



SL EMBASSY AND PERMANENT MISSION IN GENEVA

NEWSLETTER

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**FOREIGN
MINISTER
PROF. FRANCIS
IN GENEVA**

**Response to
COVID-19:
COVAX
Vaccines**

**Sierra Leone
@ 60 in
Switzerland**

**Praises for
First Lady
at HRC**

**Human Rights
Council and
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H. E. PRESIDENT

Dr. Julius Maada Bio



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Diplomacy is no longer about just managing bilateral relations or just presenting political and other positions to other friendly nations or organisations. It goes beyond the traditional notion of acquiring and analysing deep knowledge about foreign nations, identifying key state actors, and successfully navigating relations with those nations through engagement and negotiations. It involves working with multilateral, multinational, and international organisations right across the globe. It involves negotiating partnerships and international instruments that foster the interests of our nation, promoting our trade and economic interests, and pursuing multilateral solutions to transnational issues ranging from trafficking in persons and irregular migration to terrorism, cybercrimes, illegal narcotics, trans-border insurgencies, climate change, pandemics, and more. In fact, how we ascertain the nature, the reach, and the impact of these transnational phenomena and networks is central to the work of the new Sierra Leonean diplomat.

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21 December 2020

EDITORIAL

Our Mission

In this maiden edition, this newsletter showcases the many – and various – activities of the Embassy and Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone in Geneva. Opened only in 2012, our Mission has emerged as a true leader in Sierra Leone’s multilateral diplomacy. This is hardly surprising. Geneva is the diplomatic capital of Europe and hosts more UN and other International Organisations than any other city on earth. It is home to 181 UN member states with representation to the UN and other International Organisations.

Several major countries have multiple Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives accredited to Geneva – covering the UN Office, World Trade Organisation (WTO), Conference on Disarmament, World Health Organisation (WHO), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and many others. There are over 24 UN and other International Organisations in Geneva. Geneva also hosts the World Economic Forum (WEF), the Inter-Parliamentary Union, World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), and over 200 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), all of which are relevant to our country’s interests, and at all of which we endeavour to make representation.

In addition to these multiple accreditations, our Mission is also accredited to the Government of Switzerland, making it imperative that, as Head of Mission, Ambassador Gberie regularly attends meetings in Bern, the political home of Switzerland, with the Government of Switzerland officials. Currently the Ambassador is engaging with the West Africa Division of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), discussing opportunities for Swiss investments and other forms of trade relations with Sierra Leone within the framework of the Swiss International Cooperation Strategy 2021-2024.

The Head of the Mission, assisted by his able Deputy, Samuel Saffa Esq., coordinates all activities of the Mission. We represent Sierra Leone in negotiations that take place at the United Nations and related agencies and ensure that Sierra Leone’s interests



Mr. Mohamed Sheriff, Information Attache'

and views are taken into due account by UN bodies and other UN Member States. As such the Mission engages daily with international organizations to cover diverse fields of issues including:

- **Trade** [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)]
- **Health** [including the World Health Organization (WHO); the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM)]
- **Peace, security, and disarmament** [the Conference on Disarmament, a multilateral forum established in 1979 by the UN General Assembly]
- **Humanitarian Affairs and Human Rights** [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)]

- **Intellectual Property** [World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)]
- **Telecommunications** (ITU)

The surprise is that it took our country so long to establish a Mission here.

As a small Mission, we have had to carefully focus on core priority areas of our government. One of them is health as a right of all citizens. As a result, our engagement with organisations like WHO, UNAIDS, GAVI and Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Fund has, over the past decade, contributed tens of millions of dollars to the health sector in Sierra Leone. As a result of the Mission’s ongoing effective engagement with Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance), Sierra Leone was enlisted as one of 92 countries eligible for COVAX facility and has thus far received 456,690 doses from the facility. COVAX is the vaccines pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator. Also, because of our steadfast and positive engagement with the Global Fund, the Fund in September announced the approval of around \$160 million for Sierra Leone, three times more than its previous allocations.

