sierra Leone's main man-made environmental issues, with an estimated 3,000 hectares being cleared each year, and over 87% of the original forest area already converted. People cut down trees to make charcoal and for firewood. Furthermore, slash and burn agriculture, stone mining and the construction of homes in water catchment areas all contribute to the country's current water shortage.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security and Ministry of Water Resources are working with partners such

as the Environmental Protection Agency on a National Tree Planting Drive which will increase awareness of the importance of trees and adequate forest cover, and encourage tree planting to improve water catchment as well as reduce flooding, erosion and other environmental degradation. Existing forests and woodlands that have been devastated over the years, will be restocked with 1,818,540 indigenous and exotic fast growing trees.

The Minister of Water Resources, Momodu Maligi says that widespread encroachment into water catchment areas has severely reduced the efficacy of water catchment zones and calls upon local communities to join in the environmental protection effort: "Tackling the water shortage requires the support of local communities to prevent deforestation and protect our water catchment zones. Deforestation of our water catchment zones has caused soil to erode and run into the Guma dam, reducing its capacity. The lack of forest cover also increases evaporation of the water in the dam. Water is life and we all have a duty to preserve it."

## Improving Sierra Leone's water supplies must start with accurate data says Momodu Maligi, Minister of Water Resources



**A**s part of Sierra Leone's second Water Point Mapping survey, almost 200 surveyors have been sent into the field to gather accurate information on the number and state of Sierra Leone's water supplies. This will provide important baseline data which is the first stage in a commitment by the President's Recovery Priorities to improve access to water in 400 rural communities.

For the Ministry of Water Resources, accurate information on rural water supplies is crucial to provide sufficient data for planning and budgeting. Not knowing where and what is available makes it difficult to plan new investment, decide which schemes to rehabilitate and assess previous strategies and approaches to safe sustainable water supplies.

Water point mapping helps assess the availability of clean and safe water in communities. It aids investment decisions and

planning by showing where water supply services exist and where they are needed. The survey will be repeated every two years, tracking progress in the sector and highlighting challenges.

Poor water and sanitation, as well as unsafe hygiene practices are the primary causes of diarrhoea, one of the main child killers in the region. According to figures from UNICEF more than 250,000 children under the age of five die from diarrhoeal diseases each year. By improving access to safe water in the provinces, the President's Recovery Priorities will also help reduce infant and child mortality, one of the key results targeted for the Health sector

Momodu Maligi, Minister of Water Resources says: "Our drive to provide Sierra Leone's people with clean water and ensure that water supplies are sustainable over time must begin with proper planning and accurate data. This Water Point Mapping survey will give us a credible start point, especially when it comes to identifying communities of greatest need, and by providing the information to assess service delivery in the sector, it gives stakeholders a powerful tool to hold us to account."



# MAFFS – providing fertiliser, improved seed varieties and training to farming families

**M**ost of Sierra Leone's arable lowlands, especially inland valley swamps are capable of double cropping - growing two crops on the same piece of land during a single growing season. As part of the President's Recovery Priorities, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security (MAFFS) has recently finished distributing rice seed and fertiliser for the first cropping. Nationally about 52,000 bushels have been distributed in total, targeting 50,000 farming families.

Currently Sierra Leone's farms have an average yield of one tonne per hectare. With the aim of increasing the productivity

and quality of the yield to an average of two tonnes, MAFFS is encouraging the use of fertiliser and an improved rice seed variety. Improving farming skills by providing training in important husbandry practices, such as fertiliser use, weeding, bird scaring and improved planting techniques – will also help Sierra Leone's farmers boost the productivity of their farms.

Harvesting of the first crop is due to take place in October. This will give MAFFS and Sierra Leone's farmers the opportunity to begin assessing the success of strategies to increase the harvest, while preparations for the second cropping are taking place.

## Next term, Sierra Leone's primary school children will get a hot lunch under a new national school feeding programme



**I**brahim Jalloh is a member of the President's Recovery Priorities' delivery team. Growing up in Bombali in the mid-70s, he walked three miles to school and back, carrying a plate, his alpha pencil and 'foo foo' book. Of those three items, his plate was prized above all else, because it guaranteed him a hot meal at lunch time. "The food was a major catalyst. For a good number of us, it was the magnet that kept us within the school system," he remembers.

He is not alone. Among Sierra Leone's older generations, there are a fair few who freely admit that school feeding played an important role in keeping them in primary school.

School feeding has been part of Sierra Leone's educational landscape for over 50 years, but over the years has been mainly offered by various NGOs and charities, and only in selected chiefdoms. The national school feeding programme has been a

major objective of the President's Recovery Priorities and in the next school year 1.2 million school children in government and government-assisted schools will receive a meal at school on two days each week.

