

SIERRA LEONE PRIORITY PLAN FOR THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEBUILDING FUND (PBF)

I. Background

Considerable progress has been made in the Sierra Leone peace building process since the end of the protracted conflict in 2002. State authority and the provision of basic services have been restored and extended throughout the country. Presidential and Parliamentary elections were held in 2002. Other developments include the implementation of a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration plan (DDR), the conclusion of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the adoption and currently ongoing implementation of a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), the establishment of a National Human Rights Commission and the adoption of a decentralization and devolution plan and of a National Anti-Corruption Strategy.

However, the root causes of the conflict among which, bad governance, corruption, denial of basic human rights and political and economic exclusion still need to be fully addressed. Persistent and pervasive unemployment, in particular among the youth, also presents a serious threat to stability, as recognized by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Government institutions lack the capacity to discharge effectively their duties and provide essential services (power, safe water and proper sanitation) which are only available to very few households in urban areas. The role of civil society in the country's post-conflict recovery and transition efforts and the dialogue between the Government and civil society require further strengthening. The judiciary in particular needs to establish credibility, professionalism, independence, and efficiency in order to significantly reduce the backlog of outstanding cases.

The Government's Peace Consolidation Strategy (PCS) provides an analysis of the critical threats to long-term peace and stability and proposes specific interventions to address them in order to create and support an enabling environment for the implementation of the country's long-term development objectives and for building national capacities for conflict prevention and resolution.

Upon its request, Sierra Leone has been included on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission which held two country-specific meetings in October and December 2006, respectively. The Government and the Commission agreed to focus on following priority areas:

- Youth empowerment and employment;
- Democracy and good governance;
- Justice and security;
- Capacity building of public administration.

In declaring Sierra Leone eligible to benefit from the Peacebuilding Fund, the members of the Commission recognized these critical impediments to the consolidation of peace as necessary conditions for inclusive development and stability. The Commission further stressed that every effort should be made to deliver the Peacebuilding Fund Country envelope during January 2007.

Projects in these four areas should focus on realizing immediate and quick impacts that will help bring visible and tangible peace dividends to the population. Interventions funded by the PBF are meant to have a catalytic effect and attract sustained assistance to bring PBF short term interventions to fruition. The PBF will, therefore, seek to maximize its complementarity with both existing and planned for project activities from other donors under the four priority areas. The mapping of long-term strategies will be informed by various Government-owned national strategies and frameworks such as the (PRS), the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), and the Peace Consolidation Strategy (PCS).

II Priority Interventions

Youth empowerment and employment.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) identified marginalization and political exclusion of youth as one of the primary causal factors for the civil war. Five years after the formal end of hostilities, both the Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Peace Consolidation Strategy still highlight youth unemployment as the most serious threat to the country's stability and a hurdle to inclusive development. It is estimated that up to 70% of the youths of the country are unemployed or underemployed. The 2002 poverty profile showed that youth aged 15-24 are amongst the poorest of the poor. Many young citizens that grew up during the conflict have been completely deprived of a basic education. Over half of all young men and nearly two thirds of young women cannot read or write. The Government recognizes the significant gender disparities that need to be addressed in this context.

Significantly eradicating youth unemployment will require sustained economic growth, a robust and expanded private sector to create jobs, as well as urgent efforts to provide remedial education and essential skills acquisition. However, in light of the long-term nature of these challenges the Government and its international partners recognize that concerted efforts on various fronts and multi-annual programmes are needed to ensure infrastructure development, attract investment, ensure private sector development, and provide training. In the meantime, it is imperative to ensure that short term, time-bound initiatives are taken to improve employment tangibly for both young men and women.

Ongoing initiatives to address this issue include the creation of a Ministry of Youth and the formulation of a national youth policy, the establishment of micro-farms, Agricultural Business Units (ABUs) and specific enterprises for "Girls off the Street" in several districts and the launch of a Youth Employment Scheme (YES), focusing on immediate and feasible options for employment creation. Government and its external partners are working closely together to implement and support the Youth Employment Scheme, which combines short-term and long-term interventions. Other areas of consideration for future projects could include vocational training, skills development, literacy, and non-formal education programs, income generating activities. A strong gender focus owing to significant gender disparities in education and literacy will also be needed.