The Mission actively promotes the agenda of our government and seeks investments and other opportunities to actualise its manifesto commitments. We demonstrate to the world that Sierra Leone is a vastly different country than the one that was sucked into a civil war just over two decades ago – a new image of competent and articulate and progressive leadership and citizenry.

The Mission represents Sierra Leone as a strong voice from the developing world on issues such as sustainable development, socio-economic and cultural matters, human rights, and gender equity.

Ambassador Gberie's Message



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As Ambassador and Head of Mission, I remain grateful to His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio for affording me and my family this singular honour and opportunity to serve my country at such a high level. The President's steady support for me and the Mission is a daily inspiration. My commitment to his vision and his leadership remains steadfast. He has provided an opportunity for renewal of our country.

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In the past two months, our Mission was honoured with the visitation of two important delegations from Capital. The first was led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Prof. David J. Francis, who arrived at the end of August to preside over the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), CSP7, of which I was the President. The second was led by the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Honourable Anthony Y. Berewa Esq., who arrived in late September to formally accept recommendations from Sierra Leone's Universal Periodic Review by the UN Human Rights Council.

We are very grateful for the support those delegations provided our Mission – its work, its visibility – and the enhanced profile for the Mission that resulted from those visits.

As Ambassador and Head of Mission, I remain grateful to His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio for affording me and my family this singular honour and opportunity to serve my country at such a high level. The President's steady support for me and the Mission is a daily inspiration. My commitment to his vision and his leadership remains steadfast. He has provided an opportunity for renewal of our country.

I am grateful that though our staff strength is way below optimal, staff motivation is very high. I have a capable and very supportive Deputy, H. E. Samuel Saffa Esq; a very capable Minister Counsellor and Acting Head of Chancery, Mr. Patrick Morlai Koroma; and two dedicated Attachés, the resourceful Mrs. Fatmata Alpha and Mr. Mohamed Sheriff – covering Finance and Information respectively – supporting the work of the Mission.

But the true strength of the Mission derives from the dedication and professionalism of the locally recruited staff. I say this not to make a sentimental point, but because it is true – and important. For small Missions like ours, covering often highly technical subjects that demand expertise, experience working in multilateral settings and contextual knowledge are very important. This is what our staff recruited from the Geneva ecosystem bring. My brilliant and highly efficient Assistant, Mrs. Essate Weldemichael, does more than half of my work, and keeps me on top of my brief. Our bilingual Secretary, Mrs. Mildred Kabba, long resident in Switzerland, is a treasure. Our official drivers are fantastic, giving more than the call of duty. To all of them, I say: thank you. I appreciate you and the work that you do every day. That work continues.

BILATERAL ENGAGEMENTS

31 August 2021

Foreign Minister **PROF. DAVID J. FRANCIS** in Geneva



Foreign Minister meets with Mr. Johannes Matyassy, Deputy State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Switzerland (with responsibility for Sub-Saharan Africa)

- My Government counts Switzerland as one of our development partners.
- We thank Switzerland for the support you continue to provide to our Embassy and Permanent Mission as host state
- Through Ambassador Dr. Gberie, during his meeting with officials of your Permanent Mission in Geneva on 5 August 2021, we requested Switzerland to consider the possibility of issuing **Swiss visas** in Freetown through one of the EU Member State Embassies there. This will certainly improve travel and communication between our two nations
- Mr. Deputy Minister, I have paid keen attention to the provisions in *Switzerland's Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy 2021-2024*, and I can see similarities and areas of convergence with *Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019-2023*, particularly in the following areas:
 - on women, children, and persons with disabilities
 - on education and young people
 - on tackling corruption and strengthening the rule of law institutions
 - on collaborations in investment, tourism, etc.

