



Republic of Sierra Leone

*OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COORDINATION OFFICE
(DACO)*

DRAFT REPORT

OF

THE FIRST QUARTER

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
(DEPAC)

HELD AT
COUNTRY LODGE, HILL STATION
FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE
6TH APRIL 2006

INTRODUCTION

1. At the 4th Consultative Group (CG) meeting on Sierra Leone held in London on the 29-30th November 2005, the Government of Sierra Leone and its development partners agreed henceforth on convening quarterly DEPAC meetings to discuss among others, progress on the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Consequently, the First Quarter Sierra Leone Development Partnership Committee (DEPAC) meeting took place at the Country Lodge, Hill Station, on 6th April 2006. The meeting was to examine progress made in terms of implementation of the PRSP and the actions taken to ensure that the outcomes from the CG meeting are being accomplished. In addition, the pledges made at the CG meeting were analysed and Action Plans for Capacity Building, Youth Employment and HIV/AIDS were presented. The meeting also looked at the status of the financing mechanism that was presented at the CG i.e. the Trust Fund and the Multi Donor Budgetary Support (MDBS). The meeting discussed the proposal for an annual CG meeting was also endorsed

2. The meeting was chaired by the Honorable Vice President, Mr. Solomon E. Berewa and co-chaired by Mr. Victor Angelo and Mr. James Sackey in their capacities as Resident Representative of UNDP and the Country Manager for World Bank respectively. In attendance were cabinet ministers, representatives from the EU, World Bank, DFID, Germany, USA, China, Swiss Development Cooperation, French Cooperation, Irish Aid, Japan, the UN country team and international and national NGOs.

OPENING STATEMENTS

3. In his opening remarks, the Vice President, on behalf of His Excellency, the President and people of Sierra Leone extended a hearty welcome to all at the first DEPAC meeting after the CG meeting. He then expressed sincere gratitude and appreciation for the significant support Sierra Leone continue to receive as we strive to consolidate the peace and stability and also, in our drive to alleviate poverty in Sierra Leone. The Vice President recognized and appreciated the presence of the regular DEPAC members, which included DFID-UK, the EU, the German Embassy, the Irish, USA, Swiss, Japanese and Chinese governments and the UN Country Team.

4. *Update since the CG Meeting.* The Vice President highlighted the key conclusions reached with the development partners at the CG meeting as follows:

- The estimated disbursement from government's development partners for the period 2005-2007 was around US\$800million. This figure he noted excludes the expected debt relief from the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and other multilateral debt relief initiatives.
- The meeting agreed that an annual CG meeting should be held to ensure alignment of donor support to the PRSP and the budget cycle as well as facilitate the review of progress.
- DEPAC should be held quarterly.

- A Working Group comprising of government and representatives from donors should be established to facilitate discussions on harmonization and aid effectiveness based on the Paris Declaration.
- An agreement was reached to launch the PRSP Trust Fund and a Multi Donor Budget Support (MDBS) programme.

On the Side Meetings, it was agreed that the Capacity Building Task Force should continue its work and ensure that a comprehensive capacity building programme is finalized and adopted by government; assistance for HIV/AIDS should be coordinated through the National Aids Secretariat; and that the issue of youth employment should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

5. The Vice President informed the meeting on progress made since the CG meeting. This is summarized as follows:

- Analysis of the pledges made at the CG meeting to determine new commitments as against on-going donor support.
- The conversion of the PRSP Activity matrix into Action Plans for 2006 to form the basis for PRS implementation and the reformatting of the Results Framework to facilitate regular updates on the indicators.
- Establishment of a Government Wide Monitoring System, which requires government institutions to report on progress on a quarterly basis.
- The harmonization process is on track as evidenced by the participation of government at the workshop on Paris Declaration on Harmonisation and Aid Effectiveness held in Bamako, Mali.

6. In concluding, the Vice President gave an update on the key activities that the government would be implemented in 2006 and these include issues dealing with security, peace, good governance, food security, private sector development, energy, education, health and water and sanitation.

