

THE FOURTH STATE OF THE NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM – 2003 REPORT ON THE MINISTRY OF MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, Ministers of Government, Honourable Members of Parliament, Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, Heads of Parastatals, members of the Fourth Estate, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

You will no doubt agree with me that, where there is no peace and security, there can be little or no investment and hence no development. The safety and security of the people of this country has been Government's priority. It was in view of this that it created the Ministry of internal Affairs whose pivotal role or overall mission statement according to Gazette No. 47 of Tuesday 30th July 2002 is to "carry out the development of Policies and Programmes for maintaining internal security and safety by undertaking activities under the following major headings:

- The Police (Internal Security)
- The Prisons and after-care of Prisoners
- Immigration Control at Sierra Leone's Sea Ports and Airport
- National Registration Secretariat
- Public Safety Matters
- Fire and Civil Defence Services
- Extradition of Criminals
- Coroner's Office – Burials, Cremations and Exhumations
- Fire Control
- Collaboration with relevant Government Ministries and National and International Organizations/Institution".

I now proceed to discuss each Sectoral Division within the Ministry in terms of its role and achievements made so far, and at the same time looking at the constraints and challenges it continue to face.

THE SIERRA LEONE POLICE

BACKGROUND

Since this country took the path to peace, considerable progress has been made and sustained by the SLP in the restructuring process. This has encouraged our international partners and donors to continue to assist in enhancing the institutional capacity of the SLP. Police stations and barracks destroyed during the war are being rehabilitated through the support of the British Government, the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone.

Areas that were initially inaccessible to the police have been opened up and some police presence felt. These changes continue to impose more tasks on the SLP to meet the new challenges. As political and socio-economic stability gradually builds up, it becomes apparent for the SLP and other stakeholders to work assiduously to return the war ravaged country to a sustainable peace. On the part of the SLP, it will have to contend with handling efficaciously post-war crimes in our cities, villages, borders and sea.

The Government will do all in its power to ensure that the Sierra Leone Police is:

- Directed and managed in accordance with the Constitution.
- Locally managed so as to ensure that community views are always taken into consideration.
- Adequately resource in finance.
- Well equipped to understand its duties.
- Professionally trained.
- Dynamically led.
- Operating under comfortable terms and conditions of Service.
- Reflective of the importance of the task they perform.

In order for the Police Officers to be more effective in the discharge of their duties, it is essential that all people of Sierra Leone help and support them at all times.

The Research and Planning Department (RPD), through series of reach has been able to identify and demarcate police lands that have been subject to undue encroachment by individuals. Consequent upon this, the Estate Department of the SLP is instrumental in taking inventory of police lands and buildings including rented properties. It has also made effort to acquire legal documents pertaining to ownership of police properties and remains committed to the rehabilitation of stations and barracks destroyed by the rebel war. These include Central Police Station, Adelaide Street Police Station, Kissy Police Station, Kambia-Gbalamuya Police Post, Kambia Police Station, Lunsar Police Station and Kono-Tankoro Police Station, At Kissy Barracks, the bucket toilet system is being systematically replaced with cesspit tanks.

To seek the welfare of personnel and their dependants, an overhaul of the Kingtom hospital has been undertaken through assistance from DFID. Regular supply of drugs is being maintained, and a stand-by generator to provide electricity and a deep freezer to up-keep the drugs has been installed. Mosquito nets are provided to each of the beds to prevent patients from malaria infection. The laboratory is also equipped with tools to diagnose tuberculosis and HIV through the assistance of the National Aids Control Programme.

The Complaint, Discipline and Internal Investigation Department (CCIID) has intensified efforts at not only curbing indiscipline and misconduct, but improved the speed at which cases reported are investigated and criminal ones charged to court. Increased confidence reposed in it by the public has subsequently quadrupled the number of complaints reported to it. The department is determined not to throw away the confidence reposed in it and has decisively improved on its efficiency by replacing the old system of adjudicating disciplinary offences. The new method by which such hearings are conducted sends a clear message to personnel that indiscipline and misconduct will not be tolerated in the new SLP.