I would therefore like to encourage Switzerland to consider



Foreign Minister Prof. David J. Francis at the Seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

- supporting Sierra Leone's Free Quality School Education programme that provides vital opportunities for girls and children
- supporting Sierra Leone's policies on women empowerment and gender equality to increase women's status in governance
- extending Switzerland's international strategy on education and investment in basic education to Sierra Leone and
- increasing Switzerland's engagement with Sierra Leone in building the capacity of our national rule of law and anti-corruption institutions.



Foreign Minister Prof. Francis WTO Director General Dr. Ngozi Iweala.

Foreign Minister to WTO Director General Dr. Ngozi Iweala in meeting

Director-General, allow me to convey His Excellency, President Dr. Julius Maada Bio's congratulations to you on your appointment on 15 February 2021 and assumption of office on 1 March 2021 as Director-General of the WTO.

- I wish to convey our government's appreciation of your hard work in bringing prominence to the discussions on vaccines, fisheries, and agriculture. The last two topics are coincidentally central planks of the National Medium-Term Development Plan 2019-2021 and the development diplomacy approach of our foreign policy.
- Madam Director-General, my government has prioritised the diversification of our economy through more trade, promotion of tourism and agriculture, particularly farming. We made a conscious decision to reduce our over-reliance on gold, diamond, and other mineral resources.
- The **Sierra Leone 2021 Economic Update** produced by the World Bank forecasts that "Agriculture will contribute about half of all real sector growth over the medium term. On average, the sector is expected to contribute 1.8 pp

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The Sierra Leone 2021 Economic Update produced by the World Bank forecasts that 'Agriculture will contribute about half of all real sector growth over the medium term.'

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(50 percent) to medium-term economic growth because of a shift in government policy to promote private sector participation in agriculture and to increase investments in cash crops. Also, recent fisheries reforms—a new law and regulations and fisheries management plans—are expected to boost fish production especially by artisanal fishers”.

- Given this crucial period in our development, Sierra Leone now needs more than ever before a multilateral trading system that is fair and responsive to the needs of its developing members and Least Developing Countries.
- Madam Director-General, it is for these reasons that Sierra Leone supports your three priority areas for delivery at this year's 12th Ministerial Conference in December, namely:
 - Trade and health
 - Fisheries
 - Agriculture
- Let me conclude by reiterating Sierra Leone's desire to continue receiving technical assistance and capacity-building support in fisheries, agriculture, e-commerce, etc.



Foreign Minister Prof. David J. Francis at the Seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

ARMS TRADE TREATY

30 August 2021

Foreign Minister's Opening Statement at the CSP7

My Government is very proud to have represented Africa as President of this Seventh Conference. Right from the beginning of Sierra Leone's presidency, we dedicated the highest level of political commitment and leadership towards serving the ATT community. I am addressing you today in the place of and on behalf of my President, His Excellency Dr. Julius Maada Bio who sends you all warm greetings and compliments for a successful Conference.

As a former leader during our civil war, and as a peace studies scholar, President Bio fully understands both the need for weapons systems for legitimate and sovereign purposes, and for effective global arms regulation for responsible use of those weapons. For this reason, on Sierra Leone's assumption of the leadership of the ATT, he personally authored a total of 54 letters to other Heads of State and Government across the globe urging their countries to become parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. Those letters were mostly hand-delivered by you, Mr. President, to the diplomatic representatives of those Heads of State and Government here in Geneva, and some were directly mailed to the Heads of States.

We, the nations of the world, have always responded, and successfully so, to challenges that threaten our very existence. We have seen how our collective efforts led to the development of the principles of the laws of war as contained in the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols.

Therefore, the universalisation of the Arms Trade Treaty and its effective implementation should be actively promoted and encouraged by all nations in all our sub-regional, regional, and international engagements.

In this context, on behalf of His Excellency President Bio, I urge all States that are not yet Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty to join this Treaty. Sierra Leone believes that the ATT stands as one of the most significant achievements in international arms control and plays a key role in promoting

international and regional peace, security, and stability. It will help reduce human suffering, promote cooperation, transparency and responsible action by States Parties involved in the international trade in conventional arms.