7. Mr. Victor Angelo in his capacity as UNDP Resident Representative and co-chair thanked the government for convening DEPAC and further expressed satisfaction on behalf of the donors on the technical details of the presentations. He commended Government for the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that are being put in place for the PRSP. Mr. Angelo stated that donors have been very supportive to DACO and that they are pleased that things are moving forward at the technical level. He however cautioned that there is need to strengthen the implementation capacity of MDAs, establish better coordination mechanisms between key MDAs, enhance the complementarity between local councils and central government and improve sensitization of civil society.

8. Mr. Angelo further stated that the UNDP is strengthening its coordination mechanism and focusing its programmes around issues relating to the PRSP and political governance. These will: increasing the capacity of the security agencies to address internal and external threats; democratization and human rights; fight against corruption; youth employment; food security; gender; and HIV/AIDS. Specifically, attention will be focused on the elections in 2007, resource mobilization for the elections, implementation of the recommendations of the TRC report and empowering local authorities to participate in governance.

9. Mr. Angelo concluded by recognizing the cordial partnership between the government and NGOs in poverty reduction. He however stated that concern is being raised by NGOs with regards to the processing of work permits for expatriate personnel. He pointed out that the fee costs involved in acquiring work permit could be prohibitive and needs to be looked at by government. Finally, the UNDP is looking forward to the partnership with the government of Sierra Leone in implementing the Peace Consolidation Strategy.

10. Mr. James Sackey, in his capacity as the World Bank Country Manager in Sierra Leone informed the meeting that the Chairman's report for the CG meeting has been completed and is due for circulation. He intimated that the CG meeting should be seen as the transition from recovery to development and therefore highlighted three key outcomes from the CG as topical for discussion at DEPAC. These include resource mobilization, future CG meetings and harmonization agenda. With regards to resource mobilization, Mr. Sackey noted that since the pledges made at the CG meeting are in excess of US\$800 million, the Government should strive to improve upon its absorptive capacity. On future CG meetings, he urged the meeting to take a decision convening a CG meeting in 2006.

PRESENTATIONS

11. Institutional Framework for the Implementation and Monitoring of the PRS.

The Director of DACO Mr. Kawusu Kebbay presented the institutional framework for monitoring the poverty reduction strategy. The pyramid structure identifies four levels representing Local Council, the Pillar Working Groups, the National Technical Committee and DEPAC. Monitoring starts at the district level and the information feeds into the pillars working groups. The pillars groups validate the information and send to the National Technical Committee. Upon validation, the NTC send the various reports to DEPAC for adoption and actions. The composition of the pillar working groups was also presented and the proposal to establish monitoring committees at the district level was also endorsed.

Mr. Kebbay stressed that the design is based on the fact that there should be a very strong linkage (upward and downward) between the various committees in the pyramid to enhance exchange of ideas and quick decision making.

Comments:

- There were suggestions that the membership of the Pillar Working Groups should be expanded to include other relevant government institutions.
- Donors were encouraged to categorise themselves accordingly in the various pillars and that they should communicate this to DACO.
- The intervention of NGOs in poverty reduction was seen as very critical and for this reason we need to know what aspect of the PRSP is being implemented by NGOs so as to facilitate monitoring of their activities, resources, etc.

12. Following the discussions, government and donors agreed that:

- i. MODEP should prepare a discussion paper to be discussed by the high level committee. This paper should focus on the impediment to implementation for example registration of NGOs, cost of work permit etc.
- ii. All NGOs should align their activities to the priorities in the PRSP.
- iii. NGOs should provide information on their activities so these can be included in the Results Framework.

13. Analysis of CG Pledges: The Financial Secretary, Dr. Samura Kamara presented the analysis on pledges made at the CG meeting by development partner and sector. Partners were therefore asked to validate the information relating to various institutions.

