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TOWARDS
RE-ELECTION

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Hon. Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh
Vice President



Hon. Jacob Jusu Saffa
Chief Minister



Professor David J. Francis
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation



The Case for President Bio's Re-Election

Clear-sightedness and reasonableness are not the staple of presidential elections, particularly in a politically divisive atmosphere like ours where sentiments other than an appreciation of good governance determines most votes. Still, leadership character can be isolated; and a sizable proportion of voters who determine the result do care about the direction of their country, the commitment and vision of the presidential candidate, and the record of that candidate in office and elsewhere.

No presidential candidate in Sierra Leone has articulated a more ennobling vision shorn of short-term political gains and stuck by it with as much success and tenacity as President Bio. That vision, as set out in his manifesto of February 2018, was large: he promised a New Direction that would lead to a progressive, dynamic and confident nation by developing the country's "human capital through free education."

It was easy enough then to scoff at this promise: The Economist, a leading global journal, described it on 12 April 2018 as "unrealistic, given the state of government finances." At the time, only 13.7% of children aged 3-5 years were enrolled at pre-primary level; 34.5% of children between 12 and 14 years did not attend school, and an astonishing 70.5% between 15 and 17 also did not. Teachers were poorly trained, if at all: less than half of all teachers were qualified.

Defying grim predictions, the President launched the free and quality education. Not only were school fees waived, "conditional cash" for poorer parents were set aside to encourage them to send their kids to school, and \$8 million was isolated for school-feeding for children in communities where they often faced the option to work on farms or mines or starve.

The results have been extraordinary. The World Bank last year noted that primary school enrolment has increased by 141%. Over 10,000 more teachers have been recruited, and 20,000 overall have received professional training. Enrolment of girls in schools has increased from 999,298 in 2018 to 1,592,823 by 2021, probably the most significant social advancement in the region in recent memory. Overall school enrolment has increased



President Dr. Julius Maada Bio

from 1,982,475 in 2018 to 3,131,440 by 2021. No wonder President Bio's Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, the dynamic Dr. David Moinina Sengeh, got the Best Minister Award in the World at the 10th edition of the World Government Summit in Dubai.

Investment in education is an investment in the country's future. No one can characterize it as a political or populist gesture. Indeed, so expensive has it been that the scope for such extravagant gestures is eliminated. The same may be said about President Bio's repeal of the seditious libel law, the death penalty, and the ban on pregnant girls attending school. The latter both supports the free and compulsory education policy, and broader human rights. The former – death penalty and seditious libel law – were useful tools for capricious government. Despite that, there was no widespread popular calls for their repeal – in other words, no electoral gain may be anticipated from that repeal.

That is a mark of true statesmanship: acting out of pure conviction.

President Bio's accomplishments in other important matters include expansion of access to electricity, and stability and market availability of essential commodities (especially food and fuel), despite rising inflation occasioned by broader global events that affects every country in our region, most of them more acutely. Sierra Leone's inflation rate

was 11.87% in 2021, before the war in Ukraine and the global spike in fuel and food prices, down from 16.03% in 2018, when our government took office. This has meant that prices of essential commodities have increased significantly, but they have consistently been available and largely affordable through the cushioning effects of Government subsidies and other interventions.

In foreign policy, President Bio's achievements have been unprecedented. For the first time in over 50 years, Sierra Leone is on the verge of becoming a non-permanent member of the UN security Council. We have placed a Sierra Leonean Judge at the ICC and several compatriots in other important international organisations. In providing leadership at the United Nations and other international organisations, including the World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), and the Arms Trade Treaty, our government has given our country unprecedented visibility.

The conclusion is indisputable: the case for re-electing President Bio is overwhelming; he should be overwhelmingly elected at the first ballot on 24 June. It will be a reward for good governance, which needs to continue under his leadership during his second and final term.

L.G.

From the Editor's Desk

Switzerland opened a consulate in Sierra Leone, then a British colony, in 1920. This is both a testament to a long and enduring relationship between the two countries, and to Switzerland's primacy as a centre of multilateralism. At the time it opened its consulate in Freetown, the League of Nations – the immediate predecessor of the United Nations – had just been established in Geneva, in January 1920. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) – the oldest continuously existing inter-governmental organisation – had been founded, also in Geneva, less than a year earlier, in October 1919. Both were preceded by the International Committee of the Red cross, founded – again in Geneva – in 1863.

Shortly after Sierra Leone gained independence from Britain in 1961, the two countries formally established diplomatic relations and the Swiss Consulate in Freetown was scaled up to a Consulate General. In 2012, Sierra Leone opened its Embassy and Permanent Mission in Geneva with Ambassador Yvette Stevens as Sierra Leone's first Ambassador to Switzerland and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva. From 2012 to 2018, Ambassador Stevens worked tirelessly to strengthen diplomatic and bilateral ties between Sierra Leone and Switzerland.

The Sierra Leone–Switzerland bilateral and diplomatic relations have been strengthened further by the New Direction Government of His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio, after his election in 2018. President Bio appointed Dr. Lansana Alison Gberie, a renowned academic and writer who had worked for over 20 years for UN and other international organisations to serve as Ambassador Extra-ordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative accredited to Switzerland and to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations in Geneva to spearhead the nation's rebranding efforts under the New Direction Government.

In his role, Ambassador Gberie has dramatically changed the narrative of a war-torn, Ebola-battered, and poverty-stricken Sierra Leone to one that presents a country of great talent, resourcefulness and competent professionalism,



Mr. Mohamed Sheriff, Information Attache'

championing progressive policies on human rights, climate change, arms control, safe and orderly migration, and access to life saving drugs and vaccines amidst a global pandemic. This new face of Sierra Leone has enhanced not only respect from our bilateral partner, but recognition and credibility within the UN and the international community in Geneva. Sierra Leone has become more attractive in the framework of international cooperation in the areas of education, trade, investment, Humanitarian Affairs and Human Rights, Telecommunications, Intellectual Property, health, Peace, Security, and disarmament, tourism, and migration, among others.

Under Dr. Gberie's leadership, the Mission in Geneva has given priority to strengthening the bilateral ties between Switzerland and Sierra Leone through engagements and negotiations for the promotion of the policies of government regarding our sociocultural and trade and economic interests as they relate to transnational issues ranging from trafficking in persons and irregular migration to terrorism, cybercrimes, illegal narcotics, climate change, pandemic fears, and more.

The Mission's regular meetings in Bern, the administrative capital of

Switzerland, with officials at the West Africa Division of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) have focused on discussing opportunities for investments and other forms of trade relations and cooperation assistance within the framework of the 'Swiss International Cooperation Strategy 2021-2024'. Ambassador Gberie has actively utilized this bilateral platform to promote the agenda of Government as outlined in the manifesto commitments of His Excellency President Bio.

The Swiss are committed to providing support for the socio-economic development of Sierra Leone. Successful inter-governmental meetings and other special Ministerial sessions have been held to advance the strengthening of ties between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Swiss Confederation.

Sierra Leoneans need to trust the process, for the path we have chosen with the New Direction leadership will bring us the change and development we all have been yearning for. In this edition of the Geneva Mission's Newsletter, we will present you, among other things, some of the key activities and achievements of the Mission since the last publication (December 2021).



Ambassador Gberie's Message

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Sierra Leone is on the verge of becoming a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council – the world's most exclusive and powerful organ.

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This edition of our newsletter is appearing at a critical moment: a national electoral contest in which our leader, His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio, is seeking re-election. It is a moment to reflect upon five years of his stewardship, focusing on the small part that this Mission has played in the larger current of Sierra Leone's foreign affairs and international cooperation.

So let us begin, where this journey began, with the political manifesto that then candidate Bio issued in February 2018. At 93 substantive pages, including the forward by the candidate, the manifesto was long and detailed and even discursive, every key section opening with a situation analysis laying out the issues and challenges, and ending with a promise to fix those problems in often innovative ways. The vision, given the disabling challenges waiting to be inherited, was bold and large. Domestic policy, of course, was the focus of the manifesto. Foreign affairs and diplomacy were appropriately placed under 'improving governance', and they take just over a page.

This might seem underwhelming; but the manifesto in fact stakes out a large vision: to transform our lacklustre international presence into a robust one that would "make major imprints on

the foreign and international scene." To this end the manifesto promised to "maintain and strengthen our national commitments to the Commonwealth, Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations and all other multilateral organisations."

President Bio's success in this regard has been phenomenal – and cannot be disputed because it is easily measurable. The crowning achievement, of course, is that Sierra Leone is on the verge of becoming a non-permanent member of the UN security Council – the world's most exclusive and powerful organ. It is foolish to attempt to judge this achievement in purely transactional terms: one is aware that some opposition figures have asked with obvious petulance about what material benefits this membership will bring to a struggling economy. The fact is that becoming a member of this august body is its own reward, for which some nations spend tens of millions of dollars to enjoy that singular honour and privilege. For a small country like ours, which was degraded by a brutal civil war and other calamities, membership of the Security Council – which for over a decade considered Sierra Leone in the 1990s and early 2000s merely as an item to be discussed, pitied, and helped – will be the ultimate affirmation of our statehood. It cements Sierra Leone's presence on the international

stage. We were last there in 1971, and then went downhill. We have risen again. It is the prominent platform to attract positive attention and foreign direct investments.

Credit for this great resurgence must be given to HE President Bio, with whose robust diplomacy – including urgent flights to Abuja, Addis Ababa and other capitals – ensured the coveted endorsement of ECOWAS and then the African Union, guaranteeing our success without the prohibitively expensive competition that would have ensued without that endorsement. He was ably assisted in this effort by his chief diplomat and our energetic Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Professor David J. Francis. The Embassy and Permanent Mission to Geneva is proud to have provided support to these efforts, including finalizing the Vision Statement, translating it into all the official UN languages and laying it out in an attractive format, as well as helping design the campaign logo and messaging for the campaign.