POLICE OPERATIONS AND LOGISTICS

There has been an improvement in police operations due to the availability of adequate logistical support. To ensure proper management of vehicles, fuel, bikes bicycles, spare parts and communication sets, a new Transport and Communication Department (Transcom) has been established. Mobile

telephones have been supplied to Commanders in addition to handheld radio sets in order to improve the communication network. Mobile patrols have intensified day and night thereby ensuring safe and secured environment. It has been confirmed that our coast and territorial waters would soon be policed to reduce smuggling, poaching and accidents with the arrival of five (5) high-speed boats. Training has already begun of personnel for such duty.

OPERATION PLANNING AND CONTIGENCY UNIT (OPCU)

As the country practices free and fair democratic elections, it is the responsibility of the SLP to ensure an incident-free election. The OPCU established in May 2000, has adopted series of strategies to increase the operational capacity of the SLP to police the election. It liaises with the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and other relevant partners. Has set up an operation to provide security for electoral materials, campaign period, election day and after. To be able to do this, and considering the present strength of the SLP, the OPCU has identified the Prisons Department and Fire Force Service to work as partners in ensuring a free and fair presidential and parliamentary election.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS DEPARTMENT (CRD):

The CRD has continued to maintain Police-community reciprocity, as the two are seen as effective co-producer of crime prevention strategies. Joint activities with other stakeholders such as Council of Churches Sierra Leone (CCSL), youth groups, Campaign For Good Governance and Civil Society Movement (CSM) are in full gear. It is now usual for them to hold fortnight consultative meetings in the Western Area. Violence among youths during schools' soccer competitions has been a concern to CRD. In this regard, sensitization programme aimed at football hooliganism, tolerance and acceptance of defeat took place before the start of last year's competitions, which helped in preventing violence. Also schools with high concentration of ex-combatants in the Western area such as, Lungi and Moyamba have been targeted by CRD in their sensitization drive to explain the danger of drug abuse, civic responsibilities and the role of the police.

ARMS COLLECTION AND DESTRUCTION PROGRAMME (CACD):

CACD was established to actualize government's intention of collecting arms and ammunition from the community after the completion of Phase 111 of the disarmament and demobilization of ex combatants by the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR). It is the view of government that the long protracted war proliferated arms and ammunition in the country and that the effort of NCDDR programme needs to be

complemented by the police to make Sierra Leone arms free. In this regard, the CACD, in partnership with NCDDR and UNAMSIL, has undertaken the collection of arms from the community people. Much success has been registered in this exercise throughout the country.

1. Traffic Management

As peace develops in the country, there is the tendency for increase in vehicular traffic and therefore, increase in accidents. The SLP will;

- Engage with other stakeholders in road safety awareness campaigns at both local and national level.
- Educate motorists cyclists and pedestrians on road safety measures.
- Work with other partners in identifying causes of road traffic accident and finding solutions to them.

2. Public Order Reassurance

To build on community confidence and trust in the police, the SLP will,

- Work with other stakeholders to ensure a free and fair presidential/parliamentary and paramount chief elections/local elections.
- Maintain target-oriented mobile and police boat patrols for 24 hours, capable of responding to all crime incidents and deal with them swiftly and decisively.
- Erect more police posts in secluded areas and hot spots.

Conclusion:

Policing all over the world is no longer a monopoly of the police. Therefore in order to effectively achieve the objectives outlined in the future plans, the community must be ready to support and participate with the Police. On the other hand, the Police must be ready to listen to treat citizens' definition of their own problems seriously for any problem, call the police on emergency Line 015 and 999.

SIERRA LEONE PRISONS DEPARTMENT

The Prisons Service is a “total institution” in which inmates live throughout the year. In this regard, it is of the utmost necessity that the Welfare and well-being of the inmates are catered for, in order to assist them in the reformative and rehabilitative processes of imprisonment.

It is also of importance that the Prison Officers themselves should be motivated in order to them to be very effective and efficient in the discharge of their duties. Now that Government has brought peace to this nation, the Prison Department being an integral part in peace sustenance will play its rightful role in national development. At this point, the Ministry will welcome assistance from donor agencies and other international partners to enhance the service delivery of the Prisons Department.

