

*(A statement delivered by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology at the National Symposium 2003)*

Your Excellency – the President of Sierra Leone,  
Colleague Cabinet Ministers, etc., etc.

Since my last national symposium presentation, I am happy to report that the Ministry has made further advances in its endeavour to provide the nation with the foundation for building a better and a greater Sierra Leone.

***Introduction***

At independence, we inherited a Western-type education system, aimed largely at the urban middle class. The system was biased towards academically gifted students, who entered tertiary education and finally found formal employment in government offices. In essence the system was aimed at nurturing civil servants and government administrators in the colonial and independent government. Yet the majority of Sierra Leoneans, unable to afford formal education were excluded from the education system. Few vocational or technical institutions existed to cater for this majority who could not complete formal schooling. Given the exclusive nature of the country's education system, it is not surprising that literacy levels remained low, 8% at Independence and that in the 70s fewer than 15% of children aged between 5-11 attended school, and only 5% of children between 12 and 16 years were in secondary school.

In the period after 1970, the socio-economic situation in the country became progressively worse, adversely affecting the education sector in particular. From an annual increase in enrolment of 6% between 1970 and 1985, enrolment in primary school declined by 2% on average in the period from 1985 to 1990.

A direction of change for education in Sierra Leone had been recommended way back in 1984 in a White Paper on education titled All Our Future. The need for expansion of access to quality primary education and exposure of our students to technical and vocational options were well articulated in the document. The recommendations were further affirmed in the Mondeh-Fewry Report of the 1980s, yet tangible steps were not taken to bring about change.

The consequence of the above is that we have had to endure a period in our history when education was subjected to deliberate and vicious attack. A period when the perpetrators were largely supposed beneficiaries of the education system and when the majority of the perpetrators and victims were school-aged youths. The system has emerged victorious and with the input and changes introduced by this government, the present desire for and value accorded to education is truly breath-taking.

## ***Mission Statement***

Having evolved from the Ministry of Education, Youths and Sports to that of Education, Science and Technology, a change in the mission statement of the Ministry has been necessitated. The new mission statement includes the following:

### ***Education***

- *Overall responsibility for Education, Science and Technology in Sierra Leone*
- *Supervision of all educational institutions*
- *Development of appropriate policies and programmes for Education, Science and Technology*
- *Minimising the possibility of cost being a barrier to accessing education through, among other things, free primary education for all children and ultimately free and compulsory basic education*
- *Maximising access to education of the highest quality possible with the resources available*
- *Provisioning of life sustaining skills for those who drop out of formal schools*
- *Resumption of school broadcasting*
- *Provision of basic school materials for all school*
- *Sensitising the public on all aspects of education*

### ***Science and Technology***

- *Promotion of technical and vocational education through, among other things, middle-level manpower skills training*
- *Development of interest in Science and Technology starting at the Primary level*
- *Provision of equipment and materials for science and technical/vocational education.*
- *Development of indigenous technology and encouraging the absorption and adaptation of imported technology to meet our national priorities and resources.*
- *Increasing the role of Science and Technology in the attainment of economic and social development.*
- *Contributing to Government's overall poverty alleviation strategy*

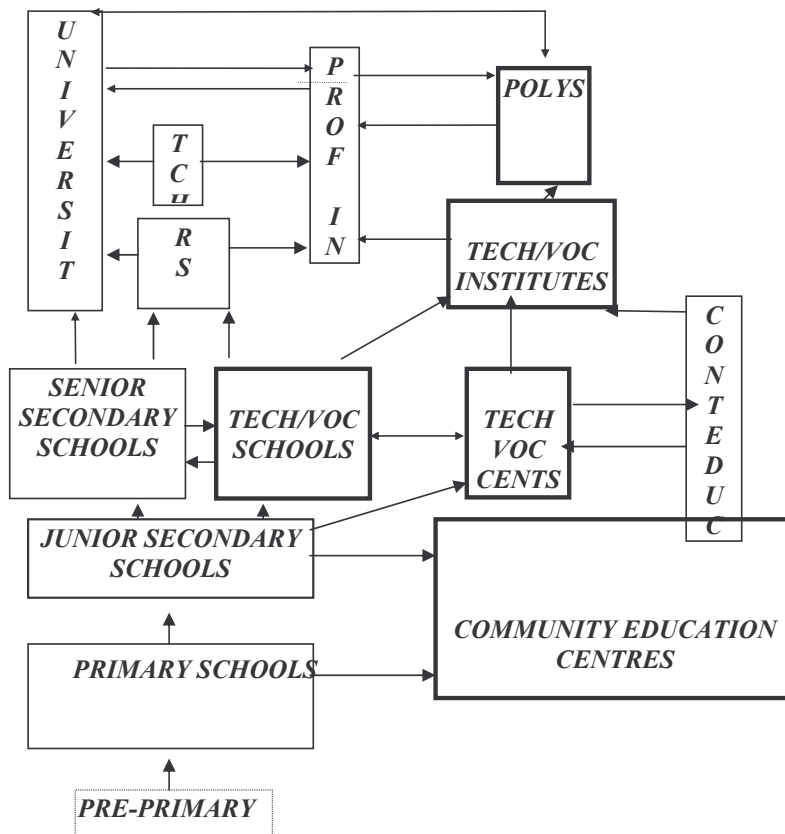
## ***The Context: Trends and Present Status of Education***

### ***The School System***

The system of education presently in operation in Sierra Leone is known as the 6-3-3-4 system is tailored around the White Paper – All Our Future. But around the time of its launching and its introduction to the people of Sierra Leone, parts of the Eastern Region could not be accessed and some districts in the North received only a superficial introduction to the system.

The 6-3-3-4 system as it presently operates is shown diagrammatically below:

*The Educational System*



The numbers 6-3-3-4 represent - 6 years of formal primary schooling/education, 3 years of Junior Secondary schooling/education, 3 years of post-junior secondary schooling/education and 4 years of tertiary level education leading to a first degree. Additionally, the Ministry has in the last few years given increased attention to pre-school / pre-primary education because of the overwhelming evidence that early childhood care, health and education influences much of what happens later in life. It has also been placing much emphasis on technical/vocational education and the provision of vocational skills training.

Some of the main features of the 6-3-3-4 System are as follows:

- a. The primary school curriculum is transformed to include Indigenous Languages, Practical Creative Arts, Pre-Vocational Subjects, Social Studies and Physical Health Education.
- b. The secondary level is divided into two sub-levels each of 3 years duration; the Junior Secondary School (JSS) and the Senior Secondary School (SSS). Each level has as an end point and external examination, the Basic Education

Certificate Examination (BECE) for the JSS and the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) for the SSS. The grades for BECE and WASSCE are partly determined by the Continuous Assessment scores obtained at each level.

- c. The curriculum at the secondary level emphasises mathematics, the sciences vocational and technical subjects, at the expense of the humanities.
- d. Greater emphasis is given to technical/vocational education and polytechnics, which never existed previously, are introduced.
- e. Sierra Leone Language systematically studied at the JSS level.
- f. Continuous Assessment and Guidance and Counselling are integral parts of the system.
- g. Facilitates movement from school to the world of employment.
- h. Takes cognisance of the importance of the non-formal system and provides an interface between it and the formal system.

The move to the 6-3-3-4, system of education should be seen as a bold attempt to move the country away from a predominantly grammar school type of education, which takes neither the varied talents of the pupils nor the socio-economic needs of the country into account. In particular it puts technical/vocational education at the heart of the system whilst at the same time making provisions for other types of education.

#### Demand and Access

The demand for education continues to increase and the Ministry continues to increase provision.

*Table 1 – Percentage of Pre-Primary School Age Children in Structured Education*

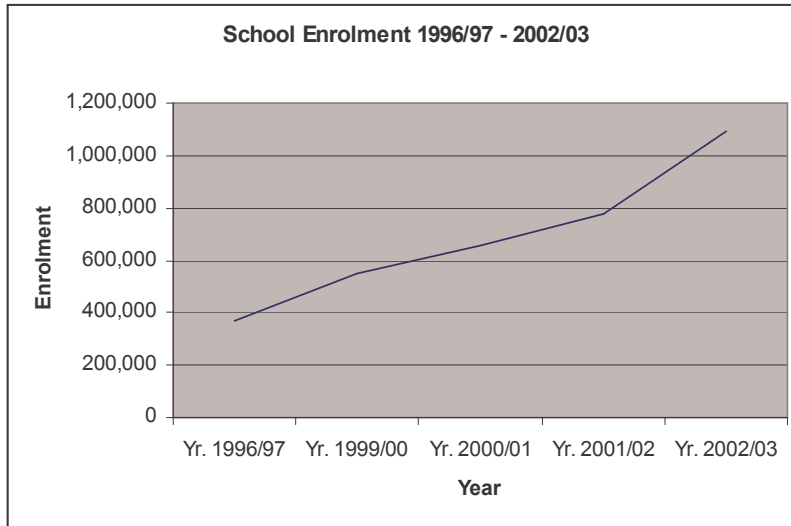
<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
4.3%	14.5%	10.4%	31.2%

Cognisant of the fact that educational disadvantage starts even before primary school age and conscious of the home background of the majority of children, the Ministry has commenced on a promotion of pre-school education and the establishment of the framework needed for a structured and successful national pre-primary education programme.