14. HIV/AIDS Implementation Plan in 2006: The Acting Director of the National Aids Secretariat, Dr. Brima Kargbo stated that for 2006 their focus will be on four key areas: improved coordination of HIV/AIDS activities in the country; mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into all sectors; reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and mitigating its impact; and gender equity and reduction of family violence. He highlighted several activities that would be implemented to address issues relating to the four broad areas.

15. Comments:

- Donors were encouraged that Sierra Leone is treating the issue of HIV/AIDS very seriously as evidenced by the low prevalence rate. However, the issue of coordination and networking among the various players in the sector should be adequately assessed to ensure maximum output and better utilization of resources.
- The issue of stigmatization should be seriously addressed especially in work places.
- The role of educational institutions in the fight against the disease should be considered.

16. Following the discussions, government and donors agreed that:

- Support to NAS should be increased to strengthen their coordination role in implementation of HIV/AIDS related activities and programmes.
- On coordination, there is need to establish a clear distinction between coordination and implementation.
- There is need to explore the possibility of establishing a coordination mechanism that will involve other countries in the sub-region.
- The role of educational institutions should be factored in to the overall strategy in the fight against HIV/AIDS.
- Sensitisation and Public Education on HIV/AIDS should be focused on addressing the stigma associated with the disease.

17. Capacity Building Plan for 2006: The Minister of Public and Presidential Affairs, Dr. Sheku Sesay stated that the capacity building programme for the successful

implementation of the PRSP is made up of four components. These include: the institutional development; human resource development; public service reform to ensure capacity retention and sustainability; and enhancing civil society and private sector development. Dr. Sesay identified key activities and targets for the implementing the capacity building action plan for 2006. He noted that the issue of funding for the implementation of most of planned activities is very crucial if the programme is to succeed and encouraged other donors to join with DFID, UNDP and World Bank in supporting some of the activities.

18. Comments:

- The link between training and employment creation need further clarification and should be adequately addressed.
- The costing of the Senior Executive Service (SES) scheme should be seriously reviewed and the funding mechanism should be properly addressed.

19 . Following the discussions, the following were agreed upon by government and donors:

- That the government of Sierra Leone should determine the preferred financing mechanism for support to the Capacity Building Programme i.e either budget support or project financing.
- That Government should also decide on whether the mode of implementation would be selective or comprehensive.
- That effort should now be focused on determining the cost required for the implementation of the recommendations of the Management and Functional Reviews.

20. Youth Employment Plan for 2006: The Minister of Youth and Sport, Dr. Denis Bright pointed out that issue of youth employment is critical to the overall economic development of the country and for this reason the focus of the Ministry will be to promote employment opportunities for youth in the formal and informal sectors. The Minister stressed that the creation of Youth Agricultural Farm Schemes, Youth Enterprise Development Programmes and the establishment of National Youth Council will be promoted by the Ministry. In addition, a National Sports Policy will be formulated and the Ministry will take up Sports for Development and Peace Programmes and practices. He encouraged donors to seriously consider the proposed activities in the light of the potential benefits to the hundreds of unemployed youths in the country.

21. The following were agreed upon:

- That the Ministry of Youth and Sport should liaise with all other MDAs to fast track the implementation of the Youth Employment Programme.

22. Other issues considered by DEPAC included:

- EU's upcoming consultative meeting on the 10th EDF for Sierra Leone. MODEP was requested to coordinate the participation of other MDAs.
- The draft of the Legal Instrument for the establishment of the PRSP Trust Fund has been completed and should be made available to the government of Sierra Leone.

- Two test runs have been conducted by the government on 11 benchmarks in the Progress Assessment Framework (PAF) for the MDBS.
- A Task Force on Harmonisation was proposed and a more detailed discussion on the issue should be done at the next DEPAC.
- The next annual CG will be held in September 2006 in Freetown.

22. Closing Remarks

In closing, the Vice President thanked donors for their support in ensuring a successful CG in London. He also re-affirmed government's continued reliance on their support and commended all for a very productive and highly participatory meeting.

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