Despite the economic constraints Government is facing as a result of the compounded problems caused by the rebel war, Government is always working out measures to up keep its human rights records by up grading the living standards of its populace. In this vain, government, through the Prisons Department, is making conscious effort to up grade the living facilities and standards of inmates. To achieve the modern goals of imprisonment in comparison to advanced countries, government has now appointed:

- (a) A special Parliamentary Committee responsible for the affairs of Prisoners and Prisons Welfare – This committee conducts periodic visits to the Freetown Central Prison and other Prison Institutions in the Western Area.
- (b) Government approved the sum of Eight Hundred Million Leones (Le800,000,000.00) towards the rehabilitation of the prisons services.
- (c) Out of this money Government approved the purchase of foam mattresses, beds for the inmates and a standby generator for the Freetown Central Prison. These have been achieved.
- (d) Wooden doors at the Freetown Central Prison were replaced with steel doors. The hospital, located at the Freetown Central Prison was rehabilitated and a face-lift of the blocks and the administrative building was effected. The main entrance gate into the Freetown Central Prison which used to be wooden is now replaced with a steel gate. The main kitchen at the Freetown Central Prison has been refurbished through the help of the ICRC, on request of the Prisons administration. For this, we extended our thanks to the ICRC.

- (e) The vent bars at the Freetown Central Prison are now strengthened. Government has installed a T.V. monitoring system with cameras located at the four corners of the perimeter.
- (f) Toiletries for prisoners health are constantly provided.
- (g) The Pujehun and Bonthe Prisons have been fully rehabilitated.
- (h) Government has provided flush toilet seats, but are yet to be installed.
- (i) The ministry approved a self help building project initiated by officers and partly sponsored by Government. This is presently being undertaken at the Prison Officers' Training School.

FUMIGATION

Complete fumigation is regularly done at the Freetown Central Prison to facilitate a healthy environment for inmates.

TRAINING

Twenty-five (25) junior officers benefited from a training course in communication. Six (6) senior officers and one (1) junior officer were trained in the field of computer application from the Institute of Public administration and Management (IPAM). Certificates were awarded to them upon completion. Two (2) officers are pursuing Degree Courses at Fourah Bay College; one in the Faculty of Arts and the other in the Law Faculty. Another officer is pursuing a Degree Course at the Njala University College in the Faculty of education. Two (2) officers are pursuing the H.T.C. Course at the Milton Margai College of Education, and several others are also pursuing vocational training in various institutions in Freetown.

E. REOPENING OF SOME PRISON INSTITUTIONS

With the advent of peace, arrangements are underway for Provincial Prison institutions in Kono, Kambia and Makeni to reopen so as to complement the work of the Police.

THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT

The Immigration Department is currently undergoing transformation / restructuring programme from Police to civilian Administration. The Programme involves:

1. Recruitment and Training of Personnel that will form the core of a professional Immigration Department that will enable the Department to realize its full potentials in the following areas:

(a) Revenue Generation

Probity and Accountability: during the last financial year (FY) Jan – Dec 2001, the Department was able to raise revenue of One billion, one hundred and Ninety four million six hundred and twenty four thousand, five hundred Leones (Le1,194,624,500.00).

Arrangements have been put in place for the printing of Visas Stickers and Visa receipts and also of Passport Receipt Books for the new set of Machine Readable Passports in order to avert the use of unauthorized/faked receipts. The printing of Visas Stickers and Receipts will ensure that any revenue collected from Passports and Visa are properly accounted for.

(b) Security

The Immigration Department is part of the Internal State Security apparatus. Security reports received from the department are co-ordinated by me at the level of the National Security Council. Security reports from the Immigration Department are mainly on the movement of people in and out of the country. Also, the Department, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Industrial Relations determines and co-ordinates the activities and status of all Foreigners in the country.

© Border Control

Arrangements are underway to establish provincial offices that will co-ordinate the existing Border Posts within their respective regions, in terms of providing Immigration services and strengthening border control.

(d) The protection of jobs and business facilities for capable Sierra Leoneans

In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Industrial Relations, the Immigration Department ensures that jobs for which there are capable and competent Sierra Leoneans do not go to Foreigners except otherwise as provided for under the current Immigration laws. Therefore, all foreigners coming to Sierra Leone for employment purposes must first of all secure unnecessary work and Resident Permits before entering the country to take up such appointments.

(e) The drawing up of rules and regulations geared towards the protection of the state and the guidance of Immigration Officers in their daily operations.