By taking a decentralised approach that encourages local procurement, the new twice weekly school feeding programme has several advantages over its predecessors. It will benefit children's learning whilst creating jobs and increasing agricultural opportunities for local communities.

School feeding committees will be set up with representation from local and traditional government as well as the relevant schools. They will receive cash transfers from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) to buy locally grown produce. The committee will be responsible for procurement, storage, cooking and serving the food to pupils.

Dr. Christiana Thorpe, Deputy Minister, MEST says that school feeding can improve attendance and retention rates, and make children more receptive to learning. "Hungry children can't learn. By providing them with a midday meal, we can keep them in school and they are more likely to be alert and focused on learning. In September, when the national school feeding starts, we should be able to see more attentive children who get better results at school."

The success of the programme will be tracked by looking at school attendance and improved learning outcomes.

# There is nothing petty about corruption

By **Ady Macaulay, Commissioner, Anti-Corruption Commission**

**T**he President's Recovery Priorities have made governance a cross-cutting priority targeted at improving the delivery of basic public services across all the priority areas. Here at the Anti-Corruption Commission, our strategy to help achieve this objective is to enlist the support of citizens in the drive to tackle petty corruption within the public sector, through the 'Pay No Bribe' campaign – our new anti-corruption call-centre and on-line platform reporting mechanism.

'Pay No Bribe' gives us all a secure and anonymous way to report when and where we have been asked to pay a bribe by officials in the police force, or the water, education, health and electricity sectors in order to access services. It recognises that regardless of the amount of money involved, there is nothing petty about the corruption that ordinary people and organisations experience when they seek government services they are entitled to. It also recognises that we all have every reason to be concerned about it and do what we can to eliminate it from our public sector.

Transparency International describes petty corruption as the "everyday abuse of entrusted power by low- and mid-level public officials in their interactions with ordinary citizens, who often are trying to access basic goods or services in places like hospitals, schools, police departments and other agencies." Individual demands for Le5,000, Le10,000, Le20,000 in bribes may appear small, but there is nothing petty about the amounts that can be accumulated over time.

Nor is there anything petty about resources that should fund vital goods and services being diverted into private pockets, or demands for gifts or favours in lieu of cash, which very often perpetuates the abuse of women. Evidence suggests that poorer women and girls are often asked for sexual favours in return for public services that they are entitled to.

For the most vulnerable and poorest in society, there is nothing petty about the proportion of their already stretched incomes

that goes on bribes to access the services they desperately need – health, education, power, water and law and order. Nor is it petty when they are deprived of these services because they do not have the money to pay a bribe. It means children do not get the education they need to build a better future for themselves and our country; and the sick die because they are denied life-saving treatment or vital medication.

Corruption, however petty, diminishes people's trust in each other, state institutions, their belief in local or national government and social values. It destabilises our society and contributes towards creating the conditions for conflict. No wonder the World Bank has identified corruption as among the greatest obstacles to economic and social development.

Fear of speaking out often deters people from reporting corrupt practices, however the fight against corruption and our ability to enforce anti-corruption measures, depends on knowing where it is taking place and who is behind it. The 'Pay No Bribe' system is intended to work in tandem with the progress that is currently being made on developing a stronger criminal justice system, as well as improving governance, access to decision-makers and management controls. It will make anonymous reporting possible, and give us the data to assess the efficacy of our work to eliminate corruption in Sierra Leone.

The President's Recovery Priorities represent a considerable investment in vital development initiatives across the country. Their success depends on ensuring that allocated resources are targeted where they are most needed. By using the 'Pay No Bribe' online reporting system, you can help make Sierra Leone's recovery the success it needs to be.

Stop Corruption now and improve public service delivery, Full Stop!

[www.pnb.gov.sl](http://www.pnb.gov.sl)

## Making pregnancy and childbirth safer for Sierra Leone's mothers

**A** unique partnership between Sierra Leone's Ministry of Health and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) which has trained over 376 midwives, means that today Sierra Leone has almost four times the number of trained midwives than we had in 2010.

The 61 that graduated last month, as part of the President's Recovery Priorities' focus on reducing maternal and child mortality rates, increases the likelihood of a safe pregnancy and birth for Sierra Leone's women and their babies.

A 2007 study by the World Health Organisation shows there is mounting evidence linking midwifery care with reduced maternal and newborn deaths. Supporting these findings is a UNFPA 2008 study which shows that when the number of mid-

wives increases, the number of women who die decreases.

Commenting on Sierra Leone's commitment to make pregnancy and birth safer, Deputy Health and Sanitation Minister, Madam Madina Rahman said that the Free Health Care Initiative and the concerted effort of health partners and the Ministry to provide trained midwives means that more women will have access to appropriate standards of care during pregnancy and delivery.

