



# Leh we make Salone grow!

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THE PRESIDENT'S  
RECOVERY  
PRIORITIES

*The President's Recovery Priorities represent a multi-sector 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



**O**n the 7 November, we commemorated the one-year anniversary of the end of the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone with a nationwide three-minutes of silence. It was a poignant reminder of how urgent the process of recovery and development is in Sierra Leone.

Quality education has a paramount role to play in this and Sierra Leone took a significant step forward this month with the launch of two major initiatives. The first, led by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, is a major programme of classroom building which will reduce severe overcrowding in the worst affected schools, mainly in urban settings. The President's Delivery Team is also pleased to report the recently launched collaboration between the Ministries of Water Resources and Education, working with UNICEF, which will ensure 360 schools across the country have hygiene and toilet facilities that are fit for purpose. The support of UK aid is invaluable to the delivery of both of these.

To ensure that this delivery process remains both effective and sustained, the President's Delivery Team is working to enhance and strengthen the capability within MDAs at both district and central level. We look forward to reporting on this in the next issue of the newsletter. It is the nature of economic recovery that the pace of delivery speeds up as the behind-the-scenes planning starts to yield visible results. At this point in the process, the role of district and traditional leaders, beneficiaries and all other stakeholders in verifying output becomes even more important. We will be going around the country to share with district and traditional leaders the exact location of projects being implemented in their areas, so that they can track them more reliably.

**Leh we make Salone grow!**

## New fortnightly radio programme from the PDT hits the airwaves

*Increasing the transparency and accountability of the delivery process, was a key recommendation from the early recovery (6-9 months) phase of the President's Recovery Priorities. A recently launched national radio series from the President's Delivery Team will make the process more widely accessible.*

**T**he 'Leh we make Salone grow' radio series was launched on the 28 October and is being broadcast throughout the country to communicate the strides that Sierra Leone's ministries, departments and agencies are making towards achieving the President's Recovery Priorities.

The President's Delivery Team works with stakeholders at the central, district and chiefdom levels to gather information and updates, so that communities can find out what is happening elsewhere in the country and follow the progress of the recovery.

'Leh we make Salone grow' is a half hour programme. It is broadcast fortnightly and complements the monthly newsletter, website and countrywide community engagement activities which also make information on the process and progress of the priority initiatives widely available.

## EDUCATION

### Nationwide classroom building programme to reduce overcrowding launched in Bo

*Reducing overcrowding in the worst affected schools is one of the strategies being implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) to improve educational outcomes.*

**O**n October 17, 2016, the educational potential of Sierra Leone's schoolchildren received a significant boost, with the launch of the President's Recovery Priorities' nationwide Le35 billion classroom building programme. The initiative will deliver an additional 225 new classrooms across the country, and create a better learning environment by reducing severe overcrowding in schools.

The launch event was held at the Madonna Roman Catholic Primary School, in Bo. This school benefited from one of 168 new classrooms built in the early phase of the recovery process. The additional 225 new classrooms planned for this phase, will mean that a total of 393 new classrooms will be built by June 2017. With as many as 100 pupils in some classes, overcrowding in schools has been identified as a significant barrier to learning.

Dr Christiana Thorpe, Deputy Minister of Education and Sector Co-ordinator – Education, with the President's Delivery Team, says that crowded classrooms make it difficult for pupils to concentrate on their lessons, and inevitably limits the amount of time teachers can spend providing learning support. Teachers must constantly struggle simply to maintain order," she says. "As well as making it difficult for children to learn, overcrowded classrooms can be a health hazard as the Ebola epidemic highlighted. With Ebola spreading through direct contact with bodily fluids, overcrowded schools, often with poor or no proper hygiene facilities posed a high risk to children."

Improving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in schools is therefore an important additional component of the school improvement drive and the schools receiving new classrooms will also receive new or rehabilitated WASH facilities where necessary.

## SOCIAL PROTECTION

### Livelihood Skills Training for EVD Survivors in Seven Districts

**A** course to help Ebola survivors rebuild their lives and manage their finances has been delivered to 319 EVD survivors in Bombali. The three-day course provided career counselling and training in financial literacy, which included learning how to open and operate a bank account.

Three hundred and ninety-one survivors in the district also received Le350,000 for their second stipend payments. Similar payments were made to 1,179 survivors in Tonkolili, Port Loko, Koinadugu, Moyamba, Kenema and Kailahun Districts. These stipend payments and financial literacy training are part of the President's Recovery Priorities for livelihood support to EVD Survivors, which is implemented by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs and funded by the UNDP.