In Geneva, the original home of multilateralism, the presence of Sierra Leone is felt in unprecedented ways. The Mission represents Sierra Leone's interests in the United Nations and over

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The Mission was also able to get financial and technical support from IOM to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a project focused on an endangered island, Yeliboya, with more in the pipeline.

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24 other important international organisations that have their headquarters in Geneva, through international diplomacy. This involves negotiating, advocating, and promoting Sierra Leone's policies, as well as working with countries across the world to achieve common objectives.

Under President Bio, longstanding dues that had sent our country into administrative measures, including suspension of voting rights, were settled at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), World Health Organisation (WHO) and several other key international organisations. As a result, I as head of Mission was able, in 2020, to vie for and be elected President of the Arms Trade Treaty (a first for Sierra Leone, and the second for Africa – Nigeria); in 2022 to be elected chair of the Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property

Rights (TRIPS), one of the most important subsidiary bodies of the WTO, again a first; and in 2023 to be elected President of the Governing Council of International Organisation for Migration (IOM), also a first. In this new role, I made official visits to IOM's field missions in Morocco and Kenya from 19-26 March 2023, where I held discussions on IOM's priorities relating to protection of migrants, implementation of the Global Compact on Migration, mitigation measures with respect to the effects of climate change on displacement and forced migration, and above all safe and orderly migration, with ranking Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs and Migration official as well as top UN and other international officials.

This unprecedented global visibility for our country aside, the work of this Mission has brought tangible material benefits to our country. In addition to facilitating the implementation of tailored projects, the Mission secured technical and capacity development support from several UN bodies and specialised agencies based in Geneva to cross-sectoral government officials and personnel, in several critical areas.

One striking example may suffice – and it relates to the important repair work to our international image that President Bio's government has done. In 2020, the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria sent me a damning report issued by the Fund's Office of the Inspector General, which had extensively investigated the use – or misuse – of the Fund's financial contribution to our health sector, focusing on the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and the National HIV/AIDS Secretariat. The period covered by the report was from early 2016 to March 2017, when the APC was in power, and a year before President Bio took office.

During that reporting period, the Fund disbursed tens of millions of dollars to Sierra Leone. The report stated that over \$2 million of those - \$1,377,843 expended by HIV/AIDS Secretariat and \$707,690 by the MoHS – were inappropriately used. It established that of that amount, \$707,690 was fraudulently converted by the HIV/AIDS Secretariat and \$249,238 was stolen by officials of the MoHS. The Fund was requesting that government refunds the stolen amount, \$946,726, with the implication that their important programme in Sierra Leone may be negatively affected if it wasn't. The language of the report was blunt. It spoke of “significant levels of fraud, collusion, overcharging and non-compliant procurements with respect to the HIV grant”; “fraudulent procurements, payments and overcharging with respect to the grant focusing on TB, malaria, and health systems”; and “theft, fraud, and non-compliant payments which have affected Community Health Work programs.”

I immediately negotiated a repayment plan once I verified that the contents of the report had been reviewed by colleagues in Freetown, which I then canvassed with all the relevant authorities. Cabinet approved the plan. Once repayment started in 2021, the Fund allocated \$160 million, far more than its normal allocation. This year, the Fund's allocation to Sierra Leone is \$126.4 million, of which \$73 million is for the treatment of malaria.

The Mission was also able to get financial and technical support from IOM to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a project focused on an endangered island, Yeliboya, with more in the pipeline.

I would like to thank my team, which, though small, has been highly motivated and supportive. Without my team's dedication and collaboration, we wouldn't have been able to deliver at this level. I look forward to more excellent work in the period ahead.



Mr. Edward Kawa, Minister Counsellor and Head of Chancery

Multilateral and Bilateral Engagements: My Experience

By Edward Kawa, Minister Counsellor

As young Foreign Service Officers, we constantly discussed our preference for our first diplomatic postings. Some colleagues rooted for bilateral stations, while others favoured multilateral stations. Our thought processes were influenced by senior colleagues who shared their experiences with us. Some bilateral diplomatic posts are easier to navigate because of their focus on one-on-one relationships between two countries. In all multilateral diplomatic posts, it is less easy because there are often a broader range of perspectives to deal with.

Fast forward today, I have had the privilege first of serving in a bilateral Mission, and now in a dual accreditation station (Bilateral and Multilateral engagements).

Ultimately, I believe the choice between bilateral and multilateral

diplomatic Missions depends on specific circumstances.

A bilateral diplomatic post refers to a diplomatic mission, often an embassy, that deals primarily with one country. This means that the focus of the mission is solely on promoting the interest of the home country in the host country and maintaining positive relations between the two nations. Diplomats working at a bilateral post would spend their time meeting with government officials, conducting negotiations, promoting economic and cultural ties, and assisting citizens of their home country living and traveling in the host country.

On the other hand, a multilateral diplomatic post refers to one that deals with many countries and organizations within a specific region or at the global level. Multilateral diplomacy aims to build consensus

and cooperation among different countries and international organizations towards common goals. Diplomats working at a multilateral post would attend various meetings and conferences, work with other diplomats to negotiate agreements, and promote their country's interests through cooperation on issues such as climate change, human rights, and security.

Navigating a bilateral diplomatic post can vary depending on the specific post and country, but generally it involves working closely with officials of the host country and representing the interests and policies of your home country. It requires a good deal of diplomatic tact, effective communication skills, and cultural sensitivity to build relationships.

As a general rule, it is important to be well-informed about the cultures, customs, and political landscapes of both your home country and your host country in order to effectively navigate a bilateral station. It is also helpful to have strong language skills, as communication in languages other than your native tongue may be necessary.

Overall, the experience can be challenging but rewarding for those of us who are dedicated to building bridges between nations and promoting international cooperation.

Small countries like Sierra Leone generally navigate in multilateral diplomatic posts like Geneva by forming strategic alliances with other countries that share our values and interests. We also tend to prioritize diplomacy and negotiation as a means of resolving conflicts and maintaining stability. In addition to this, we pursue specialized niche roles in international organizations, such as being champions of equality, environmental and development issues. We also leverage our unique perspective and experiences to offer creative solutions to global challenges. Overall, we rely on our agility, flexibility, and resilience to effectively navigate the complex web of multilateral diplomatic relations.

Effectively serving in a multilateral diplomatic post requires, in my experience, the following.

1. Building strong relationships: Diplomacy is all about relationships, so building strong relationships with key stakeholders in the host country is critical.

2. Being a good listener: Multilateral diplomacy often involves listening to and understanding multiple viewpoints. Be willing to listen, ask questions, and

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Sierra Leone at the UN & other International

Geneva hosts 181 United Nations member states with representation to the UN and other International Organisations. This has rightly though unofficially earned the Swiss city the name ‘International Geneva’.

The Sierra Leone Geneva Mission under the leadership of Ambassador and Permanent Representative Dr. Gberie remains actively engaged aligning Sierra Leone’s national priorities with the operations of the United Nations bodies and other international organizations including the World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Advisory Centre on WTO Law (ACWL), Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation (AITIC), the World Health Organization (WHO); the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), the Conference on Disarmament, (a multi-lateral forum established in 1979 by the UN General Assembly), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Intellectual Property World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Telecommunications (ITU).

Arms Trade Treaty and Disarmament

As a result of Sierra Leone’s active role in the implementation of national, regional, and international arms controls efforts, Ambassador Gberie was elected as the President of the Seventh Conference of States Parties (CSP7) to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in August 2021. During his presidency, Sierra Leone drafted and tabled the 2020 ATT resolution at the UNGA First Committee which highlighted Ambassador Gberie’s recommended theme on Small Arms and Light Weapons. It was adopted with an overwhelming support from Member States - 87 countries formally co-sponsored the resolution, including China, Switzerland, UK, France, and Nigeria. Most importantly, this is the first time the ATT resolution reflected the theme of a presiding CSP President.

Ambassador Gberie also prepared and submitted a working paper on “strengthening efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) and ensuring efficient stockpile management” which was adopted by consensus at the CSP7 held from 30 August – 2 September 2021 in Geneva. Another priority issue for Ambassador Gberie was strengthening the ATT through, inter alia, increased membership. This was achieved following consultations with His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio who approved that Sierra Leone write inviting Heads of States



Dr Sandy and Ambassador Dr Gberie at MC12.

Organizations in 2022: Major Achievements



H.E. Dr. Lansana A. Gberie Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone... ATT

who were not signatories to the ATT, influencing them to join this important arms control instrument.

Owing to this effort, the Gambia announced to the CSP7 the Government's decision to accede to the Treaty as the last west African country. Also attributable to Ambassador Gberie's consultative approach throughout his Presidency is all CSP7 decisions were adopted with consensus.

World Trade Organization

The Mission continues to work closely with the Director-General and her team to represent Sierra Leone's interest in the following priority areas: trade and development, food security and health, fisheries, and agriculture. Sierra Leone played a prominent role in the campaign of Nigeria for the selection of Madam Ngozi Iweala on the 15 February 2021 as the Seventh WTO Director-General, and Ambassador Gberie remains a key member of the Friends of the Director General.

Before 2018, Sierra Leone was in category three (3) of the Administrative Measures of the WTO because of her failure to pay membership assessed contributions under the past All People's Congress Party Government. This did not only become an embarrassment, but also posed a great challenge to the Mission's work with the organization.

