

**UNITED NATIONS
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**SUMMARY REPORT OF ADAPTATION OF THE GOALS
IN SIERRA LEONE**



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Country context

The Government of Sierra Leone strongly supports the launch of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (the UN SDGs) to succeed the Millennium Development Goals (the MDGs). The new agenda conveys renewed commitment by the UN to support global paths to sustainable development by 2030. The previous agenda, the MDGs, provided useful benchmarks that the government strove very hard to achieve despite Sierra Leone's weak start at the dawn of the 21st century due to a devastating decade-long civil war (1991-2001) that crippled the economy and human development.

Unfortunately, while the government was staying the course of pursuing the MDGs to an end, the nation was struck by yet another crisis, the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in May 2014. The disease killed an estimated 3,500 of about 8,000 infected persons. It caused unprecedented damage to the social and economic fabric of the state before it was officially declared over on 7th November 2015. This natural catastrophe was exacerbated by a coincidental crisis in the mining sector. As the disease was raging, the international price of the country's leading export commodity (iron ore) was crashing, compelling the two leading mining companies of the mineral to suspend operations for at least a year during 2014-2015.¹ The economy phenomenally plunged during the twin crises. Growth in GDP decelerated from 15.2 percent in 2012 and 20.1 percent in 2013 to 4.6 percent in 2014.² The estimated growth for end-2015 was minus 21.1 percent. Consumer prices skyrocketed and at least 2.3 million people had their livelihoods worsened during these crises.

The combined effects of the twin crises badly affected progress towards meeting the MDGs, and undermined hopes of achieving the country's Vision 2035 of becoming a middle income country anchored on the successive implementation of its poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), the current one dubbed the Agenda for Prosperity (A4P, 2013-2018). These effects have continued to linger on to date, to the extent that the government is currently instituting tough austerity measures to rebound the economy.

Progress on the MDGs

Before the EVD struck in 2014, Sierra Leone had made progress in implementing the MDGs by, among others, integrating its goals in the national development plans, including the PRSP/III/A4P. Two MDG reports had so far been prepared (2005 and 2010) and the country received a UN MDGs award in 2010 in recognition of the President's remarkable leadership commitment and progress towards achieving MDG6. Various socio-economic surveys and sector reports indicated notable progress towards achieving a number of MDGs and the country was optimistic that several goals would have been achieved in 2015. Poverty headcount had declined from 70 percent in 2003, to 52.9 percent in 2013; prevalence of underweight children reduced from 20 percent in 2004, to 16 percent in 2013; primary school completion rate stood at 76 percent in 2013; the ratio of girls to boys in primary school was close to 100 percent; HIV/AIDS prevalence dropped from 1.5 percent in 2005, to 0.12 percent in 2015; access to safe drinking water increased from 36.7 percent in 1990, to 62.6 percent in 2015; and mobile cellular subscribers increased from 14.3 percent in 2007, to 76.7 percent in 2014. A draft 2015 MDGs progress report has been prepared. This end-programme report and various socio-economic assessments including the Ebola Recovery Strategy show that the EVD reversed gains made in achieving several MDGs. Indeed, serious challenges remained in a number of other areas, especially in reducing maternal and child mortality. In 2013, maternal mortality rate was 1,165 deaths per 100,000 live births and under-five and infant mortality rates were 156 and 92 deaths per 1,000 births, respectively. A huge room also remained in protecting the environment and enhancing sanitation and hygiene.

Challenges and lessons going forward

A number of challenges have emerged for Sierra Leone in light of recent socioeconomic developments and their implications for the need to foster regional and global cooperation to ensure sustainable development. Poverty, vulnerability and inequality remain a concern. And to the extent that Sierra Leone could

¹ The two financially challenged mining companies were replaced by new companies during this period.

² See Sierra Leone National Ebola Recovery Strategy (2015, p.6), Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Freetown.

phenomenally suffer a cross-border infection to a monumental scale as witnessed with the Ebola virus originating from the Republic of Guinea cements the fact that regional and global dimension to a country's sustainable development cannot be overemphasized.