The activities to be covered through the PBF will be the short-term and catalytic efforts that are complementary to medium- and long-term initiatives. The Youth Employment Scheme also provides for urgent building of capacities at the local level, throughout the country, to support job creation and skills development.

Justice and security sector development.

The pre-war collapses of the justice and security sectors were important factors precipitating the conflict. Sierra Leone's history had seen a "continual assault" on the rule of law. Despite some progress in the re-establishment of judicial institutions, their performance, credibility, and professionalism remain matters of serious concern. The lack of timely adjudication, inadequate access to justice by most of the population, the large backlog of court cases, abysmal prison conditions and the weak oversight of, and coordination among, the various judicial institutions remain serious post-conflict issues in urgent need of redress.

Other issues of concern are the high number of cases adjudicated by the traditional system of justice and the chieftaincy-structure of power in rural areas, contradictions between some aspects of customary law with basic human rights, discrimination, particularly against women, lack of codification of customary law and lack of clarity of what constitutes customary law. Additionally, the traditional courts lack capacity, knowledge, legal training, and logistics to dispense justice effectively.

Addressing the issues facing the justice system in Sierra Leone requires a comprehensive approach including much needed structural reforms. At present, efforts are underway in that direction primarily with the support of the United Kingdom, which funds the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP). However, as these long-term initiatives are implemented, there is an urgent need to address the most pressing constraints facing the judiciary. These comprise training and deployment of additional magistrates, reinforcing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, including building the capacity of the traditional courts generally and specifically to uphold national and international human rights laws and commitments, reducing the enormous backlog of court cases and pre-trial detention caseloads, and strengthening coordination among the key Ministries of Justice and Internal Affairs.

As part of Justice and Security Sector development, support to following activities would be considered: implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), including support to the newly established National Human Rights Commission, effective implementation of the TRC recommendations and the work of the National Human Rights Commission to strengthen the national reconciliation process, promote conflict resolution by addressing the most urgent human rights legacies of the conflict, and strengthen institutional mechanisms, safeguards, and oversight arrangements for the promotion of human rights. A comprehensive Security Sector Reform (SSR) programme is successfully being implemented to improve the capacity of the security agencies with particular attention to strict adherence to the country's Constitution, accountable civilian leadership, proper Parliamentary oversight, professionalism, proper skills and training for human resources management, civic education, and discipline. Urgent attention should also be given to critical short-term requirements, especially in the area of improved coordination and operational capacities of the security agencies, in particular the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and the Office of National Security (ONS) to ensure national and human security objectives.

The Sierra Leone Prisons Department requires urgent support to address its immediate capacity constraints, especially the decongestion and transfer of the Padumba Road Central prison. A suitable location outside the capital has already been identified to help resolve the issue of the overcrowding of prison facilities resulting in severe human rights implications and to ensure that prisons are operated under modern and internationally accepted protocols and standards.

Reinforcing Democracy.

The Government has adopted a number of important measures to establish and strengthen democratic institutions of governance, including the reconstitution of a democratically elected Parliament, the establishment of a National Electoral Commission (NEC) and the creation of a Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC). Other activities to further strengthen these institutions remain an urgent priority as the country now prepares for the July 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. Some of the areas in need of immediate support include the following:

Parliament. At present, the Parliament is seriously constrained in undertaking its responsibilities, particularly with respect to consultations with and within the Parliamentarians' constituencies. Parliamentary oversight of the public administration is not adequate, especially in the area of public accounts, and in the protection and promotion of human rights. Other crucial tasks for which the Parliament is currently weakly equipped include the interfacing with civil society in general, and the capacity to conduct proper policy research to enable duly informed debates and proper background information for new legislative initiatives. Activities in this area will take into account assistance already being provided by the UN.