In keeping with his manifesto commitments, His Excellency President Dr Julius Maada Bio early in his tenure vowed to settle most of these longstanding arrears, and rescue the good image of the country. Instructed by capital, the Permanent Mission negotiated a payment plan for arrears going back to more than two decades. Payment in phases began disbursement from Freetown of US\$238,162 in August 2020, amounting to around 40% of all arrears. By the end of March 2022, President Bio's government



Minister Trade and Industry Dr Edward Hinga Sandy and Ambassador Dr Lansana Gberie at MC12

had cleared all the arrears amounting in total to over US\$550,000. Sierra Leone became a fully active and influential voice at the WTO, which sets rules that facilitate around 97 per cent of global trade.

As a result of the active role of Sierra Leone at WTO, Ambassador Gberie was appointed chair the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Council for 2022, one of the most important – and the most contentious – subsidiary bodies of WTO. The outgoing chair of the TRIPS Council, Ambassador Dagfinn Sørli of Norway, formally handed over the Chairmanship to Ambassador Gberie at the first formal meeting of the Council held from 9-10 March 2022.

Among the issues on the agenda of the TRIPS Council in 2022 was a proposal calling for a waiver of certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement in relation to the “prevention, containment or treatment” of COVID-19. The waiver proposal was co-sponsored by 65 countries. A proposal countering the waiver request was submitted by the European Union in June 2021.

The WTO’s Director General subsequently launched intensive consultations with key parties of the two proposals. Known as the Quadrilateral or Quad negotiations – involving the EU, India, South Africa and the United States. Under the able leadership of Ambassador Gberie, delegations worked hard in different formats, and under enormous time pressure, to clarify and to improve the text in order to make it their own. Despite the fragility of the situation, the time constraints, and the importance of delivering an outcome on this urgent matter, Ambassador Gberie managed to stabilize the text and the Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement – or as some call it, the TRIPS waiver decision – was adopted at

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Sierra Leone became a fully active and influential voice at the WTO, which sets rules that facilitate around 97 per cent of global trade.

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the 12th Ministerial Conference as part of the WTO’s response to the pandemic. The Mission actively participated together with a delegation from capital led by the Minister of Trade and Industry, Hon. Dr. Edward Hinga Sandy at MC12, including in a workshop organized in the margins of MC12 on the effective implementation of Article 66.2 of the TRIPS Agreement- mandatory technology transfer to the LDCs from developed country members. Sierra Leone articulated its identified priority sectors for technical assistance and capacity building and highlighted the urgency for technology transfer.

Sierra Leone has leveraged her position as Chair of the TRIPS Council and energetically pursued longstanding national aspirations, including developing our fisheries and agricultural sectors with support from the WTO, UNCTAD and World Economic Forum. The Mission continues to work with the WTO Secretariat to facilitate targeted and context-oriented support to Sierra Leone, including through capacity building training and technical cooperation. technology

The Twelfth Ministerial Conference (MC-12) held in June 2022 in Geneva was attended by trade ministers and other senior officials from the organization's 164 members. It was an unprecedented success, producing landmark agreements – known as the Geneva Package – covering, among others, a waiver of intellectual property protections to produce COVID-19 vaccines, a long-illusory agreement on fisheries subsidies, and a decision addressing global food insecurity.

The Ministerial Conference is the highest decision-making body of the WTO and meets every two years.

Human Rights

Sierra Leone maintains a prominent voice at the Human Rights Council with effective engagement in all Council and Universal Periodic Review Working Group sessions. Sierra Leone successfully completed its third cycle Universal Periodic Review on 14 May 2021. 102 States participated and applauded Sierra Leone's progress and achievements in the field of human rights.

The Mission played a key role in garnering support for Sierra Leone's 3rd cycle UPR, including the preparation and presentation of the National report, outreach with UN Member States and UN machinery on our UPR highlighting key achievements in the promotion and protection of human rights since the 2nd Cycle Review.

Sierra Leone is a core member of the Group that developed and tabled resolution 43/19 entitled "Promotion and protection of human rights and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" at the Human Rights Council. The resolution was adopted by consensus.

Ambassador Gberie was appointed chair of the 4th intersessional meeting on Human Rights and Agenda 2030, "Investing in sustainable recovery, advancing gender equality and strengthening partnerships – Towards a renewed social contract anchored in human rights", by the then President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Federico Villegas (Argentina) in 2022.

At the regular sessions of the HRC and UPR at the UN in Geneva, the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone under the leadership of Ambassador Gberie advances Sierra Leone's foreign policy objectives. The Mission works alongside HRC members and observers to promote greater respect for human rights within the context of the mandate of the council. Sierra Leone co-sponsors and serves as a core group member participating in the preparation of draft texts of important resolutions at the UN Council. In addition, the Mission negotiates and co-sponsors country-specific and thematic-focused resolutions.

Because of Sierra Leone's bold and ethical position to abolish the 'death penalty' and following the recommendation by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, the Mission along with Australia, the UK, and the Netherlands, co-sponsored a high-level side event on "Protecting Life: Repealing the Death Penalty for Apostasy and Blasphemy".

The Mission is working with relevant stakeholders, including the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights



H.E Samuel U.B. Saffa Esq

(OHCHR) and UPR info, to finalize the implementation matrix and a comprehensive national action plan to effectively implement the recommendations received during Sierra Leone's 3rd cycle Universal Periodic Review in May 2022.

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Attorney General and Minister of Justice's Statement at the 52 Session of HRC



Sierra Leone's AG Mohamed Lamin Tarawalley Esq Addressing the 52 Session of HRC

I am honoured and gratified to address this esteemed Council at this 52nd session of the Human Rights Council, which is being convened during one of the most challenging moments in this Council's recent history. The adverse impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, and the rise in political instability and heightened global insecurity are factors that continue to threaten the work of this Council. The effect is felt everywhere, including my country, Sierra Leone.

Human rights constitute an essential basis for peace, sustainable development, democratic consolidation, and strengthening of the rule of law. Sierra Leone reaffirms its commitment to promoting and supporting proposals aimed at reinforcing the efficiency of the organs of this Council, including its procedures and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights guided by the principles of universality, objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity.

The recognition and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms are enshrined in the Constitution of Sierra Leone with a view of safeguarding human dignity as a common and an intrinsic condition that applies to all individuals irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity, place of origin, political or religious beliefs. The enjoyment of these rights are subject only to the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest.

Since the reintroduction of multi-party democracy in 1996 by His Excellency Dr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, following years of dictatorships, Sierra Leone has enjoyed a peaceful transition of power from one administration to another. This peaceful democratic change underscores a new dawn characterized by the rule of law with the people at the centre of the process. Sierra Leone under the leadership of President Julius Maada Bio, has embarked on several policy reform initiatives with a view to safeguarding the fundamental human rights of all Sierra Leoneans. On that note, I am pleased to report that Sierra Leone has made remarkable strides in the promotion and protection of human rights.

The government introduced legislative measures to further reinforce the independence of the justice system and reforms to demystify the law to expand access to justice. We sanctioned an unprecedented recruitment exercise to ensure the presence of judicial staff in every district in the country to service our courts, which culminated in the deployment of resident Magistrates and Judges in almost all districts in the country. This ambitious, but worthy cause has considerably increased access to formal justice in hitherto hard-to-reach areas in the provinces.

In addition, specialized courts have been established such as the Anti-Corruption Court, Sexual Offences Model Court, Social Security Court and Small Claims Court. All these are steps to make justice not only accessible but expeditious as well. There has been a considerable increase in budgetary support to the Judiciary with judicial staff benefitting from improved conditions of service to help bring them in line with their counterparts in the sub-region.

In a bid to strengthen democratic good governance and national cohesion, we have established a peace as well as a civic education commission while consolidating existing rule of law institutions such as the Human Rights Commission, which was recently re-credited with a grade "A" status for the third consecutive time by the Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions.

Sierra Leone has established the Justice Sector Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and the Justice Sector Coordination Unit with the aim of promoting interaction between community justice providers and the formal justice system. We have rolled out the Diversion and Alternatives to detention framework for children through public engagement in all police stations throughout the country.

Gender equality is a basic human right, and it is also fundamental to having a peaceful, prosperous world. The 'Hands Off Our Girls' Campaign, an initiative by the First Lady seeks to protect women and girls from sexual abuse and exploitation. During the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the President of Sierra Leone made a passionate plea for "global solidarity on

access to justice and remedies for survivors of sexual violence.” He cited measures such as the establishment of the Sexual Offences Model Court in 2020 to fast-track sexual offences.

Sierra Leone recognizes and is committed to gender equality and women’s empowerment as a crucial element of attaining sustainable peace and social and economic development in the country. In this regard, our Parliament in November 2022 unanimously passed the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Bill and was signed into law by President Julius Maada Bio. This law is a monumental advancement for gender equality in Sierra Leone as it guarantees improvements to women’s access to finance, employment opportunities, equal pay, maternity leave and – critically - political representation. The law establishes a 30% quota for women’s participation in government for both appointed positions, including cabinet, ministry and ambassadorial roles and elected positions, such as parliamentary and local council seats.

During the adoption of our 3rd cycle UPR report, we took further steps to accept hitherto recommendations that were noted following previous UPRs, especially those on the ban against pregnant girls, sexual and gender-based violence, criminal libel and the death penalty, etc., because of a genuine desire and strong commitment to protect, promote, respect the human rights of those groups of persons most impacted by our decision to note those recommendations.

In this regard, a significant human rights milestone achieved, is the abolition of the death penalty and the repeal of criminal libel. We believe in the sanctity of life of every citizen and that the death penalty was an inhumane form of punishment that violates the rights to life and all other human rights standards. Therefore, in July 2021, our Parliament unanimously abolished the death penalty. By passing the Abolition of the death Penalty Act 2021, we committed to never again execute anyone for any reason whatsoever. In addition, in order to further consolidate democratic good governance and human rights, the President signed into law a repeal and expunged criminal libel, which criminalised free speech. In Sierra Leone today, no journalists, politicians, no human rights defenders and activists are in prison for expressing their views or defending the human rights of others.