## SOCIAL PROTECTION

### NaCSA's Labour Intensive Public Works deliver a successful cassava harvest in Kono

*Under the President's Recovery Priorities, NaCSA has so far supported 6,454 male youths and 4,962 female youths, with conditional cash transfers in the form of wages through Labour Intensive Public Works. Below we look at the experience of 80 young people in Kono.*

**T**he 80 young people taking part in NaCSA's Labour Intensive Public Works (LIPW) programme in Kono's Gbense Chiefdom have cultivated two acres of cassava in their community. LIPW is a cash-for-work approach which provides young people with short term employment opportunities as well as building their employability and contributing to the local economy. Harvests from LIPW farms are divided into four. One quarter is shared among the project's participants; another kept for next planting season – where suitable, another given to the community and the last quarter is given to other youths to cultivate, creating another LIPW group.

During monitoring and evaluation visits, the President's Delivery Team (PDT) gathered feedback on the process to prevent unresolved issues from derailing its success. During one trip, town chief, Sahr Alhaji Baker, told the PDT that the LIPW has been responsible for a lower crime rate. The PDT also heard from Joseph Bockarie, the chairman of the Community Oversight Committee, which is responsible for managing the projects. He said it had been extremely positive and suggested including training in cassava processing to add value to the yield. A female participant, Alice Gbainda, explained that she, like many other participants, is using her earnings to send her children to school.

The project is targeting 11,600 youths in the districts of Kono, Bombali, Moyamba and Western Rural. They work from Monday to Saturday, 8:00am to 2:00pm, and each receives Le10,000 per day.

## WATER

### Improving water, sanitation and hygiene in 360 schools

*In Sierra Leone only 22.9 percent of primary schools have access to functional safe drinking water sources on their school premises. Improving WASH infrastructure in schools is a commitment in the Agenda for Prosperity, which is being supported by an important initiative under the President's Recovery Priorities.*

**L**aunched last month at Brama Primary School near Newton, a collaboration between the Ministries of Water Resources and Education, with support from UNICEF and UK Aid, will ensure that 360 schools across the country have hygiene and toilet facilities that are fit for purpose.

"Safe water and good hygiene are key to developing a healthy Sierra Leone," said the Minister of Water Resources, Momodu Maligi. "This project will target vulnerable communities and bring about sustainable access to basic sanitation that has the potential to save thousands of lives."

Speaking at the launch Guy Warrington, British High

Commissioner to Sierra Leone, said: "I am delighted to see the WASH programme in action. Improving water and sanitation is a President's Recovery Priority, and I am pleased we are working on a common goal. We know that to address Sierra Leone's development challenges effectively, we must work together to ensure everyone has access to clean water and good sanitation."

Poor hygiene and sanitation in Sierra Leone is linked to three leading causes of under-five mortality: malaria, respiratory and diarrheal diseases. Hand washing levels pre-Ebola were less than 20 percent, but all indications are that this improved significantly during the Ebola response. This initiative will positively contribute to a continuation of this improvement.

The UNICEF Representative, Geoff Wiffin said: "In the Agenda for Prosperity, the Government has committed to prioritising WASH services and with DFID we want to support that goal and make improved water and sanitation a reality for many more people in Sierra Leone."

## HEALTH

### Solar fridges – strengthening the supply chain system in order to reduce maternal and child mortality



***As part of its work with the President's Recovery Priorities, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) is focusing on reducing vaccine preventable diseases in Sierra Leone. A President's Recovery Priorities' initiative to install solar fridges in PHUs throughout Sierra Leone, will improve cold chain management and help realise the full benefit of immunisation.***

**I**n the Agenda for Prosperity, an efficient, well managed procurement and supply chain management system is one of the steps central to health care delivery, and critical for the success of the free health care policy.

WHO figures state that vaccines can reduce vaccine preventable diseases by over 80%. Maintaining the vaccine cold chain (proper vaccine temperatures during storing and handling) is necessary to preserve potency and in the last four months, MOHS has supplied 100 Solar Refrigerators with support from GAVI, UNICEF, World Bank and other partners.

These are being installed in Tonkolili, Kenema, Kono, Western Area, Koinadugu and Bombali. The use of off-grid solar power is a cost-efficient energy solution for rural areas not connected to the national grid.