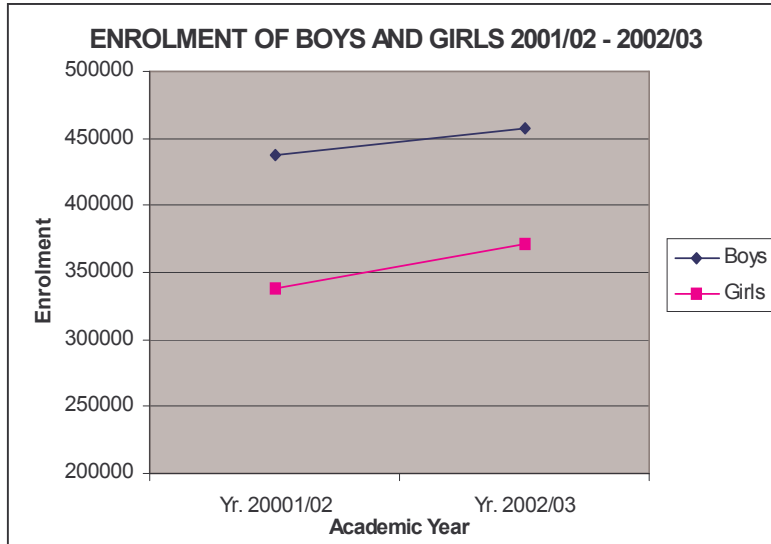
As access increases so overall enrolment in schools has also increased. This is shown quite clearly in the table and chart below.

**Table 2 – Total School Enrolment 1999/2000 – 2002/03**

1996/97	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
367,920	548,059	659,503	775,434	1,092,721

**Chart 1 – Enrolment 1996/97 – 2002/03**

The increase in enrolment has been for both boys and girls but considering that the ratio of girls to boys in the population is greater than 1:1, the under representation of girls is quite apparent from the chart below.

**Chart 2 – Male and Female Enrolment in Schools 2001/02 – 2002/03**

It is this low enrolment of girls shown in the above table that the Ministry now intends to address in a phased and prioritised manner.

### ***Girls' Education***

The districts and regions are not equally disadvantaged in terms of the enrolment of girls.

*Table 3 : Enrolment by Level and Gender*

<b>School Level</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% By Level</b>
1. Formal Primary	369,953	289,550	659,503	85
2. Formal Secondary	58,832	36,263	95,095	12
3. Other Basic Education Program	6,622	9,412	16,034	2
N/A	2,635	2,167	4,802	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>438042</b>	<b>337392</b>	<b>775434</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>G/B Ratio</b>				<b>77.0</b>

*Table 4: Girl-Boy Enrolment Ratio and Primary-Secondary Enrolment Ratio by District*

<u>Educational District</u>	<u>Primary G/B Ratio</u>	<u>Secondary G/B Ratio</u>
KAILAHUN	71.8	18.2
KENEMA	80.1	50.1
KONO	60.8	65.0
BOMBALI	71.0	37.2
KAMBIA	57.7	28.4
KOINADUGU	67.2	37.1
PORT LOKO 1	66.8	50.4
PORT LOKO 2	86.2	45.0
TONKOLILI 1	78.9	53.8
TONKOLILI 2	78.6	43.7
BO	83.3	52.1
BONTHE 1	93.3	56.7
BONTHE 2	91.9	0
MOYAMBA	82.1	34.2
PUJEHUN	77.4	45.4
RURAL	88.7	63.4
URBAN	92.6	90.3
N/A	101.1	35.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78.3</b>	<b>61.6</b>

The most disadvantaged regions are the North and the East. It is for this reason that girls passing for JSSs in these two regions will as from September 2003 receive free junior secondary education.

### ***Complimentary Rapid Education for Primary Schools (CREPS)***

In this years NPSE a few of the candidates were as old as 27 years of age. All of these and the many 16 year olds and above that sat the NPSE have had their education put back by the recently ended decade long conflict. At the MEST we are determined that no Sierra Leonean wishing to acquire education should be denied the opportunity. In this regard, we have encouraged our partners to continue with the Complimentary Rapid Education for Primary Schools (CREPS) programme for 'over-aged' children. As I speak to you, thousands of children all over the country are benefiting from the programme as the tables below show:

***Table 5 - The Status of CREPS as of August 2002***

<b><i>District</i></b>	<b><i>Implementing Agency</i></b>	<b><i>Centres</i></b>	<b><i>Classes</i></b>	<b><i>Teachers</i></b>	<b><i>Pupils</i></b>
Port Loko	MEST	24	68	68	3,270
Kenema	MEST	8	46	46	1,700
Kailahun	MEST	13	46	46	2,530
<b><i>Total</i></b>		<b><i>45</i></b>	<b><i>160</i></b>	<b><i>160</i></b>	<b><i>7,500</i></b>

***Table 6 - The CREPS Expansion Effective September 2003***

<b><i>District</i></b>	<b><i>Implementing Agency</i></b>	<b><i>Centres</i></b>	<b><i>Classes</i></b>	<b><i>Teachers</i></b>	<b><i>Pupils</i></b>
Port Loko	MEST	24	60	60	4,800
Kono	NRC	20	55	55	2,200
Kambia	NRC	40	157	157	6,280
Bombali	MEST	20	81	81	3,240
Koinadugu	MEST	15	40	40	1,400
Kailahun	NRC	65	113	113	4,520
<b><i>Total</i></b>		<b><i>184</i></b>	<b><i>506</i></b>	<b><i>506</i></b>	<b><i>22,530</i></b>

### ***Quality Issues and School Level Outputs***

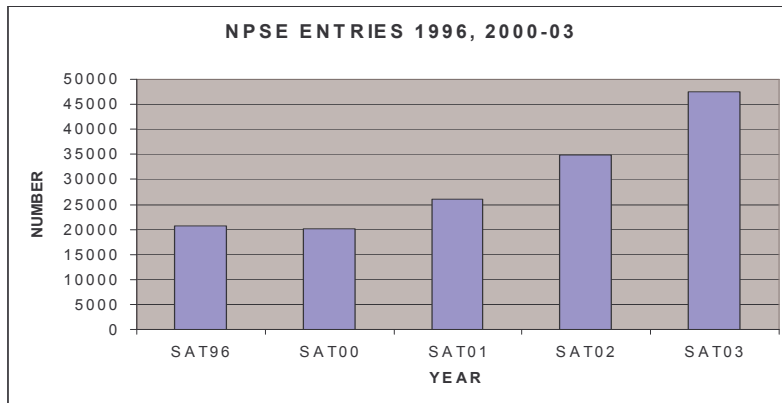
#### ***Examination Entries and Pass Rates***

The numbers attempting the various school level examinations continue to increase yearly as the table and charts below show:

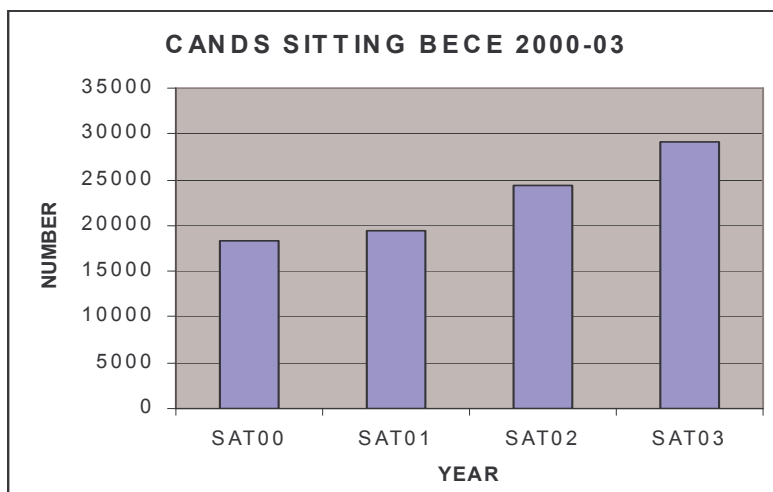
***Table 7 – NPSE Entries and Passes 1995 - 2003***

<b><i>Year</i></b>	<b><i>Sat</i></b>	<b><i>Pass</i></b>	<b><i>% Pass</i></b>	<b><i>Cut-Off Score</i></b>
1995	20,534	18,516	90.2	200
1996	20,691	19,199	92.8	200
1997/98	23,842	21,977	92.2	200
1999	18,907	16,872	93.5	200
2000	21,005	18,681	92.5	200
2001	26,451	20,705 (24,229)	78.3 (91.6)	220
2002	34,931	28,181	81	220
2003	46,851	37,117	79.2	220

*Chart 3 – NPSE Entries*



*Chart 4 – BECE Entries 2000 - 2003*



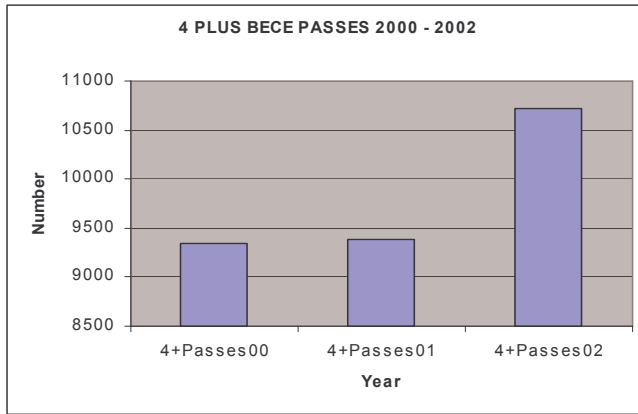
The rapid increase in the number of candidates sitting BECE shown in Chart 4 is largely due to the fee - free examination introduced.

In terms of performance however, the percentage that do well fall far short of 50% as can be seen from a comparison of Chart 4 and Table 8.