From our third cycle UPR, we recognize that some recommendations, like those on consensual or same-sex relationships and the criminalisation of female genital mutilation, are highly aspirational or ask to achieve ideals or outcomes that conflict with our national laws and cultural values. We subscribe to the principle that all human rights are indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated. Accordingly, this principle must be understood within the context of our national laws and cultural values that are quintessential to the identity of any society.

Let me reiterate that our conviction in strengthening and improving our human rights situation is not motivated by sentiment and optimism, but rather it is rooted in our commitment, resolve, capability and wartime experience to never again allow ourselves, our governments and our laws to be used as instruments or be complicit in human rights violations.

Another significant human rights milestone is that we have signed all the nine fundamental human rights treaties and submitted initial and periodic reports on five of the treaties. These are clear demonstrations that as a nation, we are committed to undertaking actions that will improve our human rights record and our sustained engagement with this international human rights mechanism demonstrates our government’s commitment in this regard. We shall continue to collaborate and effectively participate in the affairs of all established regional and sub-regional human rights treaty bodies.

The promotion and protection of human rights have often focused more on strengthening civil and political rights than on strengthening economic, social, and cultural rights. However, Sierra Leone continues to focus on both. We have made tremendous progress in the area of the President’s flagship programme - Free Quality Education by allocating almost a quarter of our national budget to education as he believes in human capital development as the pathway to sustainable development. We have also improved food security, increased access to reliable and affordable energy, made remarkable strides in the fight against corruption and justice sector reforms. We have expanded and improved healthcare, disease prevention, control and surveillance and healthcare delivery, which has led to a significant decrease in maternal mortality.

We reaffirm our unflinching support for this Council’s resolution 9/10 to help promote economic, social and environmental policies and actions that will protect people and nature. We reiterate our unwavering support to established sub-regional, regional and global human rights treaty bodies by effectively participating in their affairs.

Let me conclude by reiterating our full support and commitment for the work of the Council. As I return to capital, I wish you all a successful and fruitful 52nd session.

Sierra Leone scores Grade A in Human Rights



In Geneva, Sierra Leone officially received a Grade A Status Human Rights Certificate from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). This is in recognition of the continued series of reform in the Sierra Leone’s Human Rights under President Julius Maada Bio.

This indelible milestone of the People’s Manifesto 2018 in advancing the Rule of Law, Promoting Justice and Human Rights in Sierra Leone is achieved following the 2022 review process of the Commission with Madam Patricia Narsu Ndanema and Victor Idrissa Lansana Esq, as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson respectively.

The re-accreditation of a Grade-A status to the HRCSL confirms HRCSL’s full compliance with the Paris Principles governing the establishment and operations of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs).



IOM Honours Amb. Gberie

Sierra Leone's Leadership at IOM

With over 17,000 staff, and regional and field offices in every part of the part of globe – including Sierra Leone – the International Organisation for Migration is undoubtedly one of the most important UN-linked organizations. Founded in December 1951, with 174 member states and 6 observer states, IOM is headquartered in Geneva. Ambassador Gberie is currently the Chairman of IOM's Governing Bureau elected after being nominated by Nigeria (on behalf of the African Group) and seconded by (an unprecedented) two major countries, the United Kingdom and China, at its 113th Session in Geneva on 29 November 2022.

In this position, Ambassador Gberie will preside over the proceedings of the Sixth Special Session of the Council in mid-May where the next Director General of the IOM will be elected.

In November 2019, Ambassador Gberie was elected to the IOM Council Bureau to serve as Rapporteur for 2020. As such, Ambassador was mandated with reviewing and approving reports of the IOM Council and Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance. In addition, as Rapporteur, Ambassador attended the Bureau's meetings to discuss pending issues and priorities of the

IOM, and in consultation with the group members, ensured the perspective of the African Group is reflected in the work of the Governing Bureau. His Excellency was elected as the Vice Chair of the IOM's Governing Bureau after successfully completing his term as Rapporteur.

Sierra Leone is a committed member of the IOM and continues to strategically engage with the different governing bodies, including the Working Group on IOM's Partnerships, Governance and Organisational Priorities and the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance.

Ambassador Gberie during his tenure as the Vice Chair of the Governing Bureau played a critical role in facilitating an important negotiation amongst member states on budget reform to reform and strengthen the core structure of the Organization. The proposal was adopted by consensus. This decision sets out the institutional framework to fill the financial gap required to fund IOM's core structure and support the ever-expanding operational footprint of the Organization. The effects of migration are felt poignantly in Africa, IOM plays an important role of protecting, assisting and supporting migrants across the continent in line with the 2030 Agenda.



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IOM Honours Amb. Gberie

Owing to Ambassador Gberie's strong engagement with the IOM, Sierra Leone's proposal for the mitigation of the environmental causes of mass migration has received the first round of funding in the amount of USD 200,000. The IOM also recently approved another project focused on strengthening Government's capacity in Border Management funded through the IOM Development Fund with a budget of USD 300,000 for 24 months. In addition to her impressive advocacy role in the areas of peace, security, geopolitics, human rights, press freedom, access to justice, among

others, Sierra Leone is leading communication with the Secretariat of the IOM for the nomination of a regional group representative for African to the relevant bodies and committees of the IOM.

In his new role as President of the IOM's Governing Council, Ambassador made official visits to IOM's field and regional offices in Morocco and Kenya, where he met with ranking government and UN officials to discuss protection of migrants, IOM's promotion of measures to mitigate the causes of irregular migration (including climate change), and safe and orderly migration.

OFFICIAL COMMISSIONING OF THE SIERRA LEONE FOREIGN SERVICE ACADEMY

By

H.E Dr. Julius Maada Bio

President of the Republic of Sierra Leone



THE SIERRA LEONE FOREIGN SERVICE ACADEMY: *Advancing the National Image*

The Sierra Leone Foreign Service Academy (FSA) is located on the grounds of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation at Tower Hill in the central business district of Freetown. Twinned through a skywalk to the Foreign Ministry Building, the FSA is a magnificent four storey edifice sharing in the prominent and significant situation of the Ministry – the proximity to the House of Parliament, the Office of National Security, and the Anti-Corruption Building, and a short walk from the State House and the Office of the Vice President.

The FSA building, commissioned on 5 January 2023, is one of the huge structural and human resource development achievements of the Government of Sierra Leone under H.E. President Maada Bio. The establishment of an Academy for the training of Foreign Service officers is an achievement of one of the key action plans of the 2019 Medium-Term National Development Plan of the New Direction Government of Sierra Leone to achieve the strategic policy objectives of national rebranding through repositioning Sierra Leone for a central role in the community of nations. It was a necessary policy action to build career diplomats for proactive, constructive, and productive engagements on the international stage including robust presence at the UN and other international organizations, and at regional groupings.

The Foreign Service Academy will be the professional training institute of Sierra Leone in the field of foreign affairs and diplomacy. This is a dream come true for the Sierra Leone career

diplomats past and present. The necessity and importance of a dedicated professional training institute for the foreign affairs professionals of the Sierra Leone Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has long been felt and expressed in many ways to equip serving career officers for the challenges of an ever-changing globalized world and keep them abreast of current world issues and discourses.

This received significance with the vision of the Government to take Sierra Leone back to the United Nations Security Council in 2024 – 2025 as non-permanent member after five decades of absence. The last time Sierra Leone was on the UN Security Council in the non-permanent category was in 1970 – 1971. Government was also determined to establish more missions abroad prioritizing France, Türkiye, Morocco, and South Africa, and to build a resourceful and specialized diplomatic staff to deliver the foreign policy objectives of Sierra Leone. The increase in the number of missions would require a corresponding increase in the number of staff who would need the diplomatic skills set and professionalism to excel in delivering on behalf of the people of Sierra Leone.

To achieve this, the Government, with the help of the Government of the Peoples Republic of China, built and equipped the FSA to conduct specialized diplomatic courses for entry level career officers, and re-orientation and refresher courses for mid-level and senior career officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Besides, the FSA will serve as a platform for research and discourse regarding critical emerging



High Table during the official commissioning of the Foreign Academy.

officials including serving career officers, retired Ambassadors and diplomatic practitioners and experts from public and private universities/organizations/institutions. Ambassadors and High Commissioners, Sierra Leone Permanent Representatives to our UN missions, Heads of Missions of UN and International organizations based in Freetown and visiting experts and eminent foreign personalities will be considered to deliver speeches and conduct sessions on specific themes.

The MFAIC is working on forming alliances and partnerships with recognized institutions in diplomatic and foreign affairs trainings for shared programmes and accreditation. Deputy Foreign Minister Madam Mamadi Gobeh Kamara has, among other responsibilities for the establishment of the FSA, taken the lead on forging partnerships with the Egyptian Institute for Diplomatic Studies in Cairo and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). These two renown training institutions have in principle given their support and accreditation to the Sierra Leone FSA. There are plans to widen the scope of our affiliation with other training institutions of proven diplomatic and academic reputation to establish for ourselves a “centre of excellence”, in the words of Professor David J. Francis, Sierra Leone Foreign Minister.

At the national level, the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE), the University of Sierra Leone (USL) and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) have all acknowledged the establishment of the FSA and are in contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation working on due processes.