With these remarks, I have the singular honour and privilege on behalf of His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio, the Government and people of Sierra Leone and on my behalf to wish you all successful proceedings of the Seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.

We have sought to lead by example. Sierra Leone adopted numerous measures to comply with our various treaty obligations. In 2010, our Parliament passed the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms Act, establishing the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms. Two years later, we passed the Arms and Ammunition Act of 2012 for the following reasons:

- to repeal and replace the Arms and Ammunition Act, 1955,
- to provide for the control of the transfer of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition, and other related materials from, to or through Sierra Leone,
- to provide for the regulation of the manufacture of small arms and light weapons,
- to provide for institutional and operational capacities to regulate possession and use of small arms and light weapons within Sierra Leone

Through its presidency of the 7th Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, Sierra Leone proposes a set of possible areas for States Parties and other stakeholders to consider for further inquiry and exchange or long-term implementation. We believe that the recommendations on small arms and light weapons if implemented will help achieve the core objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty with respect to all categories of weapons under the scope of the Treaty.



Ambassador Lansana Gberie and Foreign Minister Prof. David J. Francis.

4 September

Sierra Leone Presidency of ATT Ends, with Major Achievements

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone Professor David John Francis officially opened the Seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms

Trade Treaty (ATT), from August 2020 to September 2021, on behalf of His Excellency, President Dr. Julius Maada Bio.

Sierra Leone's Ambassador to Switzerland and Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva, Ambassador Dr.



Ambassador Gberie handed over the presidency to Ambassador Thomas Goebel, the Permanent Representative of Germany to the Conference on Disarmament.

Lansana Gberie, served as President of the Seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) from August 2020 to September 2021.

The Conference, organised in a hybrid format – with in-person and online attendance – was attended by 103 States, Seven International and Regional Organisations, and 33 Representatives of Civil Society and the Arms Industry. Delegates from the European Union, International Committee of the Red Cross, Inter-Parliamentary Union, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Wassenaar Arrangement all made statements of support for the work of the ATT and its President.

The Gambia and Kenya, not yet signatory States but whose Heads of State received a letter from His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone ratified the Arms Trade Treaty on 12 August 2014 as the 43rd UN Member State and 4th African country to join.

urging them to join the treaty, sent delegations to the Conference in accordance with Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure and are currently engaged with the procedure to become full States Parties.

Ambassador Gberie was elected President of the Seventh Conference of States Parties at the Sixth Conference in August last year and presided over the treaty body holding several preparatory and informal meetings that led to the Seventh Conference. He was only the second African – following Ambassador Emmanuel E. Imohe of Nigeria – to hold the position since the ATT was established. At the close of the Seventh Conference, Ambassador Gberie

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HUMAN RIGHTS

1 October

Human Rights Council and Sierra Leone

The Universal Periodic Review of Sierra Leone was an opportunity to take stock of the state of human rights and identify areas for improvement. My government greatly values this unique mechanism because of its transparent, collaborative, and consultative approach.

Sierra Leone received a total of **274 recommendations**. A consultative process to review these recommendations was commenced. The IMC, the government's Inter-Ministerial Human Rights Committee, which has a UN official and Civil Society Representation and the Human Rights Commission (as technical advisers) met and discussed the recommendations. This consultative and transparent process helped us in our decision-making process. In the Addendum the government submitted to the UPR

Secretariat, we reported that Sierra Leone **accepted 216** recommendations and **noted 58** recommendations.

The UN Member States commended Sierra Leone for the Hands-Off-Our-Girls Initiative, the Obolition of the death penalty, abolition of the criminal libel law, promoting education, addressing child trafficking, taking measures to combat COVID-19, and advancing gender discrimination and inequity, among other things, and expect Sierra Leone to implement the 216 recommendations and consider the 58 noted recommendations.

The Human Rights Council formally adopted Sierra Leone's 3rd cycle Universal Periodic Review outcome report by consensus.