Elections. The Political Parties' code of conduct, adopted in October 2006, needs to be further disseminated amongst the membership of the various parties through proper civic education workshops. These will also focus on the critical issues of avoiding confrontational mobilization of supporters, the need for all to respect proper and sufficient electoral campaign space and the need for due process and adequate capacities for resolving and mediating electoral disputes. Significant requirements also remain with respect to the realignment of electoral laws, the setting up of a permanent voters' registration, ensuring women's participation in elections, and the crucial issue of popular sensitization on electoral issues. Government and partners also recognize the important issue of looking beyond 2007 and ensuring the strengthening of a vibrant, qualified and independent capacity to conduct national and local elections that commands national and international respect and recognition. Assistance in this area will be closely coordinated with the basket fund for elections.

Public Financial Management. Another pillar for the strengthening of democracy in Sierra Leone, also aimed at strengthening and improving the transparency of public financial management and reducing corruption has been the drive towards decentralization. The Local Government Act (LGA) of 2004 envisages significant devolution of power to the districts and the transfer of specific functions to newly established District Councils. Although considerable progress has been achieved, many challenges remain, particularly the building of adequate management and administrative capacity at the local level. Priority and short-term requirements also remain in terms of greater participation by women in local government, particularly ensuring proportionate membership in Ward Development Committees. Other issues that severely hamper the decentralization drive are related to inconsistencies between the LGA (2004) and other laws, and the issue of the sharing of revenues between local councils and Chiefdom authorities. The Government requires assistance to develop, promulgate, and implement a policy on Chiefdom Governance to address these issues.

Civil society participation. Enhancing the role and participation of civil society in Sierra Leone's development and political transformation requires urgent and support. An essential aspect of democratic governance is broad-based participation in public decision-making and dialogue between all social groups, including women. Efforts need to be focused on building

the capacity of civil society, particularly women’s organizations, and strengthening coordination with government and other stakeholders. Such support will complement ongoing efforts, in particular the DfID-funded programme focusing on Civil Society–Government collaboration, including through joint efforts to combat corruption.

Enhancing Public Service delivery

Addressing the consequences of the widespread collapse of the public service machinery urgently requires enhanced public service delivery, at national, district and ward levels. The Civil Service apparatus is now seriously outdated in terms of the necessary knowledge, skills, and training. Without an effectively functioning civil service, the Government of Sierra Leone will not be able to service the population at large which in turn could lead to discontent. Given the sense of disenfranchisement amongst the population during the years leading up to the war, support in strengthening Government capacity is recognized as a critical Peacebuilding challenge. Civil service reforms stretch across a broad area of capacity building efforts aimed at improved service delivery. Required reforms also involve addressing the unbalanced gender and age profile of the civil service, as well as developing skills and mechanisms for accountability and responsiveness to people’s needs, particularly the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

Within the context of a comprehensive Civil Service reform, which the Government is undertaking, the establishment of a Senior Executive Service (SES) within the Civil Service is considered to be an immediate priority to kick-start other components of civil service reform since its senior officials will provide the leadership for wider changes and for a transparent and efficient public service. The SES will have a performance-based character and oversee the modernization of the Civil Service apparatus at all levels to ensure that citizens of Sierra Leone will receive the services normally associated with a modern state. While it is recognized that the reform of the public service requires a sustained, holistic and multi-annual approach, the short-term requirement of the creation of the SES is viewed as a critical first step towards comprehensive civil service reform.

III Summary of planned projects and resource requirements.

Project concept attached to this Priority Plan explain how the four priority areas will be implemented. The Concept Notes are designed to provide an indication of some of the specific projects to be implemented through the PBF. Further discussion of specific projects will be undertaken through the consultative process envisaged in the Steering Committee’s Terms of reference and Rules of Procedure, for final approval by the Steering Committee. Financial requirements for the attached Concept Notes presented amount to US\$ 35.6 million, as follows:

	Priority Areas	Allocation requested from the Peacebuilding Fund (in US\$ m)
1.	Youth empowerment and employment	9.0
2.	Justice and security	9.0
3	Democratic governance	8.6
4	Capacity building of public administration	9.0
	Total:	35.6