The reform of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has attained its highest pinnacle yet in the establishment of the FSA. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Professor David J. Francis is leading the process for the legislation of a Foreign Service Act that would complement and fortify the gains in the establishment of the Academy. Sierra Leone has taken a leap onto the centre space of the global stage in her bid for a seat in the non-permanent category of the United Nations Security Council and is determined to continue to lead on issues affecting our community of nations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has embraced the challenge to compete with other international actors and promote the image of Sierra Leone.

global issues for informed decisions on behalf of Sierra Leone. It will also conduct induction programmes for officers of government with appointments to serve in the missions abroad. Government also aims at enabling the FSA to provide diplomatic trainings for countries in the subregion in promotion of the influence of Sierra Leone at the subregional level.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation will conduct the first formal trainings and skills imparting sessions sooner than later rolling out the first segment of the FSA’s course modules. The resource persons for the courses of the FSA will include eminent academicians, policy makers and high government



Foreign Academy Building



Health Minister Dr Austin Demby Presenting the health sector plan to the Global Fund Team

Global Fund and Our Health Sector

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the poor and dysfunctional state of the health system in Sierra Leone in 2015 was partly blamed on the low public investment with per capita government expenditure on health standing, as low as 11.4% compared to US\$25 in Guinea and US\$16 in Liberia. It was even worse in 2016 when it was less than 10%.

In the New Direction strategic objective, it is the commitment of Government to transform the under-resourced, ill-equipped, dysfunctional and inadequate health infrastructure and health delivery system to make it high quality, efficient, reliable, cost-effective, affordable, sustainable, and capable of responding to epidemics such as cholera, Ebola and Ebola Virus Disease.

The Geneva Mission has forged a strong partnership with World Health Organisation (WHO) guided by WHO Sierra Leone Country Cooperation Strategy 2017-2021, to actualized President Bio's goals to quality services in an equitable and efficient manner in the health sector of Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone has been actively participating in milestone and other high-level health events and reflected its views on global partnership for desired health outcomes with the Mission's active role in facilitating and coordinating Sierra Leone's high-level participation in these meetings with the WHO and the Global Fund.

Due to the Mission's effective engagements with Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance), Sierra Leone has been enlisted as one of 92 countries eligible for COVAX facility. COVAX is the vaccines pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator. The ACT Accelerator is a ground-breaking global collaboration to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. COVAX is co-led by GAVI.

As a result of the Mission's efforts and coordinating role between Gavi and Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Sierra Leone has received hundreds of thousands of doses of vaccine allocation through the COVAX dose-sharing mechanism.

The Mission has actively engaged the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Global Fund has, over the past



Health Minister with Global Fund Team

decade, contributed tens of millions of dollars to the health sector in Sierra Leone. However, in August 2020, the Fund's Office of the Inspector General submitted a report which Ambassador Gberie transmitted to His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio, detailing corruption in the use of the Fund's financial contribution to our health sector, focusing on the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and the National HIV/AIDS Secretariat. Ambassador also forwarded the report to the Minister of Foreign affairs and International Cooperation.

The period covered by the report was from early 2016 to March 2017, a month before the Sierra Leone People's Party government took office. During that reporting period, Global Fund disbursed tens of millions of dollars to Sierra Leone. The report states that over \$2 million of those funds were inappropriately used.

The Global Fund requested the Government of Sierra Leone to refund the stolen amount from the All People's Congress led Government. In addition, the Fund communicated that there are long outstanding ineligible expenditures that would need to be reimbursed. In the letter, the Fund stated that funding available for the next allocation to Sierra Leone, amounting to US\$126,205,022 for HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and building resilient and sustainable systems for health (RSSH) will be suspended until the reimbursement is done. The report was a real embarrassment for the Mission

and for Sierra Leone and had the potential to derail all the hard won gains in at the UN in Geneva.

Upon receipt of the Fund's letter, on 27 August 2020, Ambassador Gberie contacted the Fund's Managers and requested a meeting. In the letter, Ambassador assured them "both of our commitment to act on the report and to get an idea of the report's impact on your very important continuing work in Sierra Leone." Ambassador also wrote: "The conversation that I am requesting will include any possible signs of continuing malpractices on the part of our officials helping to implement the Projects and what needs to be done in real time to prevent a recurrence of the sort of fraudulent practices detailed in the report."

Ambassador held several meetings with the Fund's Managers and reported his conversations with the relevant authorities in Freetown, including the then Minister of Health and Sanitation Dr. Alpha Wurie. Following his continued engagement, particularly with the former Minister of Finance Mr. Jacob Jusu Saffa, the Government made a Cabinet Decision October to pay in full the unaccounted amount. By the same decision, His Excellency the President also directed the Minister of Health and Sanitation to take appropriate administrative steps to address the malfeasances highlighted in the report and penalise the culprits.

The appointment of Dr. Austin Demby as Minister accelerated progress towards a resolution. As of March 2021, MoHS reimbursed the first tranche (40%) to the Global Fund amounting USD 363,085.49, and the outstanding payment of USD 545,358.23 was reimbursed in two instalments from 2022 onwards.

As a proactive Government in the fight against corruption at all levels, action was taken against MOHS and the National Aids Secretariat (NAS) with most of the staff involved in wrongdoing losing their jobs, and the matter of corruption formally referred to the Anti-Corruption Commission for further investigation by the Health Minister.

The currently Minister, Dr. Demby, wrote Ambassador Gberie a note of appreciation conveying "special thanks for staying on top of issues for a resolution."

The next funding cycle for Sierra Leone has been approved by the Board of the Fund over US\$157 million.

COMMENTARY

Agriculture the Engine of Economic Growth

By Mohamed Sheriff

Today, the processing, distribution, and marketing of crops and livestock products are essential in driving the agriculture sector. Agriculture plays an indispensable role in sustaining and driving the economy of any nation and Sierra Leone is not an exception, agriculture accounts for 61% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The country is endowed with a favourable agricultural environment comprising arable land, abundant rainfall, a temperate climate, and several rivers with significant irrigation potential that could support the production of enough food to meet local consumption and for export.

The Ministry of Agriculture introduced the National Agricultural Transformation Programme from 2019-2023, in addressing critical issues towards rice self-sufficiency, livestock management, crop diversification and sustainable forest and biodiversity. To achieve sustainable and diversified food production, the government is focused on increasing the amount of arable land and introducing intensive mechanized methods in agriculture. Priority actions include a Le8 trillion (\$800 million) National Agricultural Transformation Strategy, which plans to double production of rice, forestry, and livestock. The plan also aims to increase the budgetary allocation to 10 percent to align with the Maputo Accord, and attract external investment.

Agricultural Productivity

The New Direction Government of President Julius Maada Bio in January 2022 procured 410 tractors through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. This signifies government's commitment in creating a suitable environment for the agriculture sector to increase production through mechanized farming especially the value chain sector. The tractors were distributed across the country to various machine rings (private sector), many of the farmers are excited about the policy shift in the Agriculture Ministry wherein the private sector players were given the tractors to work with smallholders farmers in the respective districts across the country to increase productivity especially in rice production that has received little attention over the years.

Farmers across the districts have called for the provision of tractors and other mechanical implements to increase crop yield, and to reduce labour and make farming very attractive to the young people, who are mostly in bike riding. The Agriculture Credit Facility was established to help with the distribution of agricultural inputs like seed and fertilisers, introduction of a transparent e-wallet system, and the creation of a complement extension staff responsible to reach millions of farmers with information to help in decision making, and boost production and incomes.

It is reported that 80 percent of foodstuffs consumed in the country are imported. Yet of the estimated 5.4 million hectares of fertile arable land, 75 percent remains uncultivated. The land is suitable for the cultivation of a wide range of crops including rice



(the country's staple food), cassava, maize, millet, cashew, rubber, ginger, vegetables, fruits, and sugarcane; cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, and oil palm; and the rearing of livestock. Smallholder subsistence farmers utilizing local traditional tools with outdated methods and limited farm inputs dominate the sector.

In June 2021, President Bio Launched the Sierra Leone Regional Rice Value Chain Project (SLRRVCP) in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in Torma Bum, Bonthe District, after securing funding from the Islamic Development Bank and BADEA to contribute to the reduction of the high importation rate of rice, enhance growth through improved production and productivity in a sustainable manner, processing, and marketing. The project is working on horizontal production by adding new irrigated areas to the existing productive ones. Annually, the government is spending over \$240 million on rice importation and this adversely affect the country's economy.

The project is supporting the government's efforts to substantially increase the production and productivity of rice using the private sector value chain approach, increase smallholder farmers income and poverty and food insecurity, and thus improve the livelihood of the rural population. 7000 farmers, 5000 in Torma Bum, Bum Chiefdom, Bonthe district and 2000 in Mambolo and Samu Chiefdoms, Kambia district are directly going to benefit from input supplies and mechanization over the five-year period.

Value Chain Approach

A value chain is a series of consecutive steps that go into the creation of a finished product, from its initial design to its arrival at a customer's door. The chain identifies each step in the process at which value is added, including the sourcing, manufacturing, and marketing stages of its production.



President Bio hands over brand New Powertilla Machines to Minister of Agriculture.

This is the approach of the Ministry is using through it different projects to optimize rice self-sufficiency, from inputs through farming, harvesting, processing and transport, to sale and consumer. This approach helps producers and traders to meet market demand—in more pro poor ways. However, it requires a wide range of technical skills and ability to manage and approach that involves many stakeholders.