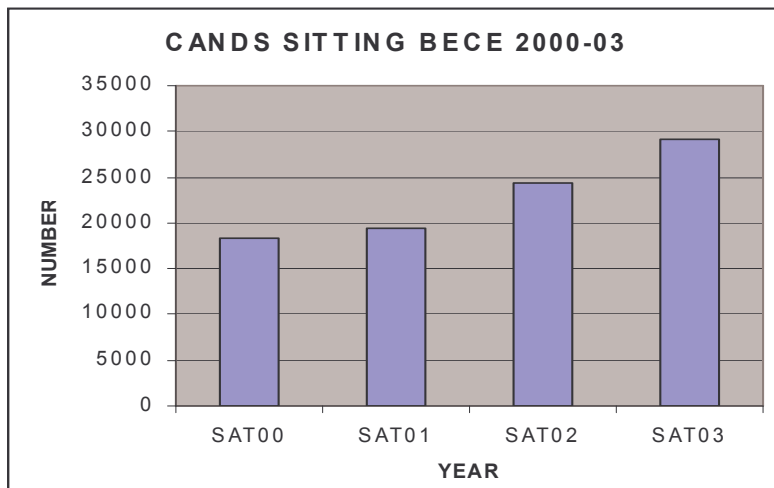
*Table 8 – BECE Passes 2000 – 2002*

4+Passes00	4+Passes01	4+Passes02
9344	9385	10723

*Chart 5*



With specific regard to the WASSCE, it is encouraging to note that since Year 2000, entries have more than quadrupled. As the WASSCE is above the former GCE 'O' level in standard and most teachers of WASSCE never taught above 'O' level, this has implications for the standard of teaching at this level. The Ministry is attempting to address the issue through in-service training but pre-service institutions need to

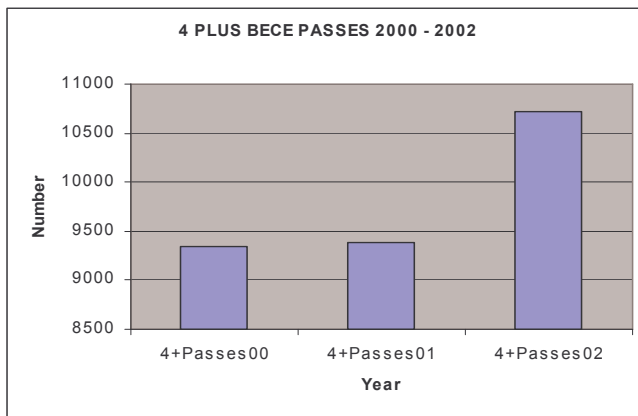


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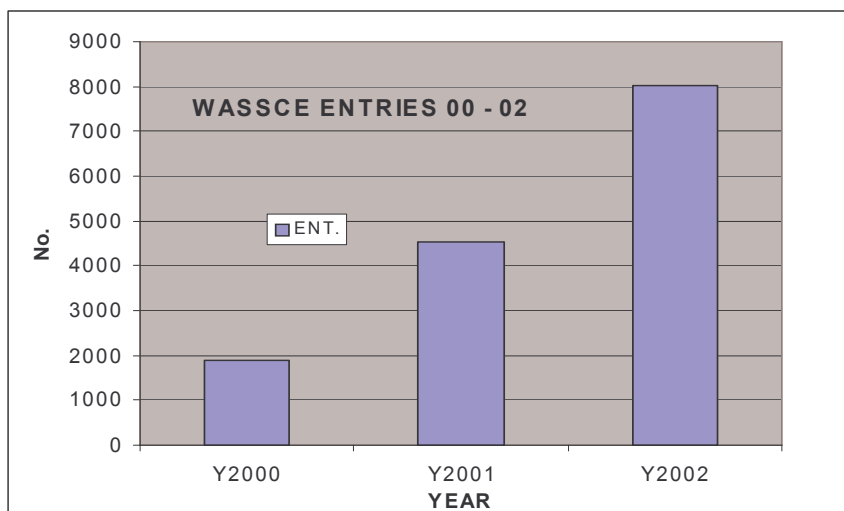
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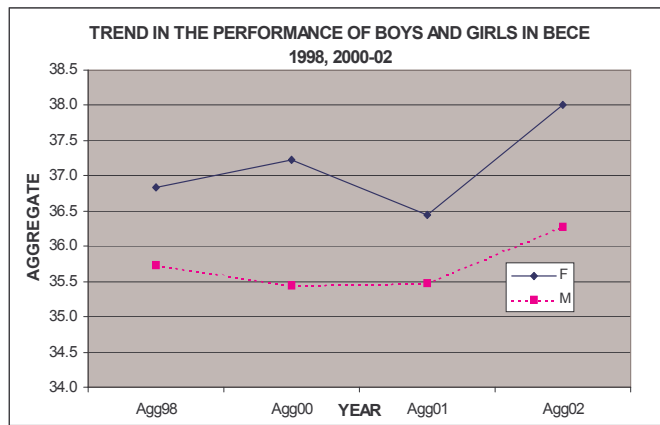
**Chart 6 – WASSCE Entries 2000 - 2002**

#### ***Trends in the Performance of Boys and Girls***

Boys have outperformed girls at BECE every year since 1998. Whilst the gap narrowed briefly in 2001, it has since started to widen again.

Note that at no time has the average aggregate been 35 or lower in the period under

Chart 7

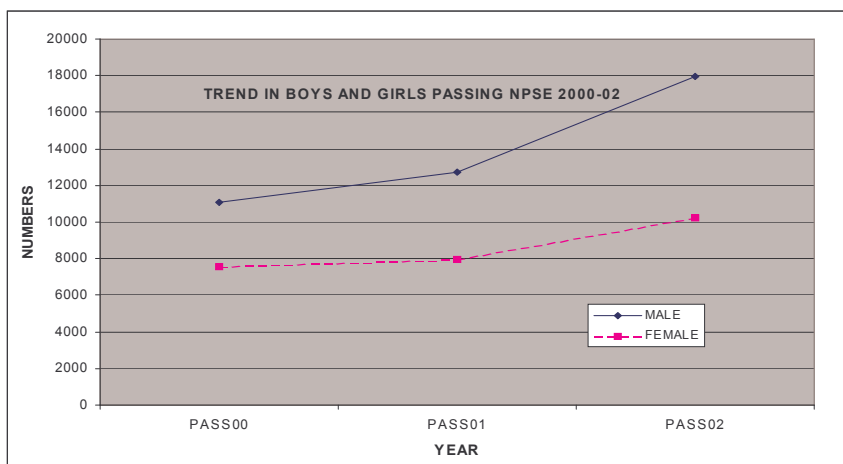


review. Even more worrisome is the fact that there appears to be no improvement in sight.

### Chart

The male : female trend in terms of performance at NPSE is very much similar to that for BECE i.e. on the average, boys outperform girls. It is worth noting however that there are as many female 'high flyers' as male 'high flyers' every year.

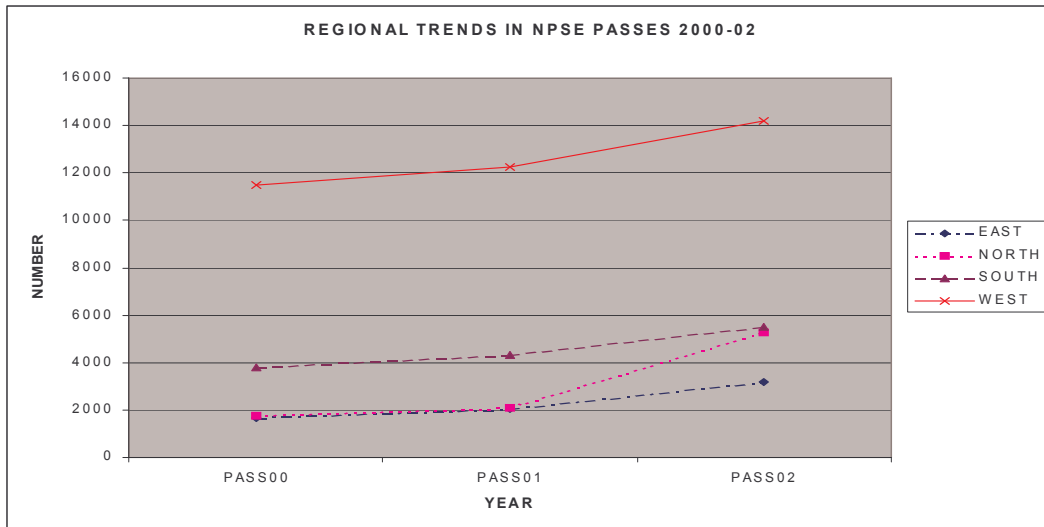
Chart 8



### Regional Trends

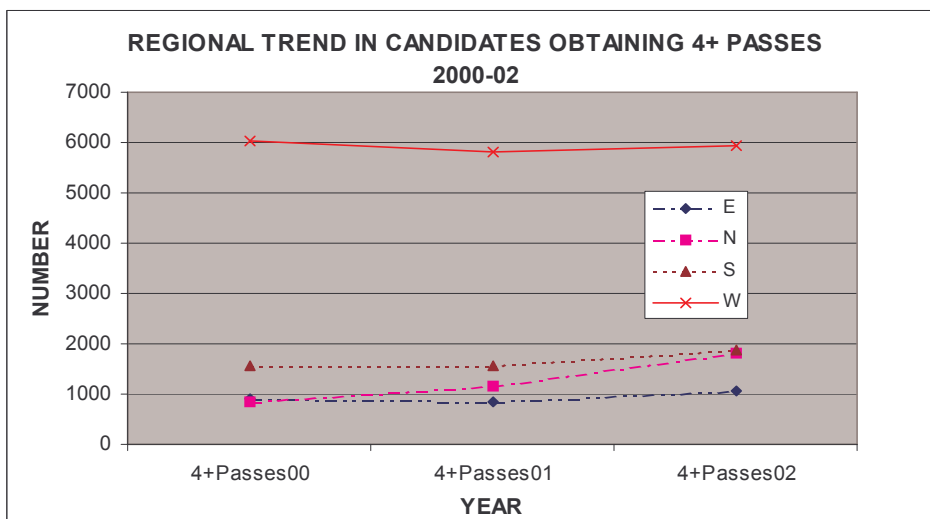
Owing to its greater number of entrants, more candidates from schools in the Western Area pass the NPSE than candidates from all the other regions. It is however worth noting that in terms of percentage passes, the Eastern Region tends to do as well as the West.