Sierra Leone's economy remains fragile and vulnerable to external shocks. It is highly dependent on mining for foreign exchange earnings, which is unpredictable as corroborated in the recent crash of international price of its leading export commodity (iron ore), suggesting that the country must diversify its economy to grow and develop sustainably.

Natural disasters are a continuous threat to the country. Recent disasters included massive flooding that decimated homes, business houses and claimed scores of lives in the capital city of Freetown and other regions just as the country was emerging from the scourge of the Ebola epidemic in August 2015, thus speaking highly to the need for SDG11 that warns states to ensure efficient management of towns, cities and population.

Related to the foregoing is the increasing evidence of the negative effects of climate change, including rising sea levels and frequent flooding. Sierra Leone has been recently reported to be among the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change in the world.³ Addressing these threats require sustained development cooperation and investing in attitudinal and behavioural change in consumption and production patterns, as well as in climate change-related disaster preparedness, such as early warning systems, and prevention planning.

Other challenges include management of regional conflicts that require member countries' participation, such as responding to cross-border organized crimes; terrorism; piracy; drugs and human trafficking; and illicit financial flows ripping Africa of scarce development resources. Great attention is required to overcoming youth unemployment in pursuing social stability.

Leaving no one behind

The domestication of SDGs in Sierra Leone has taken into consideration the principle of leaving no one behind, as this is an additional dimension to the special context and challenges the country faces, which require adequate response in fulfillment of this principle. Accordingly, SDGs consultations and popularization process has taken into consideration marginalized and excluded groups, including the disabled, women in rural areas, children, youth and households in informal settlements. Statistics Sierra Leone and other government agencies are being sensitized to collect disaggregated (including spatial) data that enable effective policy making and tracking of relevant inequalities. Furthermore, upholding concerns relating to intergenerational environmental equity is crucial to the fulfillment of this objective; otherwise not only a huge cross-section of the present generation will be left behind but the sustained survival of those yet unborn could be doubtful.

What to do to overcome the challenges

As gathered from the consultations, addressing these challenges requires development of a capable and effective state with sound institutions, and monitoring and early warning and response mechanisms to respond to risks and threats accordingly and building on acquired strengths and applying critical lessons learned. Having a well-incentivized public and civil service system and a durable and robust peace infrastructure is all the more critical to ensuring sustainable development in the country; incentive that are accompanied by inculcation of integrity at work.

Accession to the voluntary review and progress in national adaptation of SDGs

It is against the above background that Sierra Leone has seen the SDGs as a timely opportunity to overcome development challenges ahead. We have therefore prepared a review report to inform the UN at the July 2016 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) about the progress that Sierra Leone has made in integrating the SDGs into our national development processes. So far, we have published a simplified version of the SDGs,