A Technical Committee was appointed by the Immigration Restructuring Committee to draw up Rules and Regulations for the guidance of Immigration Officers. The edited document titled Proposed Immigration Rules, Regulations and Procedures for the Guidance of Immigration Officers in the Republic of Sierra Leone will soon be presented to the Immigration Restructuring Committee for approval. Thereafter it will be forwarded to the Attorney General for expert advice.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- (1) A computer network for the production of Machine Readable Passports to replace the old Passports was commissioned on 4/6/2001. It is operated by two (2) System Administrators and eighteen (18) Data Entry Clerks. This has reduced the original 14 days requirement for the issuance of passports to seven (7) days and in some cases less, thereby reducing the long e\queues at the department.
- (2) Measures have also been put in place to ensure that Passports are issued out only to the following deserving category of people:-
 - (a) Bona fide Sierra Leonean i.e. Sierra Leoneans by birth.
 - (b) Sierra Leoneans by Naturalisation.
- (3) The Inside Investigation Unit has been reorganized to enable it perform its important role of guiding and scrutinizing applicants for issuance of

Passports. With the installation of the computer network, the accessing of records will in due course be more accurate and speedy.

- (4) Sierra Leoneans abroad are required to contact the Diplomatic missions or consulates within their countries of accreditation for the issuance of a Passport, especially cases of first issuance – The reason is to ensure that the new Passports are issued out to only deserving Sierra Leoneans
- (5) The Ministry is in the process of acquiring land along Fort Street for the construction of a new Immigration Complex.

Constraints

1. **Mobility:-** The Department has no utility vehicle, thereby making it impossible to undertake assessment visits to the Provinces. This has also minimized the efficiency of the monitoring unit in making constant checks on Foreigners.
2. **Training for Recruited personnel:-** It is envisaged that personnel for the transformed Immigration Department will be recruited from three sources: from the public, within the service and from the Police. Competent Police Officers who are willing to transfer their services to the Immigration Department will be accepted. They will however be required to undergo the prescribed courses alongside the newly recruited personnel. Officers will be trained both locally and abroad in the following courses:-

- Fraud detection
- Counterfeiting
- Border control techniques
- Computer literacy

The Immigration Department is a high source for revenue for any nation where it is well arranged, well managed and officers well paid. The current Civilian Administration is committed to fulfilling the objectives of the transformation programme within the anticipated time frame of three (3) years and for that reason, the Department would like to solicit the cooperation of the public to be more patriotic by reporting any incident of Immigration malpractices to the Immigration authorities. Government on its part will continue to do everything within its power to provide the necessary logistics support to the department and incentives to staff, to facilitate the execution of immigration activities.

NATIONAL FIRE FORCE

Background

Fire fighting and fire protection capacity of any nation constitutes a potential national security for the lives and properties of her citizens, and if properly harnessed, can provide the nation with one of the most vital instruments she needs for national development. Such a concept confirms the need for all nations to find practical means to enable and encourage their fire fighters to reach their full operational potential in a bid to save their nation from burning and other environmental disasters such as flood, earthquakes etc.

It is therefore of great concern to the Ministry to note that notwithstanding developments in other areas, fire disasters in Sierra Leone keep increasing with time. Such an increase, which gives cause for alarm, has been attributed mainly to poor funding in the past. Equipment had been few, old, worn-out, patchy and damaged. However, the fire fighters have displayed gallantry, plenty of guts and stubbornness when it comes to saving lives and properties from, fire destruction.

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Fire Prevention:

The fire prevention section of the fire force did a total of 392 routine and specific inspection during the year to determine the inherent fire risk in the city, and made necessary and appropriate recommendations. Of these, 12 were government ministries, 24 government institutions, 24 factories, 100 garages and 200 dwelling houses. A total of 14 fire prevention lectures were delivered to schools and other institutions, while twelve (12) radio discussion programmes were aired in both FM. 98.1D and FM. 99.9 on the THEME – “FIRE KILLS, FIRE DESTROYS, THINK ABOUT IT”.

2. Training:

In an effort to regalanise and upgrade operational efficiency, beef up the administrative and technical skills of officers and men of the fire force, the Ministry organized a four (4) week intensive in-service training programme for serving members of the force between 26th November to 20th December 2001. the training was climaxed with a passing out parade on the 21st December, 2001.