Chart 9



At BECE the regional trends are as shown below. The dominance of the Western Area in terms of numbers passing is worth noting. It is however expected that the disparity in passes will decrease as more families return to their home region.

Chart 10

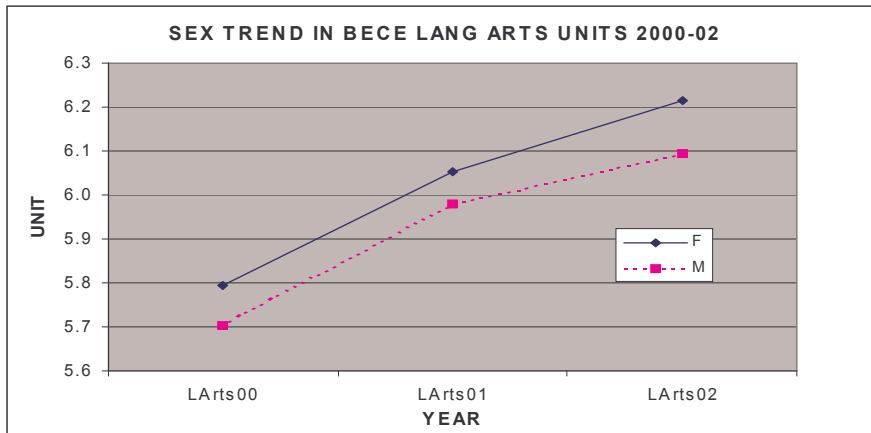


### Subject Performance

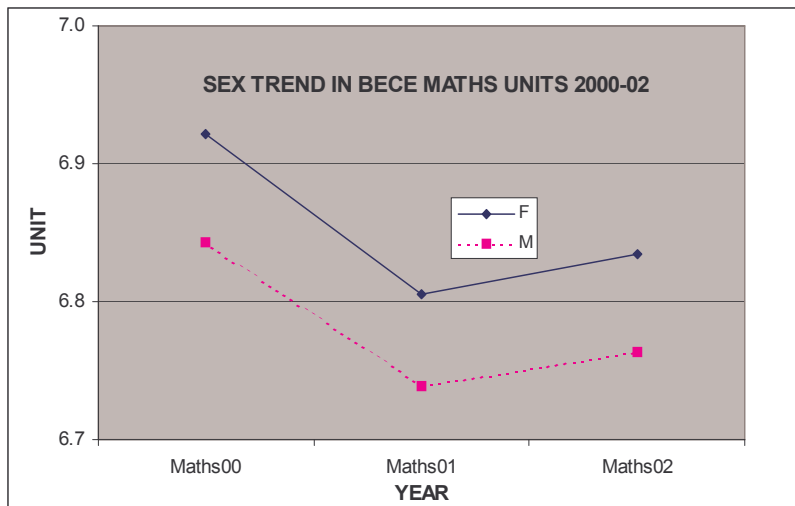
Since assessment procedures in these examinations are weighted heavily in favour of the core subjects of English, Maths, Science and Social Studies, it is worthwhile to examine achievement in some of these individual subject areas. Chart 11 and 12 below show trends in performance in Language Arts and Mathematics. Invariably

they confirm evidence gleaned from other sources about unsatisfactory performance as a whole at this level

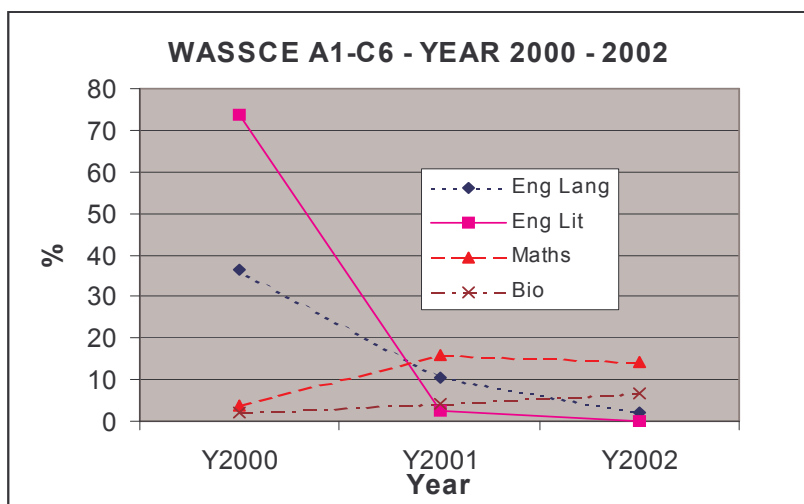
*Chart 11*



*Chart 12*



*Chart 13 – WASSCE A1s – C6s 2000 - 2002*



As in the case of the BECE, performance in English Language, Literature and Mathematics at the WASSCE level have been found rather unsatisfactory. For both English Language and Literature, the trend since Year 2000 has been calamitous – from a pass rate in excess of 70% to one of almost 0% in the case of English Literature. The suggestion from this unusual state of affairs is that a change has taken place in the syllabus and/or question paper with which teachers of the subject are not familiar. Together with WAEC, the Ministry has taken steps to investigate and address the matter and already, WAEC has held a seminar in which the Chief Examiner for English Literature has addressed teachers of the subject explaining to them the action that they need to take. The Ministry will ensure that this same seminar is repeated in all regions.

### ***Growth at the Tertiary Level***

It is worth noting that whilst enrolment in teacher colleges has been increasing as shown in the table below, the majority of the graduates come out as specialists in the teaching of the Arts subjects and not the sciences or technical/vocational subjects. It is assumed that with the merger of colleges with technical/vocational institutions to form polytechnics changes will take place in their output that will better address the scarcity we have for specialists in the sciences and technology in our schools.

***Table 9 – The Population of Teacher Colleges– 1995/96 to 2001/02***

<b><i>Institution</i></b>	<b><i>1995</i></b>	<b><i>1996</i></b>	<b><i>1997</i></b>	<b><i>1998</i></b>	<b><i>1999</i></b>	<b><i>2000</i></b>	<b><i>2001</i></b>
MMCE	835	876	1072	1057	753	1029	1050
FTC	462	364	343	429	429	645	870
MTC	371	378	390	390	390	670	810
BuTC	342	419	434	456	475	875	1010
PLTC	530	545	520	510	498	610	805

BoTC	439	504	451	496	496	806	829
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It is worthwhile noting that until very recently, the course and subject offerings of legitimate tertiary institutions were so limited that many who wish to earn tertiary level awards were compelled to pursue courses in which they are not particularly interested or gifted. In fact many end up pursuing careers relatively removed from the field in which they earned their awards. Additionally, many candidates who meet the requirements for entry into tertiary level institutions are unable to do so because of physical limitations to the intake of institutions at this level.

### ***Interventions in the Science and Technical/Vocational Sector***

#### *Equipment and Materials*

School level examination results have confirmed that the quality of teaching in some subject areas is deteriorating. The three main subject areas of concern have been English Language, Mathematics and the Sciences. The teacher can be upgraded through in-service training in some subjects, but for science, schools have tended to lack needed equipment and materials. In this regard, the MEST has this year been able, using government funds and those provided by the African Development Bank, to provide science equipment, materials and chemicals and technical/vocational subjects equipment to schools in every region of Sierra Leone. At the same time, the government has also been able to rehabilitate the laboratories of a number of schools

#### *Polytechnic Education*

The framework for the establishment of polytechnics was set by the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education, the coming into being of the 1995 New Education Policy and the passing into law of the Polytechnic Act by this government. Two polytechnics were established after the passing of the Act.

- I. Milton Margai College of Education and Technology (MMCET) comprises:
  - (a) Milton Margai College of Education
  - (b) The Technical Institute, Congo Cross
  - (c) HTTI
  
- II. Eastern Polytechnic comprises:
  - (a) Bunumbu Teachers College
  - (b) Government Technical Inst., Kenema

The polytechnics have the following faculties:

#### **1. MILTON MARGAI COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY**

**(a) Faculty Of Education – Offers subjects such as:**

- Language Arts (Modern and Indigenous)
- Education
- Community Development

**(b) Faculty Of Engineering Sciences – Offers subjects such as:**

- Building and Civil Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Automobile Engineering

**(C) Faculty Of Environmental Sciences**

- Mathematics
- Home Economics
- Agricultural Sciences

**(d) Faculty Of Business and Management Studies – Offers subjects such**

*as:*

- Business Studies & Management
- Secretarial Studies
- Banking

**(e) Faculty Of Hotel, Tourism and Nutritional Studies – Offers subjects such as:**

- Hotel and Catering Management
- Tourism Studies
- Nutritional Science

**II EASTERN POLYTECHNIC**

**(a) Faculty Of Education – Offers subjects such as:**

- Language Arts
- Indigenous Languages
- Teacher Education

**(b) Faculty Of Technical And Vocational Studies**

- Agricultural Science
- Forestry
- Secretarial Studies

Although it has had teething problems, the two polytechnics have coped successfully with the problems and this year the Milton Margai College of Education and Technology produced the first set of polytechnic graduands as shown in the table below:

Table 10 : Milton Margai College Of Education And Technology Graduands 2000 And 2002

Faculty	LEVEL OF COURSE					No. of Polytechnic Graduands (2002)	TOTAL
	Cert.	Dip.	HND	HTC	Degree		
Education	7	144		301	98	168	550
Environmental Sciences		5		77		5	82
Tourism and Nutritional Sciences	70	17				27	87
Business and Management Studies	151	64		87	8	52	310
Engineering Sciences	110	53	11	20	1	1	195

It is worth noting that 253 polytechnic students graduated and the MMCET anticipates 1,000 polytechnic graduands in 2005.