Deputy Permanent Representative, Samuel Saffa Esq., is the Mission's Focal Point on the HRC.

UNDP Supports UPR Outreach

The UNDP's Resident Coordinator in Freetown, Dr. Pa-Lamin Beyai, impressed by Sierra Leone's human rights review, in late September approved funding for nation-wide consultations on the **216** accepted recommendations as well as the **58 noted** recommendations. The support will fund sector-wide efforts to popularise the accepted recommendations following the adoption session. Stakeholder consultative meetings were organized in Freetown, Bo, Makeni, and Kenema to popularise the recommendations and discuss the national implementation plan, including the follow up monitoring and reporting on the recommendations from the 3rd Cycle Review. These consultative meetings were attended by all relevant stakeholders, including Government Ministries, National Human Rights Institution, and Civil Society. This consultative and

transparent process will facilitate the formulation of our national human rights implementation plan and subsequent reporting.

UNDP's support hugely contributed to Sierra Leone's effective participation at its 3rd Cycle UPR and the successful adoption and popularization of the accepted recommendations. We are indeed grateful to the UNDP country office and look forward for continued collaboration on areas of common interest.

The High Commissioner's Officer and its UPR Branch in Geneva and the United Nations Country Teams in Sierra Leone, including the UN Women, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNOPS, and many others, have also contributed in diverse ways during the 3rd Cycle UPR of Sierra Leone. We are truly grateful for their continued engagement and support to improve the state of human rights in Sierra Leone.

HUMAN RIGHTS

AG Anthony Y. Brewah at the UN Human Rights Council



Participants at Sierra Leone's UPR adoption, 1 October 2021.

At the 48th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council held using a combination of in-person and remote participation, Sierra Leone's Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, His Excellency Mr. Anthony Yehwoe Brewah, addressed the Human Rights Council under Agenda Item 6, as part of the 3rd Cycle Universal Periodic Review adoption of the Working Group Report on Sierra Leone's human rights record.

Delivering Sierra Leone's position on behalf of the President, Dr. Julius Maada Bio, on the UPR recommendations, the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice thanked all stakeholders who engaged with Sierra Leone during the 3rd UPR and made our human rights review a success. The review was conducted on 14 May 2021.

"Although the number of accepted and noted recommendations remain unchanged, I wish to make the following corrections and clarifications. Recommendations 218, 257 and 267 that we previously accepted are now **noted**. We will seriously consider them in the context of our framework for deliberative decision making and wide national consultations because they involve matters of deep and entrenched cultural practices."

"I am very pleased to update this Council that in addition to our existing laws on protecting the rights of migrant workers, as recently as 25 August 2021, my government ratified and registered with the International Labour Organisation here in Geneva the "Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, No. 143, of 1975".

"In October 2020, a new protection law for human rights defenders, including journalists and media practitioners, was

added when my government abolished the 55-year-old criminal seditious libel law in Part V of the Public Order Act of 1965 and ratified the Independent Media Commission Act of 2020. We also enacted a new legislation in 2020 which granted civil instead of criminal powers to the Independent Media Commission in regulating mass media institutions in Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone today, no journalist, politicians, no human rights defenders and activists are in prison for expressing their views or defending the human rights of others."

"My government is absolutely committed to fully implementing all the **216 accepted recommendations** to build a better human rights architecture in Sierra Leone. By the time we submit our 3rd Cycle Midterm Report for the 4th cycle UPR, we will present an even more positive and impressive story of change, better and improved human rights record in Sierra Leone."

"My government's conviction about strengthening and improving the human rights record in Sierra Leone is not motivated by sentiment and optimism. Rather, it is rooted in our commitment, our resolve, our capability, and our wartime experience never again to allow ourselves, our governments and our laws to be used as instruments or be complacent to human rights violations."

"Today, I am very proud to formally notify the Human Rights Council and the international community at large that on the instructions of my President, His Excellency Dr. Julius Maada Bio, the Parliament of Sierra Leone debated and unanimously passed a law that abolished the death penalty. [President Bio signed the repeal into law in October.]