Projects proposed in the areas of youth empowerment and employment will support national and local programmes for the young men and women in the areas of employment creation, skills acquisition, remedial training, conflict mediation, peace building, articulation of needs,

building of cooperative ventures and participation in decision-making processes. Special attention will be given to gender disparities, linkages with poverty reduction programmes and empowerment of young men and women. Linkages with more sustained capacity building efforts will ensure that youth employment can be structurally enhanced beyond the short-term interventions. Given the sub-regional dimension of the youth problem, some interventions will be designed to promote cooperation and coordination among youth leaders and associations in the region, such as the Mano River Youth Parliament; and the Mano River Civil Society Group, among others. Proposed concept notes are:

- Youth Agricultural Engagement (US\$ 2,000,000)
- Youth Enterprise Development (US\$ 3,500,000)
- Public Works Scheme (US\$ 3,300,000)
- Establishment of Youth Networks (US\$ 200,000)

Interventions related to justice and security will ensure wider access to justice and promote the rule of law at all levels of society, particularly through projects which will address the human rights legacies of the conflict and build national capacity for conflict-prevention, mediation, and resolution, and support to Anti-corruption measures. Activities will also seek to enhance alternative dispute mechanisms, enabling traditional courts to provide access to justice to the entire population including adequate sensitivity to human rights and gender equality. Concrete interventions will include the strengthening of the capacity of the magistrate courts to reduce the backlog of cases, to reduce pre-trial detention periods and to address overcrowding of prisons. Proposed concepts notes under this priority are:

- Capacity building for the Judiciary and the Police (US\$ 4,500,000)
- Law enforcement (US\$ 2,000,000)
- Improved security environment (US\$ 2,500,000)

Related support in the corrections system will focus on the decongestion of the Central Prison and the improvement of detention conditions and strengthen coordination arrangements of key ministries and agencies involved in the administration of justice, such as the Ministry of Justice, Internal Affairs, the Office of National Security and the National Human Rights Commission. In the security sector, the focus will be on strengthening of national capacities for Early Warning and Tracking Response System and on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) control. Support to the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), particularly empowering women to play active roles in peace building, and support to National Human Rights Commission, will also be part of the priority activities. Suggested concept notes are:

- Support to the implementation of the Recommendations of the Truth and reconciliation Commission (TRC) (US\$ 3,000,000)
- Assistance to the National Human Rights Commission (US\$ 1,450,000)
- Capacity Building for Parliament (US\$ 1,000,000)
- Support to the establishment of a National Network of Peace Mediators (US\$650,000)

Priority activities to support democratic governance will strengthen the capacity of national institutions for electoral support, voter registration, adherence to agreed codes of conduct and greater involvement of civil society, particularly youth and women organizations, in all forms of conflict resolution, reconciliation and peace consolidation. The support will ensure adequate capacity within the electoral management bodies to conduct an acceptable and credible election in July 2007. Support to Parliament will focus on enhancing its oversight of public administration, oversight of public accounts, deepening and broadening the dialogue

between Parliamentarians and civil society, as well as improved legislative functionality, through capacity building for its technical and administrative staff. Concept notes in this area are:

- Assistance to the electoral process in Sierra Leone (US\$ 1,000,000)
- Civil Society Capacity Building (US\$ 1,500,000)

Capacity building support will improve critical service delivery; help accelerate the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy and address critical bottlenecks already identified to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A key component will be the establishment of the Senior Executive Service (SES) which will spearhead and lead greater accountability of public service and comprehensive Civil Service reform. To achieve the above objectives, the priority support will complement ongoing assistance from DFID and other donors in developing and implementing a comprehensive training policy and plan of action for the Civil Service and establish a Human Resource Management Office and modern personnel practices. One concept notes is suggested in this area:

- Capacity Building of Public Administration (US\$ 9,000,000)

IV Coordination arrangements

Government and partners will use existing mechanisms and coordination arrangements, where feasible, to ensure synergies and complementarity with sectoral frameworks and strategies. In particular, Government and partners will utilize the existing PRSP pillar working groups for a technical review of projects before their submission to the PBF Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will provide overall strategic direction on the use of the PBF and approve projects. Pragmatic arrangements will be put in place to ensure coordination and linkages between the peacebuilding and poverty reduction objectives of the Government.

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