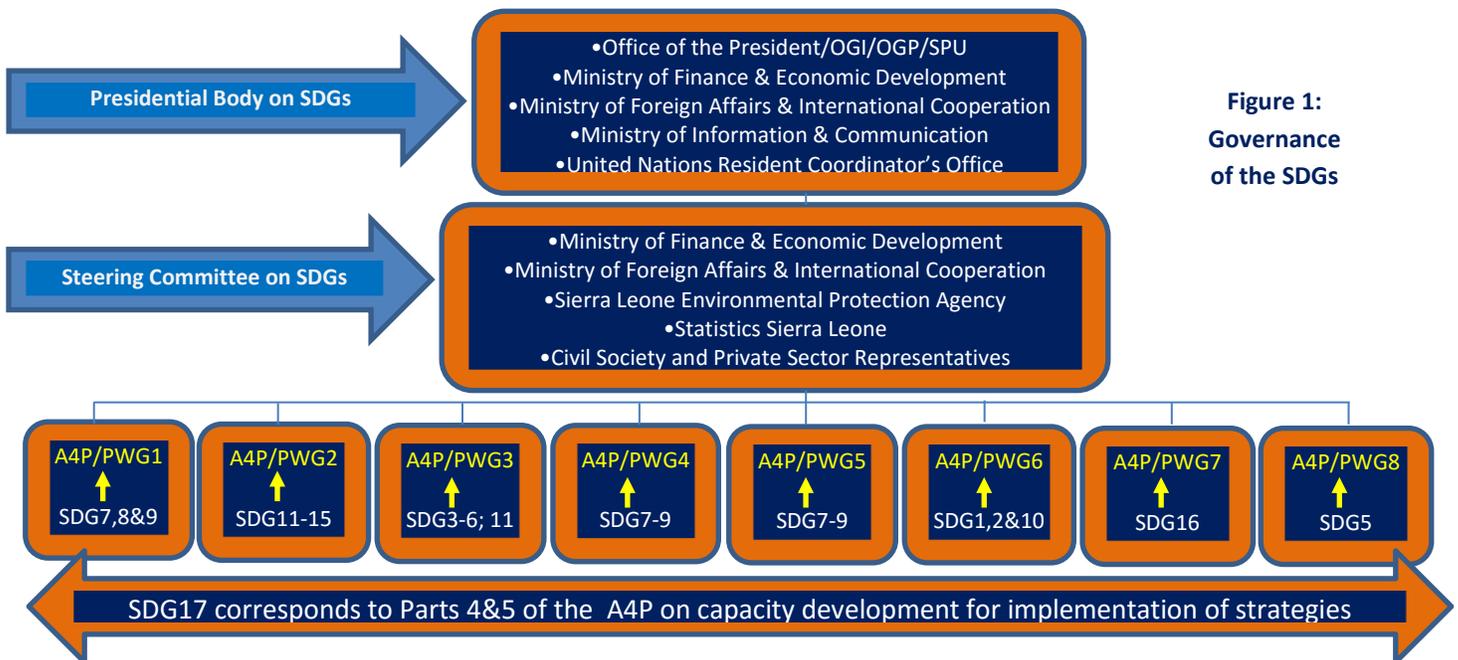
³ <http://standardtimespress.org/?p=5191>.

distributed copies to Parliament and the public at large; and provided briefing to Cabinet. These have been followed by series of sensitization meetings and workshops with civil society and Non-Governmental Organizations, the local councils, a cross-section of university colleges, and the general public through radio and TV discussions. The Office of the President provides broad oversight to the SDGs adaptation process, while the Ministries of Finance and Economic Development and that of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation provide operational, technical and diplomatic leadership.

The SDGs were integrated into the 2016 National Budget, and have been aligned to the Eight Pillars of Sierra Leone’s third generation poverty reduction strategy paper. Technical workshops were organized to prepare Sierra Leone’s SDGs adaptation report, which constitute the review report to present to the HLPF in July. A draft set of SDG indicators specific to Sierra Leone have been formulated.

Planned implementation arrangement on the SDGs

The SDGs will be implemented within the existing framework of implementing our national development plan: the PRSP III or A4P. The institutional management framework is presented in Figure 1. It is proposed to have a *Presidential Board on the SDGs (PBS)* at the highest policy and political level to provide overall policy and strategic guidance to the implementation of the SDGs, to be chaired by the President with members drawn from the Office of the President, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC), the Ministry of Information and Communication, and the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator. Below the PBS is the *Ministerial Committee on the SDGs (MCS)* to provide operational guidance to the SDGs process across line government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) at the central and local levels, and across CSOs/NGOs, the private sector, the media, the research community and the academia. The MCS will include MoFED, MFAIC, Statistics Sierra Leone, Open Government Initiative/Partnership (OGI/P) and Strategy and Policy Unit (SPU) in the Office of the President; and other MDAs. Below this are the existing Pillar Working Groups (PWGs) of the Agenda for Prosperity which will be modified to capture technical follow-ups and reporting on the SDGs within the Pillars.



**Figure 1:
Governance
of the SDGs**

Implementation of the adaptation plan shall be informed by the principles of the New Deal, such as *transparency, ownership, one plan, capacity development, and joint management of risk*, guiding development interventions in fragile states like Sierra Leone, as well as the principles of Mutual Accountability to ensure effectiveness of aid. All development actors including the public sector, CSOs/NGOs, donor agencies, local councils and the private sector shall be coordinated within the institutional framework described in Figure 1.