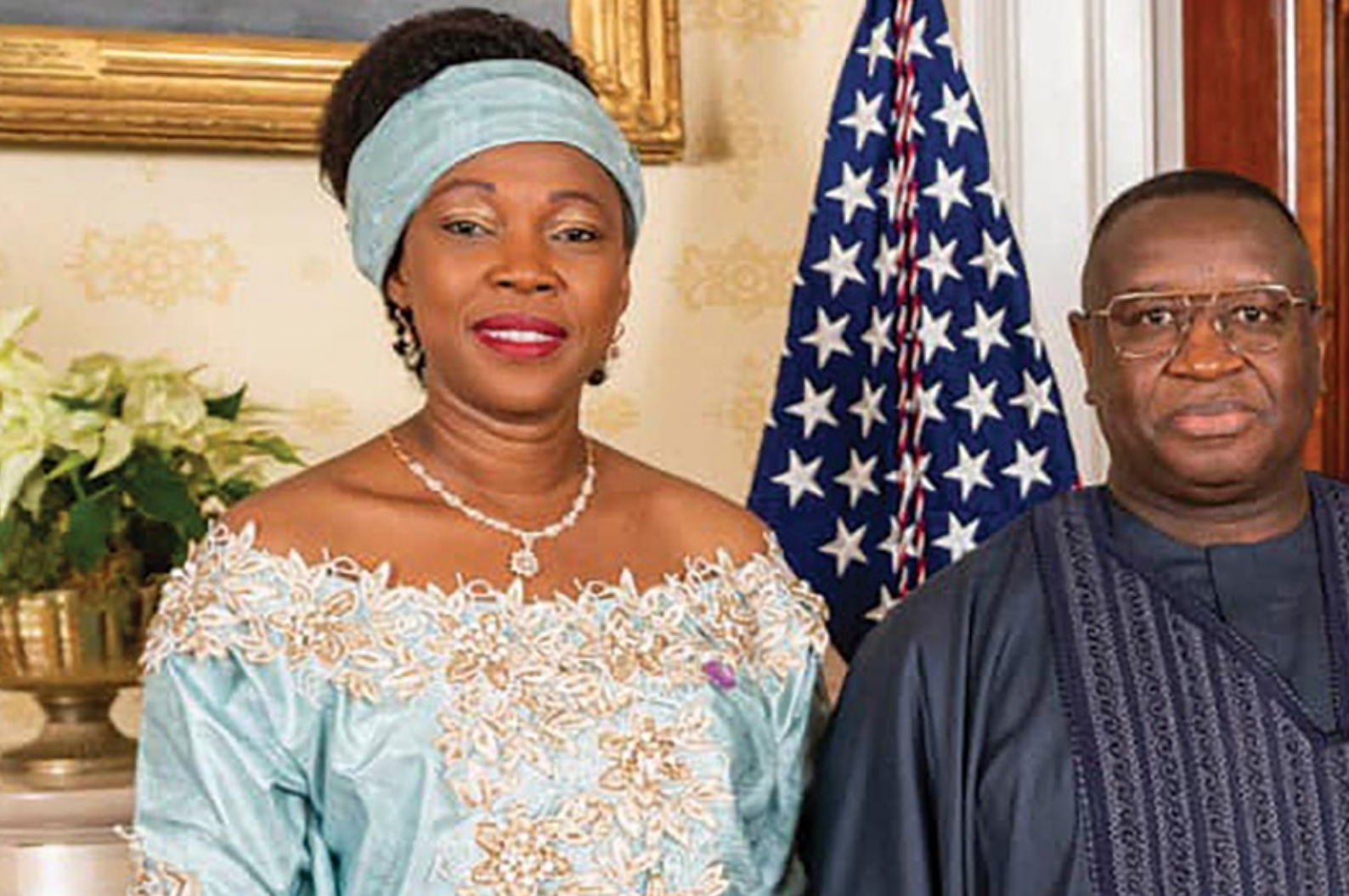
The Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (AVDP) is working towards increasing production and improve marketing of rice, palm oil, cocoa and vegetables as way of contributing to the government's priorities of rice self-sufficiency, crop

diversification and rural poverty reduction. AVDP has invested in agricultural mechanization, irrigation and water management. It will strengthen and climate proof rural infrastructure through rehabilitation of feeder roads and warehouse to improve product drying and storage capacity .The Project is building the capacitate of smallholder farmers through farmer field schools and provide them with credit for their investments in smallholder farms .34, 000 vulnerable rural households will benefit from the project and 40% of project will women and youths.

In addition, the World Bank funded project, the Smallholder Commercialization and Agribusiness Development Project

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Our First Lady and Human Rights

The Office of the First Lady under the Bio Presidency has over the years played a critical role in the promotion of the rights to health and wellbeing of women and girls in the country. President Bio has always shown a great passion for gender equality, and through the First Lady, Her Excellency Fatima Maada Jabbie Bio, this passion has transformed into pathbreaking work on gender equality, protection of children from sexual exploitation, provision of hygiene kits for school going girls, and the protection of the general welfare of children and women. Her energy has been particularly focused on addressing the numerous human rights challenges girls and women face in the areas of health, education, and stigmatisation, among others.

In 2018 Manifesto of the New Direction, there is a commitment to promote and protect fundamental human rights by establishing specialised Human Rights Courts in the judicial system and enforcing a rights-based Bail and sentencing policy, reviewing legal education, and promoting measures for the establishment of an effective, fair, and independent regulation for legal education and practice in Sierra Leone. The Government of President Bio has fulfilled this commitment in all its aspects.

Protection against early marriage, sexual abuse and exploitation the First Lady's flagship campaign, "Hands Off Our Girls", launched in December 2018, has been phenomenally successful. With her emphasis to end rape, Madam Bio brought together First Ladies of several countries in Africa to share experiences from different cultural perspectives on issues affecting women and girls.



Activists celebrating with First Lady

The "Hands off our Girl" campaign in Sierra Leone contributed greatly to the enactment of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019.



Her Excellency Fatima Maada Jabbie Bio, President Dr. Julius Maada Bio, President Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. and Dr. Jill Biden.

Madam Bio's free Sanitary pad distribution project to over 2 million girls and young women is helping to end the stigma on menstruation, enabling them to stay in school, and feeling inspired that with education anyone of them could attain a height that society would adore.

During Sierra Leone's third Universal Periodic Review on human rights in May 2021, the United Nations commended Sierra Leone for the Hands Off Our Girls Initiative, the abolition of the death penalty, abolition of the criminal libel law, promotion of education, the action against child trafficking, the measures to combat COVID-19, and advancing gender discrimination and inequity, among other things, as Sierra Leone is currently implementing 58 recommendations of the 216 recommendations of the review.

Mrs. Bio's leadership role and the conviction that women and children are essential members of the community have made the First Lady a towering figure globally. She has become the first ever sitting First Lady of the Republic of Sierra Leone since Independence to address the United Nations. In her address, she made a strong and passionate plea for a declaration to end child sexual exploitation and violence in a bid to bring hope and healing to survivors.

Through the support of her colleagues First Ladies in Africa and other stakeholders, including leaders of prominent child welfare and advocacy organizations, and survivors of child sexual abuse, Madam Bio made a historical milestone at the U.N in November 2022 for a declaration of November 18 as the World Day for the Prevention of, and Healing from Child Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Violence.

She was in 2019 decorated with a warrior award at the International Women of Power Luncheon in California, USA for her



First Lady Dr Fatima Maada Bio at the UN General Assembly

bravery and outstanding contribution towards women and girl's empowerment in Sierra Leone.

The numerous achievements of Sierra Leone now recognised by the United Nations in the areas of health, education, human rights of women and girls among other things, will be built upon beyond 2023 by supporting President Bio in the June 24 elections for a second term in office.



Embassy's Engagement with Sierra Leoneans

One of the Mission's principal responsibilities is to maintain friendly relations between the two governments of Sierra Leone and Switzerland and provide effective representation of Sierra Leone to the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva. Important also is the responsibility to seek the welfare of all Sierra Leoneans especially those residing and living within the Mission's sphere of accreditation and promote their interests relating to consular matters.

Under the leadership of Ambassador Gberie, the Mission has given priority to outreach to the Sierra Leonean community in Switzerland. It has established a social network on WhatsApp to foster interaction between and among the community. Together, the Mission and the Sierra Leonean community have cooperated and commemorated two Sierra Leone Independence Day celebrations. The Mission has always promoted unity and cooperation among the community for collective efforts to make the country attractive in their comportment and livelihood.

The Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone in Switzerland, His Excellency Dr Lansana Gberie, and his proactive team engaged the Sierra Leone community through an outreach meeting organized by the mission as a means to bring Sierra Leoneans together in Zurich, and Bern and other cantons in Switzerland. During the interactive sessions, President Bio was praised for his achievements, especial in the Free Quality School Education and other major areas of development.

In one of the diaspora meetings in Zurich, Mr. Alhaji Hamidu Mansaray, one of the most active and constructive members of the Sierra Leonean diaspora community in Switzerland, spoke on behalf of the Sierra Leoneans, thanking the Embassy for projecting the government's strides to ensure that the country become

more attractive and for citizens to bring potential investors from Zurich to the country.

The Mission stands ready to seek the welfare of its citizens providing consular services and advisory on lawful conducts and safety issues.

In this edition, we are carrying potted profiles of three key diaspora Sierra Leoneans who consistently engage with the Permanent Mission in Geneva and continue to give back significantly to their country of birth: Dr. Charles Senessie, a medical doctor based in Bern; Mrs. Mildred Kabba, Secretary and Administrative Assistant to the Embassy and Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone; and Mr. Hamidu Mansaray, a businessman and philanthropist based in St. Galen.

Mrs. Mildred Kabba: Our Longest Serving Staff Member

Mrs. Kabba, a kind and ever-genial Sierra Leonean-Swiss national, was employed by this Mission August 2018 as its (bilingual) Secretary and Administrative Assistant. In fact, given the suboptimal staff capacity of the Mission, Mrs. Kabba has effectively combined this role with that of Assistant Office Manager. Even this expanded portfolio does not capture the many and various contributions of Mrs. Kabba to the work of the Mission, including most importantly in helping newly arrived diplomatic staff, including the Ambassador and Permanent representative, settle in Geneva.