Levuma is a hard to reach village in Kenema. Its Health Centre is one of seven in the district that has received a fridge. The absence of a fridge had been a challenge for both health workers and their patients. Nurse Aminata Lolley, at Levuma explains the challenging vaccine process before the fridge was installed. "We had to store our vaccines in Kenema which is 17 miles away and schedule immunisation at long intervals to avoid the expense of frequently collecting vaccines from storage points," she explained. The installation of the fridge has helped them improve on immunisation coverage, preserve vaccine potency and improve service delivery.

Twenty-eight-year old Josephine Jenneh Bockarie, is the mother of five children. She lives at Kwakor village, 14 miles from the Levuma. In the past, she shuttled between her home and the clinic several times before finally getting her children vaccinated, but now she says that the vaccines are readily available each time she takes her children to the health centre.

Administering the vaccines is Musa Nyama, who explains that the new fridge means that clinic attendance is now regular and there has been a marked improvement in vaccine coverage.

# The Minister of Trade and Industry answers our questions on institutional feeding



*Following up on last month's update on institutional feeding, Capt. Momodu Allieu Pat-Sowe, Minister of Trade and Industry, explains exactly why it plays an important role in improving SMSE access to markets.*

**Q. Please explain what is meant by institutional feeding?**

Institutional feeding refers to the provision of food items to public institutions such as the police, the military, and correctional services, paid for from the Ministry of Finance's Consolidated

Fund. In the context of the President's Recovery Priorities, The Ministry of Trade & Industry (MTI) is working with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) to add value to Sierra Leone's farm products and find new markets for them, notably by increasing the quantity of locally sourced rice in institutional feeding contracts.

**Q. Why is the President's Recovery Priorities process focusing on institutional feeding?**

Rice is our most important crop. However, we are dependent on importation. Over \$100m of rice is imported annually, which represents a substantial part of national consumption. At the same time, the Government of Sierra Leone spends close to \$10m every year to feed these public institutions with imported rice. The institutional feeding sub-initiative is therefore critical for reducing the proportion of imported rice, thus also reducing the Government's use of foreign currency against the backdrop of austerity measures. This is also in line with our Local Content Act of 2015, which stipulates that "for the supply of food products to public institutions, first consideration shall be given to locally produced food."

**Q. How important is this initiative to growing the market for local rice?**

Although rice farming brings livelihoods to about 3.5 million farmers, the small number of commercial enterprises combined with mixed cropping practices by smallholders contributes to low rice yields. Developing our local rice market is therefore critical for transforming our agriculture sector, creating jobs, and growing our economy.

In particular, supporting entrepreneurs to develop "at-scale" operations is the key to unlocking the potential of rice, and Government plays a key role in improving the business environment for commercial producers. Most of these commercial producers have extensive out-grower schemes

supporting thousands of farmers. In addition to improving their livelihoods, they are also critical for the effective distribution of quality inputs and transferring know-how, which contributes directly to increasing the competitiveness of our local rice. Rice accounts for 40% of total calories, and is essential to the Sierra Leonean diet. Growing our domestic rice market is therefore also critical to improving the food security and nutrition of our local communities.

**Q. What percentage of local rice would MTI like to see in institutional feeding contracts?**

In the first year, 10% local sourcing is being considered for targeted institutions, this will gradually increase based on the success of this pilot and increased customer demand.

For example, the Sierra Leone Police requires 12,800 bags of 50kg per month to feed their officers, which represents 1,280 bags of local rice. We are confident that local companies can meet the specifications of our institutions.

There is no doubt in my mind that, in Sierra Leone today, it is possible to buy local rice with the same standards as imported rice, and it is even better tasting and more nutritious.

**Q. What is the Ministry of Trade and Industry doing to facilitate this?**

Although anchored in the Ministry of Trade, this initiative requires the highest level of coordination and leadership across Government. The Minister of Agriculture and I meet regularly to discuss institutional feeding and how we can support our local private sector.

We have conducted detailed assessments of the production and milling capacities of major local players. They welcome this opportunity and are committed to providing rice under the institutional feeding scheme.

My team in MTI has also met with the procurement units of all targeted institutions to understand their quality and quantity specifications for local sourcing; there is general buy-in from these institutions but procurement processes are complex and require careful review. The process is now well underway and we are confident that delivery will start in January for some of these institutions.

Our facilitation role also includes engaging with the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Sierra Leone to discuss financing and guarantee mechanisms; our local private sector has a bottom line and we need to respect that for this initiative to be sustainable.

With harvest season upon us, the time to take responsibility and act accordingly is now! The institutional feeding initiative represents a unique opportunity to achieve impact during this recovery period, and to initiate a longer-term economic transformation that is vital to achieving our Agenda for Prosperity.