### *.Cost of Interventions*

#### *School Fees Subsidy*

In addition to the examination fees subsidies which it pays to the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), government pays the school fees of all primary level students and, starting in September 2003, the school fees of all girls in JSS 1 in schools in the Eastern Region and Northern Region who passed the 2003 NPSE. Payment of the subsidies is made directly to individual schools. For the Year 2003, the amount budgeted is Le billion. In order to minimise the possibility of fraud and other corrupt practices, payment is being carried out by KPMG.

Table 11 – Primary Fees Subsidy – 2000 –2003

Year	Total Amount (Le)
2000	1,680,000,000
2001	2,069,852,640
2002	2,812,500,000
2003	3,609,000,000

#### *Examination Fees Subsidy*

The increase in the numbers sitting school level examinations has been aided by payment of all fees since year 2002 as the table below shows. It is worth noting that payment for the NPSE which started a year earlier than for BECE and WASSCE, has more than tripled since 2001. It is also worth noting that primary school student numbers are increasing at such a rate that the number of candidates and therefore the fee subsidy should increase significantly in the next few years.

Table 12 - Payment of School Examinations Fees Subsidy 2001 - 2003

<i>Year</i>	<i>NPSE</i>	<i>BECE</i>	<i>WASSCE</i>
2001	Le324,000,000		
2002	Le544,626,240	Le980,860,800	Le619,800,000
2003	Le1,050,000,000	Le1,488,600,000	Le686,100,000

### *Textbooks*

The government is committed to improving the quality of education. In this regard, free core textbooks are being supplied to primary schools. For the year 2003, approximately Le2.3 billion is being spent on the purchase of primary textbooks and Le320 million on junior secondary textbooks being sold at cost recovery prices. Expenditure by region is given below.

**Table 13 - Primary Textbook Purchases by Region**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Amount (Le)</i>
Western Area	1,090,378,992
Northern Province	545,189,496
Southern Province	681,486,870
Eastern Province	408,892,122
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,725,947,480</b>

**Table 14 - Primary Textbook Purchases by Region**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Amount (Le)</i>
Western Area	80,000,000
Northern Province	80,000,000
Southern Province	80,000,000
Eastern Province	80,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>320,000,000</b>

To date a total of 801,806 primary textbooks have been distributed nation-wide by the Materials Production and Distribution Unit of MEST.

### *Teaching and Learning Materials*

In addition to providing furniture and textbooks, government also provides all government and government-assisted schools with teaching and learning materials. For year 2003, the amount to be spent is as indicated in the table below.

**Table 15 - Teaching and Learning Materials Allocation by Region**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Le</i>
Western Area	1,579,506,400
Northern Province	962,803,200
Southern Province	1,105,554,000
Eastern Province	702,802,400

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,350,666,000</b>
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### *Study Leave and Grant-in-Aid*

Grant-in-Aid and study leave continue to be awarded and continue to be a god-send for the many who would be unable to access tertiary education without them. Both continue to also be a boon to the nation as otherwise many brilliant minds would be lost forever.

*Table 16 - Grant-in-Aid Awards 2002/03*

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Allocation</i>
Fourah Bay College	447
Njala University College	292
COMAHS	28
IPAM	83
Law School	10
MMCET	211
Eastern Polytechnic	186
Bo Teachers' College	180
Port Loko Teachers' College	160
Makeni Teachers' College	194
Freetown Teachers' College	173
<b>Total</b>	<b>1965</b>

*Table 17 - Study Leave Awards 2002/03*

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>Old Awards</i>	<i>New Awards</i>	<i>Total Awards</i>
Fourah Bay College	120	27	147
Njala University College	166	44	210
MMCET	194	152	346
Eastern Polytechnic	97	11	108
Bo Teachers' College	100	26	126
Port Loko Teachers' College	161	68	229
Makeni Teachers' College	130	68	198
Freetown Teachers' College	85	52	137
Others: IPAM, CBS, FTI, GTI, Theological Coll, Jui, Overseas	48	14	62

<b>Total</b>			1563
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*Table 18 - Tertiary Level Awards – 1995/96 – 2002/03*

<b>Institution</b>	<b>1995/96</b>	<b>1996/97</b>	<b>1997/98</b>	<b>1998/99</b>	<b>1999/00</b>	<b>2000/01</b>	<b>2001/02</b>	<b>2002/2003</b>
MMCE	110	114	*	168	175	183	183	557
FTC	110	120	*	120	140	150	150	310
MTC	110	120	*	125	136	139	139	392
BuTC	110	120	*	150	158	162	168	294
PLTC	110	120	*	156	162	168	168	389
BoTC	110	106	*	120	149	156	156	306
FBC	80	224	*	357	370	397	397	594
NUC	80	170	*	185	200	254	254	502
COMAHS	9	16	*	21	22	32	32	
IPAM	*	30	*	77	79	89	89	
LAW SCHOOL	*	7	*	7	7	7	6	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>1267</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1486</b>	<b>1598</b>	<b>1736</b>	<b>1736</b>	

The cost of providing support for all of the students given above can be determined using the table below which gives the cost per student per year for a variety of tertiary level institutions.

*Fees per Student (Grant-In-Aid) - 2001/2002*

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Amount Le</b>	<b>Course</b>
Fourah Bay College	810,000.00	Law
	650,000.00	Other Courses
Njala Univ. Coll	774,000.00	Undergraduate
	2,300,000.00	Postgraduate
IPAM	900,000.00	Degree
	710,000.00	Non-Degree

COMAHS	2,400,000.00
MMCET	600,000.00
Eastern Polytechnic	500,000.00
Teachers' Colleges	500,000.00

### **2002/2003**

Fees the same but Le50,000/00 additional per student for final year and Hons. II at Fourah Bay College

Scholarship to Sierra Leoneans studying in Nigerian Universities, 13 students at US\$3,500/- per student per year,

In addition to the grant-in-aid and the study leave awards, government also provides the subventions shown below for tertiary level institutions. For 2003 this totals more than Le17 billion.

*Table 19 - Tertiary Level Subventions – 2002/2003*

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Amount (Le)</b>
University of Sierra Leone	10,906,108,542
MMCET	2,136,928,201
Port Loko Teachers College	827,697,475
Makeni Teachers' College	770,202,617
Freetown Teachers' College	800,787,650
Bo Teachers' College	805,660,780
Eastern Polytechnic	983,815,991
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,231,201,256</b>

### ***Other Interventions***

#### *Development of a National Science and Technology Policy*

Science and technology is seen as a tool for socio-economic development. Spearheading science and technology development is a Science Technology Council supported by a Secretariat. The Council has the following as its specific goals:

- i. To create and strengthen S & T capacity for indigenous self-reliant and sustainable socio-economic development.
- ii. To create and strengthen S & T culture at all levels of the society in order to create demand for the application of S & T.
- iii. To apply S & T to satisfy the basic social needs (food, water, good health, housing, clothing, etc.)

The long term goals of the Council include:

- i. Alleviation of poverty
- ii. Improvement on the standard and quality of life of its people

Development of the elements of a national science and technology policy started in 2002 and culminated in 2003 with the production of draft policy that covered areas such as manpower, industrial development, Agriculture, health and health care delivery, environment, energy, information and communication technologies, indigenous technology, research and development, etc.

### ***Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative – HIPC (2002)***

The HIPC initiative involves the provision of funds by the World Bank for those developing countries that the Bank believes would be able to use the funds to improve the life of its people.

On August 2002, Parliament gave its approbation for Le18.893 billion, representing 25% of the total HIPC funds available to Sierra Leone, to be expended on various programmes and activities by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). The MEST is spending the funds in two main areas:

1. Recurrent Allocations - Le11, 735,000,000
- 11 Development Allocations (Civil Works) - Le7, 158,000,000
  - In preparing the HIPC budget for civil works, government educational institutions were prioritised. However it was later thought prudent to include non-government institutions, especially as more districts emerging became accessible.
  - In compliance with the accepted Management Work Plan by a Cabinet Sub Committee, 4 Civil Works Management Agents (CWMAs) were appointed for effective civil works implementation, using approved, standard procedures. These are responsible for overall direction; supervision and technical back stopping of the project implementation.
  - Oversight Committees (OCs) comprising community people, the CWMAs and others have also established as directed by the Cabinet Sub-Committee. The OCs have direct responsibility for awarding contracts under the HIPC programme.

### ***Current Status of Civil Works***

While only 56 primary, 1 tertiary and 13 secondary institutions (totalling 70) were to be rehabilitated, constructed/reconstructed in the initial list of prioritised Government institutions, the following represent the increased number of institutions that have been completed or nearing completion.

West	-	10 educational institutions and 1,500 sets of school furniture
South	-	29 educational institutions, 500-school furniture, beds and mattresses for boarding schools
East	-	8 educational institutions, of which 11 are primary, 6 secondary, 1 District Inspectorate Office and 500 set of school furniture
North	-	23 primary, 13 secondary, 2 Tech/Voc, 2 colleges and 4 District Inspectorate Offices. 3,000 sets of school furniture will be provided.

Over 80% of the above civil works are completed. Others will be completed in due course.

### ***Current Status of Recurrent Allocations***

- The bulk of the recurrent allocation has been utilised on gap financing (i.e. the balance payment) of existing Central Tender Board contract sums for teaching/learning materials, books, etc. for the MEST.
- Science and Technical/Vocational equipment have been procured and supplied to schools/institutions.
- Le500 million worth of furniture for tertiary level institutions has also been procured.

### ***The GOSL/ADB/IDA Education Project***

#### ***Project Objectives***

The project is intended to assist in the rehabilitation of basic and non-formal education and the provision of vocational skill training. It will:

- (i) facilitate the immediate reconstruction and rehabilitation of Basic Education (BE);
- (ii) provide vocational skills training (VST) provision;
- (iii) support short-term in-service teacher training;
- (iv) support the active involvement of communities and parents to build local ownership of schools through School Management Committees (SMCs) and a preventive maintenance programme;
- (v) strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology;
- (vi) improve teachers living conditions through support to Government-sponsored housing units to be constructed in the most severely deprived areas as an incentive for teachers to work in remote areas.