She first came to Switzerland in 1992 to visit her husband, stayed for a while and went back to Sierra Leone. As the civil war in Sierra Leone escalated, she came back finally in 1999 and stayed. A matronly grandmother of three, Mrs. Kabba is a dedicated and



Amb. addressing Sierra Leoneans

with Mrs. Kabba. The HoC then, Mr. Kai Brima, had told me about how knowledgeable she was of Switzerland, and especially Geneva. I approached Mrs. Kabba with some hesitation – she was slightly reserved, and to me that can be a bit unsettling. But once we began talking, a whole world opened up. She was helpful beyond the call of duty. She helped get my flat furnished and got me a cleaner. And, of course, she fed me very well. When my wife joined me, she thought too well: I had added a few pounds...She and my wife bonded immediately. They remain very close. She found a great paediatrician and school for our son. A truly fantastic human being.”

There is no member of the diplomatic staff at our Mission who cannot tell similar stories of Mrs. Kabba’s generosity. There is a purity about her dedication and commitment to work that is rare: she is intelligent, genuine, pure of heart and spirit, and with boundless energy.

It is a great blessing for the Mission to have her on its staff.

Dr. Charles Senessie and AEMRN

Dr. Senessie is a medical doctor and Assoc. Professor with MSc in Dermatology, PhD in Health Sciences focusing on International Health Research and Education. He is finishing a second PhD in Public Health majoring in Epidemiology.

Dr. Senessie is the Founder-CEO of Afro-European Medical and Research Network (AEMRN), a non-governmental and not-for-profit organization with special consultative status with the United Nation Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Under



Dr. Charles Senessie

his dynamic leadership, AEMRN, which is headquartered in Bern, Switzerland, has flown in dozens of specialist doctors from all over the world to Sierra Leone and other African countries to perform surgery, dental care and countless other medical therapies and treatment in remote parts of the country that are often inaccessible to national health workers. These mobile health clinics have served communities in Kabala, Kailahun, Bonth, Moyamba, Kambia and various parts of Sierra Leone.

A truly patriotic professional, Dr. Senessie has maintain a strong relationship with the Permanent Mission, particularly with Ambassador Gberie, and has hosted visiting Sierra Leonean officials in Bern, where he maintains a private practice as well as work as a physician for the Swiss Federal Government Agency

in Switzerland



Mrs. Mildred Kabba

committed professional. About her personality and contributions to the work of the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone in Geneva, Ambassador Gberie had this to say:

“I arrived in Geneva to take post in October 2018, way ahead of my family, who were still based in Canada. I soon realised, however, that there was a family waiting for me in Geneva. I had not known Mrs. Kabba before my arrival, and my initial approach to her as to other staff members was slightly formal. This, I soon realised, would not do. A few days after I arrived, I got into a conversation

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Special Delegations of Government to Geneva

Sierra Leonean Gams Participation in Global Robotics Competition

On the 12 October 2022, a team of eight young Sierra Leoneans, mainly school going girls, visited Geneva for the 6th annual First Global Robotics Competition. The first day was exhausting, especially with getting to know people, settling down, preparing for the competitions but above all ensuring they get to meet, interact and get Sierra Leoneans living in Geneva to support and compliment the effort of the Team Sierra Leone representatives.

The team had an opportunity to visit the Embassy and Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone in Geneva. The head of Mission Ambassador Gberie along with the Head of Chancery and Minister Counsellor, Mr Edward Kawa, the Information Attaché, Mr Mohamed Sheriff, and other workers were very delighted to welcome the budding scientists and ensured they felt the welcome gestures of an African home.

The programme itself consisted of a talent sharing, learning experience, and a series of competitions at which the Mission and other Sierra Leoneans had been in attendance with other Sierra Leoneans to support their beloved country in cheering the young talented kids to do better. It was an exciting week for the visiting team who had the opportunity to get some days for site seeing.

The First Global Robotics is an organization that organizes a yearly robotics competition for young people globally. This has for the past years increased the interest of girls for the Sciences, encouraging others to bring up more innovative ideas that the



world can use to solve global challenges. This is in line with President Bio's radical inclusion policy in education where every child has access to quality education, especially children from marginalised sectors of community.

The competitions highlighted challenges such as water pollution, carbon capture and allows the young to think about possibilities to solutions. Kids nationwide in Sierra Leone can benefit more from such opportunities as it brings in different travel experiences, helping them getting an established mentorship program, diversity in career pathways which will in turn boost the educational system of the country and encourage others to go in for specialized areas like Robotics Engineering, Artificial Intelligence and many more.

First Global Robotics has been in existence for over 20 years and working greatly to get African Countries involved in lots of their projects. Sierra Leone as a country can not only benefit from the skills-based training sessions for the participants, but the knowledge gained can serve as a source for job opportunities, and the establishment of a company for different sectors of Robotics.

Sierra Leone needs more of the opportunities in other for young people to be in line with current advancements in technology.



Robotic Competition exhibition



Kadijatu-Zainab-Bangura

First Sierra Leonean Lawyer at ACWL

In early 2021, while on her postgraduate studies, Madam Kadijatu Zainab Bangura learned about calls for application by the Advisory Centre on WTO Law (ACWL) for its annual secondment program for trade lawyers. With her background as a lawyer who had served the Law Officer's Department and the Anti-Corruption Commission of Sierra Leone, she took advantage of the opportunity by applying as she was desirous of gaining specialized knowledge and practical training in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Law. Afterwards, her nomination and application were successfully submitted to the ACWL by the Embassy and Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone in Geneva, Switzerland following the clearing of all arrears to WTO by His Excellency, Dr Julius Maada Bio's government. We supported her nomination in line the President's cardinal policy to advance Human Capital development.

Ms. Bangura was among the four Lawyers selected from El Salvador, Kazakhstan, Liberia and Sierra Leone for the ACWL's 2021-2022 Secondment Program in Geneva.

In late September 2021, she arrived in Geneva to embark on her secondment program. The training program lasted for Nine Months, and the program was quite challenging and mind intriguing. Madam Bangura experienced working in an international environment with global experts in trade law, a friendly and professional environment where learning and the exchange of experience happens without the known restrictions and limitations back home. The experts were considerate in introducing the intricacies and complexities of the WTO Law and practice.

Ms. Bangura, being the first Sierra Leonean Lawyer to be accepted at ACWL, was honoured with the visitation of the former Sierra Leone's Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Anthony Y. Brewah who was in Geneva for the Human Rights Council, as part of the 3rd Cycle Universal Periodic Review adoption of the Working Group Report on Sierra Leone's human rights record. The Attorney General and Minister of Justice had visited the WTO to motivate her in promoting and maintaining the values of Sierra Leone in Switzerland during her stay.

The Advisory Centre on WTO Law (ACWL) is an international organisation established in 2001 to provide legal advice on WTO law, support in WTO dispute settlement proceedings and training in WTO law to least developed countries, developing countries and customs territories, and countries with economies in transition. These opportunities sit in well with the People's Manifesto of the New Direction Government led by His Excellency, President Julius Maada Bio that believes in strengthening and modernizing the legal Service for effective and efficient service delivery to restoring public confidence in the Judiciary and the justice delivery system and impartiality and make justice accessible and available for all.

At the 5th Global Summit...

Deputy Health Minister Princess Dugba Met with Swiss President Alian Berset

The Embassy and Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone in Geneva, Switzerland was pleased to have received the Deputy Minister of Health and Sanitation, Madam Princess Dugba along with Mrs. Hannah Kawa Aruna, Manager, Directorate of Hospitals Inspection in Geneva. Throughout their four days stay in Switzerland, the Mission ensured that they were comfortable by helping with transportation and other logistical support. The Honourable Minister and her staff were in Switzerland for the 5th Global Ministerial Conference held in Montreux on 23 and 24 February 2023. In

appreciation, the Deputy Minister asserted "We are very proud of the good work the staff at the Mission in Geneva is doing to keep our flag of Sierra Leone flying high".

The Deputy Minister of Health and Sanitation, Madam Princess Dugba, described the summit as insightful and educational. She assured that experience gained from the 5th Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety will guide the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation in the development of strategies to reduce the occurrence of unnecessary harm to patients in all healthcare

settings. She added that this will lead to positive outcomes in the delivery of healthcare services in Sierra Leone.

Patient safety is a fairly new initiative in Sierra Leone, and more opportunities to participate in such high-level global conference will provide access to expert skills in the field. It will also provide opportunities to get hands on support both physical and financial to promote patient safety initiatives (e.g., training of staff, development of tool's & checklists to monitor progress, logistics etc

It was during this Conference that the Deputy Minister of Health and Sanitation, Madam Princess Dugba, met with the New President of the Swiss Confederation, Mr. Alain Berset who expressed high interest in the Sierra Leone and Switzerland relations. During the Conference, the Sierra Leone Government made commitment to endorse the Montreux Charter on Patient Safety “Less Harm, Better Care-from Resolution to Implementation” championed by Switzerland.

The Deputy Minister expressed her gratitude to Switzerland for its support in various fields of cooperation, including health-care, tourism, Agribusiness, Fisheries, and Swiss investment. The



Deputy-Health-Minister-with-Swiss-President

two exchanged views on how to strengthen further the existing bilateral relation between the two countries.

Sierra Leone at WIPO



Sierra Leone's Administrator and Registrar-General, Madam Saptieu Elizbeth Saccogh(second from right).

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), founded 55 years ago, is one of 15 specialised agencies of the UN with 193 member states. WIPO is the global forum for intellectual property (IP) services, policy, information and cooperation, leading the development of a balanced and effective international IP system that enables innovation and creativity by individuals and industries for the benefit of all.