The Minister said Sierra Leone is proving itself as a pacesetter in the field of human rights.



Government officials, COVAX partners from the UN, EU and other partners witnessing the arrival and formal handing over of the vaccines. Photo: WHO/Saffea Gborie.

HEALTH

Response to COVID-19: COVAX Vaccines

At the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Ambassador Gberie wrote letters, on behalf of the Mission and Sierra Leone, to the WHO and the Government of Switzerland to solicit support for our country's response to the raging pandemic. He then actively participated in the negotiations leading to the establishment of the COVAX facility in part through effective engagement with Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance) and WHO. As a result, Sierra Leone was 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, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the WHO. Its aim is to accelerate the development and manufacture of

COVID-19 vaccines, and to guarantee fair and equitable access for every country in the world. Following continuous engagement with Gavi and Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Sierra Leone has received hundreds of thousands of doses of vaccine, and currently processing the 5th round of allocation through the COVAX dose-sharing mechanism.

As we went to press, we received a communication from the COVAX Facility that it is offering Sierra Leone 168,000 doses of the Janssen Ad26COV2.S vaccine (Johnson and Johnson, donated by the United States) as part of the COVAX dose-sharing mechanism. Their arrival in Freetown, possibly in December, will take the COVAX donation to 624,690 doses of high quality vaccines.

Though Sierra Leone has received donations from several other sources aside from the COVAX – including, notably, African Union and China – vaccine supplies fall far below need. This is common problem for developing countries, which are

disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. WHO estimates that only 2% of Covid-19 vaccines have been administered in Africa. It is precisely for this reason that Sierra Leone is supporting a proposal at the World Trade Organization (WTO) for a temporary waiver from intellectual property restrictions (TRIPS waiver) to remove existing and potential legal barriers to scale-up vaccine manufacturing and diversify supply developing countries. This proposal, authored by India and South Africa and co-sponsored by 64 WTO Members, has received widespread global support. Sharing the know-how behind making COVID-19 vaccines is key to not only scaling up production, but also bringing forward the second generation of vaccines we will need to address emerging variants.

The Permanent mission is actively engaged in the text-based negotiations over a TRIPS waiver at the WTO and supports the call on all members to exercise flexibility.



Dr. Austin Demby, Minister of Health and Sanitation.



Global Fund Allocates \$160 million to Salone

Our Mission sees it as a top priority to actively engage with the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Fund has, over the past 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 inappropriate 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. The period covered by the report is from early 2016 to March 2017, a month before our government took office. The report stated that over \$2 million of those funds were inappropriately used. The Fund requested the Government to refund the amount.

The period covered by the report was from early 2016 to March 2017, a month before our government took office. During that reporting period, Global Fund's report stated that over \$2 million of those funds were inappropriately used. The Fund requested the Government to refund the stolen amount. In addition, the Fund communicated that there are long outstanding ineligible expenditures that would need to be reimbursed.

Ambassador Gberie held several meetings with the Fund's representatives in Geneva and with relevant officials in Freetown over a period of more than six months. An agreement was reached, because of which the Fund jointly announced with, H.E. President Bio a new disbursement for Sierra Leone amounting to around US\$160 million for HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and building resilient and sustainable systems for health (RSSH). The amount is three times more than previous allocations by the Fund to Sierra Leone.

SHIPPED COVID-19 VACCINE DOSES

Vaccine Type	Shipment Arrival Date	Source	Number of Doses
Astra Zeneca (Covishield)	8 Mar 2021	COVAX Allocation Round 2	96,000
Astra Zeneca (AZD1222)	8 Aug 2021	French Donation: Counted as part of the COVAX 20% population target	96,000
Johnson and Johnson	7 Sep 2021	USG donation: Counted as part of the COVAX 20% population target	151,200
Pfizer	11 Sep 2021	USG Donation: Counted as part of the COVAX 20% population target	113,490
TOTAL			456,690

MIGRATION: IOM



H.E. Lansana Gberie, Ambassador and Permanent Representative

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Ambassador Gberie has worked with the Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, Dr. Bondi Gevao, to design a proposal for the mitigation of the environmental causes of mass migration.