3. Logistics:

In the Ministry's drive to improve the effectiveness of fire fighting in the city, government within the period under review, provided some breathing apparatus, complete with oxygen cylinders, protective clothing, working – out and overall uniforms, rain gears, boots and shoes for the operational activities of the Force. Government also provided additional fire equipment such as fire hoses, fire extinguishers, hard and soft suction etc. Major repairs were also effected on the only existing Fire force Building and adequate measures were taken to keep fire engines in good operational order.

In determined effort to protect lives and properties from fire destruction, government is paying Le561 Million to a reputable Sierra Leonean supplier to supply a fire engine with a water capacity of 12,000 litres, by far bigger than the 1000 litres now in the service. The Chief fire Officer, who went on an official trip to France last January to inspect the engine in its manufacturing stage, has reported that the engine will be here by mid this year. Provision has also been made in the current budget for the purchase of another fire engine of similar capacity.

FUTURE PLANS FOR 2002

As part of my Ministry's efforts to expand the activities of the National Fire Force, Government has already set aside seed money for the construction of a sub fire station in the Eastern part of the city during this year.

Government also intends to provide additional fire engines and modern fire fighting equipment for the proper functioning of the National Fire Department during this year.

To enhance the activities of the fire Prevention Section, especially in its drive to carry fire prevention messages to more people, convey additional men and equipment faster to fire ground operations, government has paid for two vehicles for the Department. These vehicles will be commissioned soon.

In furtherance of Government's drive to improve and expand the Fire Defence mechanism nationwide, funds have been budgeted for advanced overseas training in specific aspects of modern fire fighting techniques.

NATIONAL REGISTRATION SECRETARIAT

A. The National Registration Act No. 20 was passed into Law in 1974 and was passed to provide for the establishment of a National Register for the registration of all citizens and non-citizens throughout the country aged from 16 years and above.

From its inception, the National Registration Secretariat embarked and worked in accordance with its mandate until 1997 when it was temporarily halted.

- Due to the paucity of funds, government engaged/contracted a private firm, Central Data International (C.D.I.) Limited to recommence this exercise. Thus the Secretariat through C.D.I. commenced the issuance of Identity Cards in mid 2000.

A. MISSION STATEMENT

To establish a National Register for the registration of all citizens and non-citizens resident in Sierra Leone aged 16 years and above.

B. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- (1) TO PROVIDE A national data Bank for population policy and planning purposes.
- (2) To augment and widen Government revenue collection base.
- (3) To assist Police in the detection of criminals.
- (4) Identification of victims involved in accidents.
- (5) To ease immigration formalities across national boundaries.

ACTIVITIES

Registration Centres established nation wide. Government has provided premises for the registration and issuance of Identity Cards not only in the Western Area, but the Provincial towns of Bo and Kenema. Negotiations are currently on for an office in Makeni. This is in accordance with the Contract Agreement.

Notwithstanding, the meager allocation on training and recruitment, the Secretariat has ensured six female and four male staff to complete a computer training in soft ware. Two Male staff have obtained Diploma Certificate in Computer Engineering. These are now attached to the C.D.I. understudying the Company staff.

Interface with other Department/Ministries especially Police Immigration and the Ministry of foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Births and Deaths, Local Government and Rural Development.

SUCCESS

From January, 2000 – December 2001 C.D.I. has registered i.e. the Public 68,818, in Bo between July-December, 2001 5,635 and in Kenema 3,317.

CONSTRAINTS

Central Data International has not fulfilled most part of the agreement signed with the Government and this has greatly affected the registration exercises. For example it has not supplied any vehicle, to transport staff within the city of provinces, no generator is attached to any office up country or to any of them mobile teams.

- The Secretariat needs total refurbishment, furniture, and
- Allowances for staff and office equipment.
- However, the above issues have been discussed with the officials of the Budget Bureau.

RECOMMENDATION

It is necessary for both the representatives of Government and the company to meet and discuss issues relating to the agreement, since it is almost 3 years old in effect and certain changes need to be effected.

CONCLUSION

With the foregoing synopsis, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen I want to assure you that the Ministry will continue to strive to maintain internal security, protect life and property to the best of our ability so as to earn the confidence of the people of this country.