The Permanent Mission under Ambassador Gberie has given priority to engagement with WIPO, including with the Director General, HE Mr. Daren Tang (Singapore). In the past years, the Director General has meet with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Professor David J. Francis, and with the former Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Mr.

Anthony Y. Brewah, indicating the seriousness with which Sierra Leone views the development of a functioning IP system in the country. WIPO has played a key role in the development of such a system in Sierra Leone. It has over the years provided support, both technical and capacity building, to the IP office hosted by the Office of the Administrator and Registrar General in Freetown.

WIPO in recent times have held meetings with the Administrator and Registrar General, (ARG) Madam Saptieu Elizabeth Saccogh, who is the focal point in Sierra Leone for IP issues, and members of her staff. In a meeting held on 19 July 2022, it was revealed that WIPO has provided legislative assistance to the IP office in Freetown. It centres on the legal framework dealing with various IP Acts and Regulations.

In several engagements with Ms. Saccoh, the Africa Director of WIPO, Seray-Kore, reiterated his organization's commitment to assist Sierra Leone and acknowledged the difficulties the ARG encountered during the inception of IP in Sierra Leone. He promised to help develop the structures of the IP Office in Freetown and to embark on capacity building. Some of the areas of intervention the Director revealed are working with the Universities and training facilities.

The ARG thanked WIPO for the numerous supports and gave detailed update on WIPO's activities in promoting IP in Sierra Leone. She appreciated the legal framework dealing with various IP Acts and Regulations, noting that they will help to bring sanity and improvement in the IP sector in Sierra Leone.

The Administrator and Registrar General commended WIPO for the great strides and looks forward for more cordial relationship. She highlighted some of the trainings organized by WIPO and the benefits Sierra Leone stands to gain. In 2017, WIPO organized an online advanced course on collective management of copyright and related rights for legal practitioners. Two IP staff in Freetown benefited from this program. Again in 2019, a sub-regional meeting on Sub-regional Technology Innovation Support Center (TISC) Network was organized by WIPO-ARIPO. The meeting aimed at continuing the development of TISC regional network in ARIPO member states and to encourage them to use TISC resources concretely in order to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in their regions. In Addition, in August 2022, WIPO supported an Online JPO/IPR training course on Trademark examination under the Madrid system. The training was for participants to know the formal and substantive examination involved in the Madrid System of the international registration of marks. The training also highlighted the chain of communications between national offices and WIPO through the International Bureau. Also in November 2022, WIPO-ASRT organized advanced training course on Patent Search and Examination for African Countries. The program assessed patentable and non-patentable subject matter. It helped participants identify the patentability criteria for any invention, determine examples of non-patentable inventions under TRIPS agreement and describe the minimum term of patent protection.

Participants were also able to explore the various perspectives to the concept of patent quality, online patent office's approaches towards patent quality, examine how patent offices could enhance the quality of patent examination procedure and discuss the importance of IP education of patent examiners in enhancing patent quality. Moreover, plans are underway to hire consultants to provide guided technical support in developing the Intellectual Property Development Plan (IPDP) for Sierra Leone.

WIPO has again created a platform for capacity building in online trainings and visitations to other member states. The objectives of the trainings are to promote innovation among the IP generators (universities, research institutions and MSMEs) for business competitiveness and development. It also sensitizes senior government officials, policy, and law makers on the intellectual property system to support the modernization of the IP policies and laws as well as ratification/accession of regional and international treaties. It will also promote the use of technological information contained in patents for research and development.

Ten Sierra Leoneans have been beneficiaries of an MA programme in Intellectual Property paid for by WIPO and more invitations have been extended in this respect. This is to increase the human resource base of Sierra Leone in IP.

Agriculture the Engine of Economic Growth ...

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(SCADeP) is investing in roads and bridges to improve connectivity, thereby providing access to more remote areas of high agricultural production and access to markets for smallholder farmer-agribusiness across the country. Smallholder farmers are the drivers of many economies and play an important role in promoting livelihoods and food security amongst the rural poor. So far, the SCADeP project has supported the rehabilitation and maintenance of 166 km of feeder roads and the construction of 192 culverts and 6 bridges, thereby providing year-round access to farms, markets, schools and health centres for 77 communities in nine districts across the country.

It now remains clear that the government is committed to creating a necessary business friendly environment for the private sector, to ensure that the agribusiness companies increase rice production, create jobs and drive economic growth and wealth creation for the rural poor.

The Way Forward

With great move in transforming the country's education, President Dr Julius Maada Bio has declared agricultural transformation as a priority for his second term in office when elected, to support the country's food and agriculture delivery compact.

At the Dakar 2 Summit on "Feed Africa: Food Sovereignty and Resilience", the President also announced that in the next five years, he would prioritise agricultural transformation for jobs and wealth creation, noting that he believes that agribusiness as a key driver of growth for the country and a critical area of focus for investment.

"Our Food and Agriculture Delivery Compact" is a US\$649 million initiative to improve agricultural productivity for food security in Sierra Leone. We will invest heavily in climate-smart agriculture mechanisation and technologies and promote private sector involvement throughout the agriculture value chains".

For this initiative, the President will establish Presidential Taskforce on Agricultural Development that he would chair to provide strategic leadership for its successful implementation to ensure the delivery of compact in the most efficient and accountable manner.

President Bio said: "Sierra Leone's strategy for the future is to think about agriculture differently. Our vision is to take advantage of our soil wealth, grow agriculture as a business in climate-smart ways, and leverage it as a fundamental source of national prosperity. This will inspire citizens, especially the youth, to see agriculture as a profitable and sustainable business."

To achieve this, government needs to seek strategic partnerships, including the private sector, development partners, regional and international research institutions, and donor agencies, to develop our key agricultural production, processing, and marketing infrastructure sub-sectors.

The food security has been the most important economic and political issue facing the country due to rapid population growth coupled with declines in average yields. However, government is working with the different stakeholders to ensure that food insecurity is minimized across the country.

Embassy's Engagement with Sierra Leoneans in ...

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(Swissmedic) in the regulation of clinical trials locally and internationally. He has lectured Dermatology (Postgraduate), Faculty of Life Sciences and Education, University of South Wales, UK, Dermatology, Department of Internal Medicine, College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences, University of Sierra Leone has worked as WHO Consultant in Geneva on several projects including acute shortage of health workers in low and middle-income countries.

He has won several awards for his work, including the 2019 USA International Forum on Advancements in Healthcare top 100 Health Care Leaders, and was featured together with former President Obama and others in a book entitled "The Most Influential Contemporary African Diaspora Leaders". In 2021/2022, he was the winner of the prestigious Swiss Excellent Award for the NGO sector.

Said Dr. Senessie: "In Sierra Leone, the Government through the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) have been very supportive to our missions in the districts of Koindugu 2017, Kailahun 2018, Moyamba 2019, Karene 2021 and Bonthe 2022. We also organize our annual end of year experience sharing conference at the United Nations Geneva where we actively collaborate with government functionaries, including H.E. Ambassador Dr. Lans Gberie of Sierra Leone Embassy and Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations in Geneva".

Mr. Alhaji Hamidu Mansaray: Businessman and Philanthropist

Mr. Mansaray is a Sierra Leonean businessman resident in St. Galen who is passionate about the country's human capital development in his home village of Ndogbogoma Town, Baoma Chiefdom, Bo District through the Omans & Sons Charity Association, where he has built a school and also provides apprenticeship for



Mr. Alhaji Hamidu Mansaray.

children. His project also supports war widows, single mothers', and pensioners without family members with relief supplies.

Mr. Mansaray is a strong supporter of the Embassy and Permanent Mission. In an exclusive interview, Mr. Mansaray said he was pleased to give back to his country by the construction of St. Gallen Primary School, Ndogbogoma Village. He financially supports over 50 school children in the village.

Mr. Mansaray has also built a decent borehole (groundwater well) with a storage facility to make it easier and less dangerous for the villagers to obtain drinkable water in Sainkuya Town, Briwa Chiefdom, Bombali District and has organized Inter Primary School Competitions in Masemra Chiefdom Port Loko District.

Passion for human capital development can bring positive change to communities, as shown by Mr. Mansaray's philanthropic efforts in Sierra Leone.

Multilateral and Bilateral Engagements: My Exper ...

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incorporate different perspectives into your decision-making process.

3. Communicating effectively: Clear and effective communication is crucial in a diplomatic post.

4. Staying informed: Stay up to date on current events in the host country and around the world.

5. Collaborating with like-minded countries: Multilateral diplomacy often involves working with other countries and institutions. Collaborate effectively, respecting cultural differences and finding common ground to achieve shared goals.

6. Flexibility: Things rarely go according to plan in diplomacy. Be prepared to be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances.

In terms of diplomatic engagements in a mission operating both Bilateral and Multilateral station, the Head of Mission has a dual focus to maintain the bilateral ties with the host country, and to function on the multilateral stage promoting the position of the sending country on global issues, while defending the national

image at the same time. The Head of Mission plays a critical role in representing our country's interests and promoting dialogue and cooperation with the host country and the multilateral institutions.

The HOM must facilitate high-level meetings with government officials, participate in international conferences and forums, and negotiate agreements and treaties. The HOM plays a key role in promoting cultural exchanges through people-to-people contacts between the two countries. They may organize cultural events, educational programs, and exchanges of scholars, artists, and students.

Overall, the Head of Mission is the most important figure in diplomatic engagement, helping to build bridges between countries and promoting cooperation across a range of fields. The Diplomatic staff at multilateral missions with these dual accreditations are caught up in this milieu of responsibilities that require high competence and flexibility to perform to operate productively.

The Embassy staff in pictures



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PICTORIAL

Sierra Leone Embassy and



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