In order to accomplish the above, the project has three components:

1. Rehabilitation of basic education, vocational skills training and literacy through a partnership;
2. Institutional strengthening and capacity building of MOEST and,
3. Project management.

The major component of the project is Component 1. This component is to help bring as many basic education (primary and junior secondary) schools in Sierra Leone as possible up to basic operational level/standards defined as:

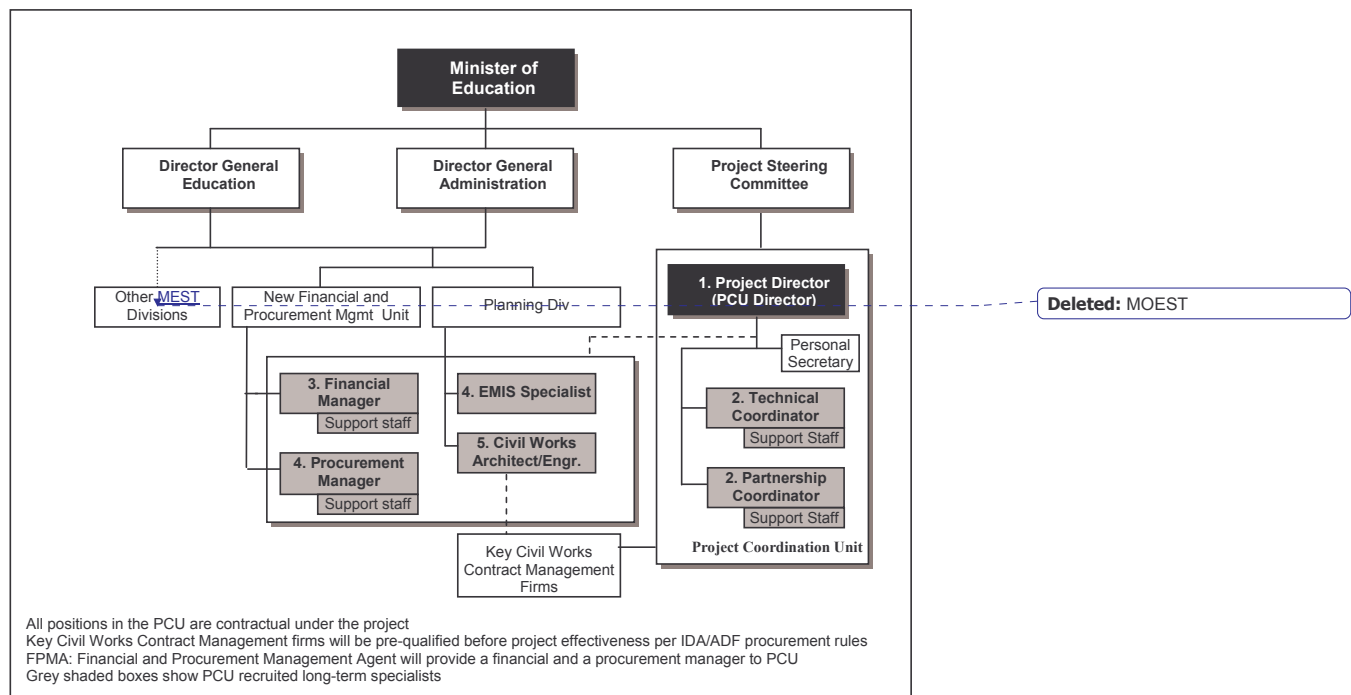
1. A safe furnished school building,
2. Minimally trained teachers at a maximum student:teacher ratio of 40:1,
3. A set of core textbooks for every pupil and,
4. A functioning school support structure in the form of a School Management Committee (SMC) or PTA and supportive DEO.

Additionally, under the component, out-of-school unemployed young Sierra Leoneans with limited formal schooling will be assisted to acquire skills and knowledge as well as functional literacy. In order to achieve the foregoing, the project will assist government-assisted and approved Community Education Centres (CECs) and Technical Vocational Centres (TVCs) to expand their course offerings of sustainable vocational skills and literacy training to youth aged 15-20 years.

Management of the project will be via a small Project Co-ordination Unit (PCU) within the MOEST. The PCU will have overall responsibility for co-ordinating all activities funded under the project and will provide technical leadership in support of project implementation. It comprises of a: (i) Project Director, (ii) National Technical Co-ordinator, (iii) Partnership Programme Co-ordinator, (iv) Capacity Building Co-ordinator, and (v) Vocational Skill Training Specialist. Two specialists in finance and procurement from a contracted Financial and Procurement Management Agent (FPMA) will build-up the capacities of Ministry in procurement and financial control. They will also train Ministry staff and ultimately ensure the establishment of a Financial Management and Procurement Unit (FMPU) within the

MEST. The head of the PCU, the Project Director and all key staff with the exception of the Capacity Building Co-ordinator have been appointed.

Chart 14 - Location of the PCU within the MEST



The decision making body of the project is the Project Steering Committee (PSC). Membership of this Committee is as follows:

*PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE (PSC)*  
Membership (Size) = 12 (including Chairperson)  
Chairperson – Minister of Education  
Members

<b>Government</b>	<b>Non-Government</b>
1. Director-General (Administration) - MOEST	1. Chairman - SLANGO
2. Development Secretary -	2. Resident Representative - UNICEF
3. Financial Secretary	3. Resident Representative - UNHCR
4. Chairman – Parliamentary Ed. Comm – Basic Ed.	4. Rep. Muslim Bodies – Inter Rel. Council
5. Secretary – National Comm. for Basic Ed	5. Rep. Xtian Bodies – Inter Rel. Council
6. Director - NCTVA	

### ***Project Value***

The total value of the project excluding taxes and customs duty will be between US\$42.40 million and US\$44.29 million. Of this amount just over US\$36 million will be spent on Component 1.

Just over US\$21 million of the project funds is a grant. All of the funds from the World Bank for the project (US\$20 million) were given as a grant following very successful negotiations in Washington and the presentation of a paper by the Sierra Leone delegation.

The project has been declared 'effective' by the World Bank and funds are being disbursed. The African Development Bank is expected to declare 'effectiveness' any time now.

Proposals have been received from partners interested in participating in the project and within the next few weeks the first set of proposals will be approved by the Project Steering Committee and the building of primary and junior secondary schools, the in-service training of untrained and unqualified teachers, the supply of 'core' textbooks' and teaching and learning materials, vocational skills training, etc., will commence.

### ***The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Education Project***

The ODB Education Project aims at restoring educational facilities affected by the recently ended civil conflict through the construction / reconstruction / rehabilitation of 143 totally or partly destroyed primary schools throughout the country over a three year period. Target schools will also benefit from furniture, teaching/learning materials, equipment, water wells and VIP latrines. All of the four regions of the regions will benefit from the construction and rehabilitation of the following number of schools:

***Table 20 - Construction and Rehabilitation Under the IDB Education Project***

Activity	East	North	South	West
Construction	15	30	18	3
Rehabilitation	29	22	22	4

Execution of the project is in two phases - Phase 1 has a value of US\$2,139,932 and Phase 2 a value of US\$5,272,000

### ***Restructuring of the MEST***

In a bid to improve its effectiveness and efficiency, the MEST is currently undergoing functional management review. At the same time the Board of Education has now been re-established, and a review of the schemes of services of all

Directorates far advanced. On completion, the MEST would be fully ready for decentralisation as envisioned by the Government.

### **Support to the Inspectorate**

As a vital arm of the MEST with the all-important responsibility of ensuring quality teaching/learning, and as part of the drive to improve effectiveness and efficiency, 2002 witnessed a beefing up of the capacity of the Inspectorate through the provision of vehicles, motorbikes and bicycles and communication equipment.

With this improvement in capacity, the Inspectorate has been able to provide an update on enrolment, teacher numbers etc. in our schools.

### ***HIV/AIDS Unit at the Ministry Of Education, Science And Technology (MEST)***

Considering the rising prevalence of the HIV/AIDS in the country and in an attempt to minimise the possibility of young men and women in our educational institutions becoming its greatest victims, the MEST in collaboration with SHARP has established an HIV/AIDS Unit at the Ministry. This Unit has commenced its work and will embark on nation-wide sensitisation of students in the very near future.

### ***School Audit by KPMG***

In September 2002, Cabinet contracted the auditing firm KPMG to conduct a national school audit of government owned and government assisted schools. Amongst other things, the ensuing report revealed increases in gross school enrolment and the need for many more teachers to be employed in order to achieve approved pupil/teacher ratios. The report also revealed several new challenges amongst which are the need for the establishment of new educational institutions, and the need to streamline the employment of new teachers.

The increase in enrolment highlighted by the KPMG report has been further buttressed by recent statistics gathered by the MEST Inspectorate which have shown an exponential leap in national school enrolment. Specially, the new statistics have brought to light the large scale teacher and general educational needs of community schools not as yet receiving government financial assistance due to ceilings placed by the Ministry of Finance. It is important to note that these institutions are catering for the needs of the children of Sierra Leone and therefore cannot be ignored.

### ***Student and School Buses***

In keeping with Government's determination to increase access to quality education and in order to alleviate the hardship of the children and youths in our educational institutions, this government commenced a school bus service in Freetown and also provided vehicles for a variety of educational institutions. This year, this facility is being expanded with the provision of 2 school buses for every provincial headquarter town and buses for 12 tertiary institutions as well as for the Blind and Deaf and Dumb Schools.

The buses for tertiary level institutions are to be run by students, as a means of preparing them for future leadership roles. It is also hoped that tertiary level students who are non-residential because of limited space in hostels would now be able to attend lectures on time.

### Constraints

The MEST is faced with the problem of having to meet increased demand resulting from successful sensitisation and interventions whilst at the same time maintaining and improving on the quality of the service it provides and its delivery. It is a problem of having to make do with Le1 when you really need Le10. Some idea of the extent and magnitude of the constraints faced is presented in the next few paragraphs.

### Infrastructural Requirements

Notwithstanding the inputs made by the government and the assistance of partners, as indicated in the table below, some school rehabilitation and reconstruction needs still have to be met. This explains why it is still possible to find schools made of sticks and covered with palm fronds in a number of rural communities.

**Table 21 – Civil Works Requirements**

ANALYSIS OF CONSTRUCTION/REHABILITATION WORK TO BE DONE BY DONOR AGENCIES (2003 - 2007)													
(AS AT MARCH 2003)													
Region		Existing Institutions	Institutions already rehab/recon by Govt/NGO				Remaining Institutions	HIPC Aug - Dec 2002	WB/ADB; 2003-2007	SL/IDB 2003-2005	BADEA 2003-2005	Total HIPC & Donors	Rehab/r econ to do (03-07)
			Govt	NGO's	Govt & NGO	Total B							
		Total A	NaCSA	SAPA		Total B	Total C				Total D	Total E	
	Primary	873	25	29	86	140	733	14	65	45	0	124	609
South	Secondary	46	5	-	1	6	40	11	18	5	4	38	2
	Tech/Voc	28	-	-	-	-	28	0	12	0	0	12	16
	Tertiary	2	-	-	-	-	2	0	0	0	1	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>628</b>
	Primary	1120	25	4	54	83	1,037	21	270	60	0	351	686
North	Secondary	69	6	-	-	6	63	13	30	10	10	63	-
	Tech/Voc	32	-	-	-	-	32	0	12	0	0	12	20
	Tertiary	2	-	-	-	-	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1223</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>1,134</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>708</b>
	Primary	729	28	9	32	69	660	21	214	49	0	284	376

East	Secondary	63	-	-	2	2	61	6	34	12	9	61	-
	Tech/Voc	20	-	-	-	-	20	0	10	0	0	10	10
	Tertiary	1	-	-	-	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>387</b>
	Primary	337	10	11	8	29	308	4	51	9	0	64	244
West	Secondary	56	-	-	-	-	56	6	18	7	11	42	14
	Tech/Voc	60	-	-	-	-	60	0	17	0	0	17	43
	Tertiary	5	-	1	-	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>305</b>
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,443</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>3,107</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1,079</b>	<b>2,028</b>
		<b>3,443</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>2,734</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1,079</b>	<b>1,655</b>
A - Existing Institutions													
B - Government + NGO Contribution													
C - Remaining for HIPC + Donor (2002-07)													
						C = A - B (	3,443	709	2,734				
D - Total HIPC + Donor													
E - Balance for Government Intervention													
						E = C - D	2,734	1,079	1,655				

### *Furniture Requirements*

For many educational institutions the primary need is furniture. The problem has been worsened by increase in demand and student numbers. In some cases institutions have indicated that they can accommodate more students if provided with the required furniture. The table below summarises the furniture situation of our educational situation and the existing needs.

**Table 22 - Furniture Situation in Educational Institutions as of July 2003**

<i>Level</i>	<i>Pupils</i>	<i>Pupils Seated</i>	<i>Seating Needed</i>	<i>Available Seats</i>	<i>Seats Needed</i>	<i>Cost of Needed (Le)</i>
Primary (Govt + Assisted)	1,100,000	440,000	550,000	141,000	176,000	14,080,000,000
Secondary	130,000	78,000	52,000	63,400	41,600	2,912,000,000
Tech/Voc	60,000	42,000	18,000	21,000	9,000	900,000,000
Tertiary	13,5000	5,400	8,100	11,800	4,200	630,000,000
Total	1,303,500	565,400	628,100	237,200	230,800	18,522,000,000

Note:

1. Primary Schools – 2/3 pupils per set of desk and chair; Secondary and Tertiary – 1 set of desk and chair per student
2. Cost per set of Furniture: Primary – Le80,000; Secondary – Le70,000; Tech/Voc. – Le100,000; Tertiary – Le150,000
3. Use of furniture and furniture requirements took into consideration the operation of double shift in some schools as well as the tertiary education programme.

### *Placement*

Until this year more than 50% of those passing the NPSE passed for schools in the Western Area. This year the picture is as shown below:

**Table 23 - NPSE Passes by Region - 2003**

Region	East	North	South	West
Passed 03	6439	8438	6983	15257
% of Total 03	17.3	22.7	18.8	41.1
Passed 02	3158	5288	5520	14216
% of Total 02	11.2	18.8	19.6	50.4
Passed 01	2024	2109	4316	12261
% of Total 01	9.8	10.2	20.8	59.2
Passed 00	1677	1748	3777	11480
% of Total 00	9.0	9.4	20.2	61.4

Even though the percentage of students passing for schools in the West has decreased the actual numbers have increased because of the significant increase in entries shown earlier. It is worth noting that the number passing for schools in all regional headquarter towns have also increased, to the extent that 'placement' exercises may also be necessary in Bo, Makeni and Kenema. Placement in these towns will not be of the same magnitude as Freetown where 15257 pupils have to be placed in 50 schools as far apart as Juba and Newton.

The above trend in figures also suggest that more and more people are returning home and that education is slowly returning back to normal in all regions.

### *Teachers and Teacher Ceiling*

The teacher needs of schools relative to the number of teachers that can be employed continues to be a problem. In order to address the problem the MEST is establishing a payroll unit and teacher ceilings for schools based on pupil enrolment in the case of primary schools and the number of usable classrooms in the case of secondary schools.

For primary schools having in excess of 225 pupils and a minimum of 5 teachers, a head teacher with no teaching load is allowed in addition to the number of teachers due to the school using a 45:1 pupil : teacher ratio. Additionally, based on the ceilings agreed with the Ministry of Finance, extra teachers are allocated per district and per proprietor on the basis of their number of pupils.

For Junior Secondary Schools, the number of teachers required to teach every period of the day and using every available classroom, assuming that each teacher will teach

24 periods per week is calculated. Four extra teachers are added as administrative and essential staff, these include the principal and vice-principal, teacher-librarian, teacher on study leave, etc.

For Senior Secondary Schools, the number of teachers required to teach every period of the day and using every available classroom, assuming that each teacher will teach 22 periods per week is calculated. Six extra teachers are added as administrative and essential staff, these include the principal and vice-principal, teacher-librarian, laboratory technician, continuous assessment records teacher, teacher on study leave, etc.

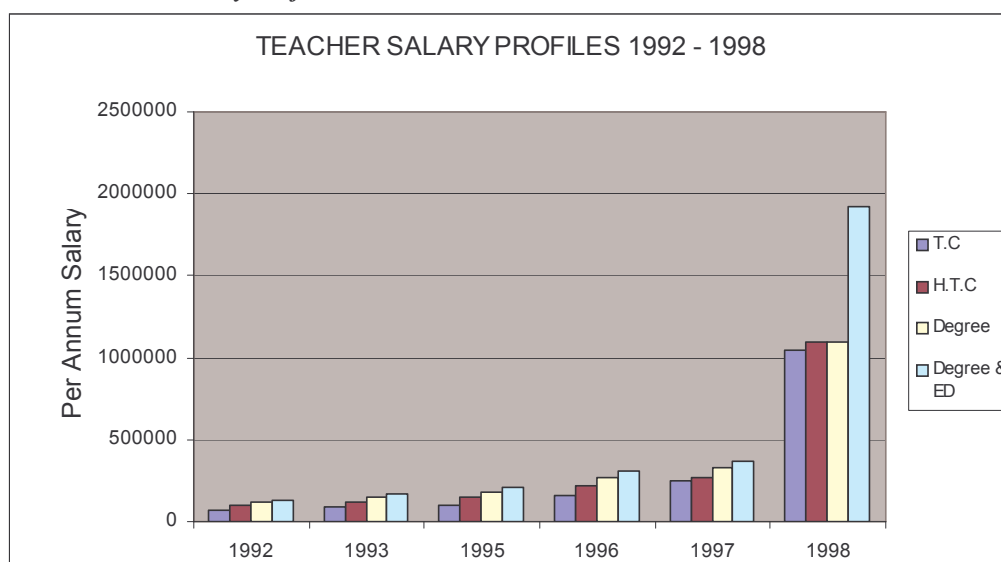
#### *Teachers' Salaries*

In order to attract and retain competent and qualified teachers in the system and enhance its quality, teachers need to be remunerated as best as we are able. It is for this reason, as the table and chart below show, significant improvement in the salaries and terms and conditions of our teachers have been taking place. It is worth noting that even at the height of the just ended conflict, when teachers were scattered all over this and neighbouring countries, this government committed itself to paying their salaries. The payment of the ensuing backlog is now completed and the very few who slipped through the net have been picked up by the KPMG audit mentioned later.

*Table 24 – Annual Teacher Salary Profile 1992 - 1998*

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>
<b>T.C</b>	68844	86897	104276	156414	252000	1043700
<b>H.T.C</b>	95560	124228	149074	223611	268333	1098000
<b>Degree</b>	116828	151876	182257	273376	328050	1098000
<b>Degree &amp; ED</b>	132848	172702	207242	310863	373036	1920240

**Chart 15 – Teacher Salary Profiles 1992 - 1998**



The procedure for getting teachers on to the payroll has been greatly streamlined in order to reduce the time between being employed and being paid. Additionally, an audit of schools, including confirmation of the actual numbers of teachers in our schools, has been carried out by KPMG. Unfortunately the firm only checked on teachers in the payroll and registered schools thus omitting the many teachers in community schools nation-wide. This anomaly is soon to be corrected and a Payroll Management Unit established at the MEST to help address and deal with teacher salary issues.

### **Short / Medium Term Goals**

#### *A New Education Act*

The present legislation covering education in Sierra Leone is the 1964 Education Act. Tremendous changes have however been taking place in education and it has become necessary to amend the 1964 Act. A draft of the Education Act 2002 has already been presented to Cabinet and is now being made ready for presentation to Parliament. It is hoped that Parliament will approve the Bill when presented so that a new Act will come into being.

Although the Education Act 2002 contains many new things, sections such as the 'Functions of the Ministry' and 'Powers of the Minister' stay relatively unchanged. Significant changes have however been made to some parts and new material introduced. For example, the regulation regarding Boards of Governors has been modified as follows:

- (1) *The Minister may by notice published in the Gazette establish a Board of Governors in respect of any school other than a primary or a private school.*
- (2) *Every Board so established in respect of any such school shall take over the management of that school in accordance with rules prescribed by the Minister under Section 43.*
- (3) *Every Board so established shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal.*
- (4) *Any Board of Governors established under this section shall consist of:-*
  - (a) *a Chairman to be appointed by the Minister from among the members;*
  - (b) *five members to be appointed by the Minister*
  - (c) *five members to be appointed by the Minister on the recommendation of the proprietor of such school immediately prior to the establishment of Board of Governors in respect thereof under this section;*
  - (d) *one member nominated by the local authority of the area in which such a school is, and appointed by the Minister.*
  - (e) *One member nominated by the community teacher association, and appointed by the Minister*
- (5) *In no meeting of the Board shall a quorum be said to exist if less than 40% of the members present are representatives of the Minister.*
- (6) *The quorum for all meetings of the Board shall be five so long as total membership stays at twelve and so long as the proviso given in (5) above is met.*

Although Boards of Governors have existed for some time for the management of secondary schools, no similar body existed for primary schools. This has now been remedied through the creation of School Management Committees. The composition of SMCs are as given below:

*The Minister shall establish a School Management Committee in respect of any government assisted primary school. Every management committee so established shall assist in the management of that school in accordance with rules established by the Minister under section 43.*

*The management committee established under this section shall consist of the following:*

1. *The Head-teacher*

2. *The Inspector of schools or Representative (non- voting member)*
3. *Agency /Mission Representative*
4. *Chairman of CTA*
5. *Traditional Ruler of the village/area*
6. *Members/Representative of Chiefdom Education Committee*
7. *A prominent educationist nominated by the Ministry of Education*

*The Chairman shall be appointed by members from among the above, subject to the approval of the Minister.*

The functions of SMCs are to:

- (a) *Ensure that physical conditions exist for the conduct of schooling through the regular maintenance of buildings and proper upkeep of the school grounds and facilities;*
- (b) *Review inspection reports and reports on the performance of the school and recommend actions to be taken;*
- (c) *Ensure the provision and maintenance of furniture, equipment and materials for effective teaching and Learning;*
- (d) *Assist in the formulation and implementation of the school's Development program for the next academic year;*
- (e) *Keep record of the accounts and funds of the school and have them audited every year;*
- (f) *Ensure that its meetings are regular, productive and that the duties assigned to the various officers of the SMC are carried out in a responsible and efficient manner;*
- (g) *Increase the effective use of available resources and expand the fiscal resource base of the school community*
- (h) *Liaise with Regional/District Inspectorate Offices and regional boards on relevant management and/or development issues.*

The Education Act 2002 also highlights new entities that have come into existence since 1964 such as Junior Secondary Schools (JSSs), Community Education Centres (TVCs), Technical/Vocational Schools (TVSS), the National Council for Technical, Vocational and other Academic Awards (NCTVA), Polytechnics, etc.

In the Act, the rules governing private schools, head-teachers / principals, certification and registration of teachers, etc., are significantly strengthened with a view towards improving the overall quality of the system.

With the new legislation in place, education in Sierra Leone will be on the footing necessary for further and rapid development in the future.

### *New Basic Education Act*

The National Commission for Basic Education was established by an NPRC decree in 1994. The lifetime of the original Commission has expired and the mandate and duties of the Secretariat to the Commission has been modified and expanded. This has necessitated a new legislation which would allow it to amongst other things, monitor the activities of units, divisions and directorates of the MEST and make recommendations for the improvement of basic education in Sierra Leone. The new Act has been presented to Cabinet and is being made ready for presentation to Parliament

### *A New University Act*

Existing legislation allows only the University of Sierra Leone to award degrees and makes the establishment of new universities nigh impossible. This state of affairs needs to be addressed and is being done via a new University Act. Work on this is far advanced and will soon be ready for presentation.

### *A One Year Primary Teacher Certificate Course*

The greatest area of growth in education is at the primary level. More specifically growth is greatest for Classes 1 to 3 of the primary level. The demand for teachers at this level is great. Unfortunately Classes 1 to 3, the foundation for later education, are generally taught by the least capable and the least qualified teachers. The MEST believes that this issue is so critical that it needs to be urgently addressed. Because the content of courses for teachers at this level is not very great and because demand is such that we cannot keep teachers at this level away from the classroom for too long, a one year training programme has been designed and will soon be ready for use.

### *In-service Training for Teachers of English Language, Science and Mathematics*

So great has been the concern of the MEST about the performance of candidates in English Language, Mathematics and Science, that in-service training programmes have been designed for teachers of these subjects. Already, as I speak, residential in-service training for teachers of Science is going on at the MMCET. Similar in-service training sessions for English Language and Mathematics will soon commence in different parts of the country.

### *The Teacher : Pupil Ratio*

A key element of concern at the MEST for many years has been the very large size of some classes and high pupil : teacher ratios which place undesirable pressures on teachers and causes them to under-perform. In this regard therefore, the MEST is advocating for a teacher pupil ratio of 1:45 at the primary level and 1:30 at the secondary level.

### *A Living Wage for Teachers*

Notwithstanding the significant increase in salaries provided by this government in 1998 and the general 5% increase in salaries enjoyed by teachers earlier this year, the

MEST is working hard to ensure that teachers receive a salary that will keep them in the classroom and provide the quality of input necessary to lift this nation from the bottom of the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI)

### ***Medium / Long Term Goals***

#### *Self Accounting Status for MEST*

The MEST is the largest Ministry in terms of employees and the breadth of its operations. The nature of its work is such that often processing of documents and payments have to be done very quickly. Because of the procedures involved in securing funds from the Ministry of Finance the latter has not always been possible and has sometimes resulted in lateness of payment and unpleasant situations. It is for this reason that the MEST is seeking self-accounting status in the medium/long term. Partly with this goal in mind, the MEST has, under the present GOSL/ADB/IDA Education Project, secured the services of KPMG to provide training for its accounting staff.

#### *Establishment of a Payroll Unit*

The most consistent and serious problem faced by the MEST in its activities is timely and proper payment of teachers. Because of the danger of others slipping onto the payroll, it is necessary that teachers be verified and prompt payment made. As the MEST is in the best position to verify who is a teacher and the appropriate salary of that teacher it is necessary that a Payroll Unit be established at the MEST in the medium term. The establishment of this unit would be a wise follow-on of the school audit work presently being done by KPMG.

#### *The Establishment of Universities*

As stated earlier, a draft University Act is soon to be presented to Cabinet and, after approval, to Parliament. On the Bill being enacted, it will become possible to establish universities additional to the University of Sierra Leone. These could be government or privately established institutions. As a consequence of this move, it is hoped that students would have greater choice and that there would be improvement in the quality of tertiary level education.

#### *Further Improvement in the Teacher : Pupil Ratio*

Although the short term goal of the MEST is a 1:45 teacher : pupil ratio for the primary level and a 1:30 ratio for the secondary level, our long term goals are 1:40 and 1:20 respectively. We have phased achievement of our ultimate goal because of the implications in terms of human, material and financial resources viz a viz available resources from the government and its partners.

#### *Housing for Teachers*

Getting teachers of quality to teach in some areas of the country is sometimes a problem even when financial incentives are offered. The cause of the problem is

often suitable and affordable accommodation. In this regard, because of the effect of a lack of competent teachers on the achievement of children in certain parts of the country, the MEST is advocating for the construction of staff quarters for teachers in government and government assisted schools nation-wide as one of its long term goals.

### ***The Way Forward***

#### *Expansion of Post-Primary Education*

The tremendous increase in enrolment being experienced at the primary level has many implications for post-primary education. Amongst other things, it demands an expansion in secondary education in terms of number of schools as well as number of teachers, furniture, textbooks, teaching/learning materials, etc. It also demands an increase in output of trained and qualified teachers and expansion in tertiary education to cope with the larger numbers that will ultimately get to that level. Most importantly however it demands immediate plans, strategies and actions to address all potential problems resulting from the increases anticipated. The MEST has started its work and is giving notice that all other relevant Ministries should also start their planning for this large wave of students coming their way.

#### *Providing Greater Options for Students*

As education expands so the needs, demands and aspirations of the products of the system also expands. It is therefore necessary to expand on course options and methods as well as modes of delivery. Skills training in particular for those who do not desire university education will become increasingly important – especially for those who may become disruptive if after their many years of education they find themselves without a means of ‘earning their living’.

#### *Making Decentralisation of Education a Reality*

Presently many things are done at a central level which are best done at the local level. For greater ownership and better solutions to problems, the MEST is committed to ensure that District Education Offices (DEOs) take responsibility for some activities traditionally carried on at headquarters and to empower and resource them to be able to carry out these activities. To this end, the MEST has encouraged the Project Co-ordination Unit of the GOSL/ADB/IDA Education Project to give responsibility for what happens in the districts to DEOs.

### **CONCLUSION**

When elected this government made a number of promises. The majority of these revolved around the provision of education. We are showing by our actions today that as long as we are able to access the needed funds, we will deliver on every single promise. We are not using education as a political gimmick because we are aware

that all our descendants, irrespective of party allegiance, will build upon the foundation that we lay today.

Mr. Chairman, colleagues, honourable members of Parliament, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, this government, the 'Dream Team', is putting into place things we could only dream about previously. Let us all now work together to ensure that all aspects of the beautiful dream that this government has for this country become a reality.