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Sierra Leone is a committed Member of International Organisation for Migration, IOM. In November 2019, Ambassador Gberie was elected to the IOM Council Bureau to serve as Rapporteur for 2020. His mandate was reviewing and approving reports of the IOM Council and Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance. In addition, as Rapporteur, he 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. In November 2020, he was elected as the Vice Chair of the IOM's Governing Bureau after successfully completing my term as Rapporteur.

Ambassador Gberie has worked with the Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, Dr. Bondi Gevao, to design a proposal for the mitigation of the environmental causes of mass migration. The proposal has been given a preliminary nod by the IOM's Development Fund.



His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio with WTO Director- General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

The Geneva-based World Trade Organisation (WTO) aims at ensuring greatest possible transparency of trade policies and at negotiating, administrating, and monitoring agreed rules for trade. Through the lowering or elimination of existing customs duties and other barriers to trade, the WTO works continuously towards a more open global trading system. Our Mission in Geneva represents Sierra Leone's interests in the organisation. This includes regularly attending meetings of the various WTO bodies and coordination with African Union, particularly ECOWAS, partner countries, maintaining communication with capital-based experts, with the WTO Secretariat, the delegations of other WTO member states and with professional associations in the field of trade policy.

The Mission recently facilitated the submission of Sierra Leone's Category B Notifications under the WTO/ Trade Facilitation

Agreement that was prepared by the Sierra Leone National Trade Facilitation Committee, the statutory body ratified by Parliament to implement the measures under the Trade Facilitation Agreement that the country acceded to in 2017. The Mission also supported the Minister of Trade and Industry in participating in the WTO's Aid-for-Trade Stocktaking Event for Least Developed Countries hosted online on 23 – 25 March 2021.

Ambassador Gberie played a prominent role in the campaign of Dr. Ngozi Iweala, who was selected as the seventh Director-General on 15 February 2021. This goodwill holds enormous prospects for Sierra Leone to advance our interests, including fisheries and other trade subsidy and funding opportunities, at the WTO.

The Ambassador helped facilitate a bilateral meeting between H.E. President Dr. Julius Maada Bio and Director-General Dr. Ngozi Iweala at the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York in September.



President Dr. Julius Maada Bio (second from right) discussing with WTO Director General Dr. Ngozi Iweala (second from left).

NATIONAL PRIORITIES

AGRICULTURE



In Torma Bum-launched \$34.1 million Sierra Leone Regional Rice Value Chain Project.

Agriculture is one of President Bio's key priorities. He is himself a farmer, as are several of his Ministers, leading by example.

With assistance from the Africa Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank and BADEA, and International Federation for Agricultural Development, the Government supports integrated agriculture systems and rice value chain programmes in the country. The aim is to increase private sector investment in agriculture, raise farm household incomes, and improve nutritional status. This policy also aims to improve food access for vulnerable households and communities through the commercialisation of farms. The Government also provides business training to producer associations. It also provides community-based savings and loans schemes and links farmers to microfinance institutions that provide innovative grants to small and medium-sized enterprises. These policies strengthen

linkages between farmers and markets. Women and youth are prioritised in these government-backed interventions.

Investments in tree crops and rice are exempted from corporate income tax for the first 10 years.

Recently, His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio launched the \$34.1 million Sierra Leone Regional Rice Value Chain Project in Torma Bum, emphasising that food security is the most critical pillar among the human capital development priorities of the country. The project directly benefits 7,000 women and youth farmers and 35,000 farming families who grow rice on 35,000 hectares of farmlands in the project locations.

To strengthen the participation of the private sector, Government, through the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank, has ring-fenced \$50million to support private sector investments in agriculture.



The Sierra Leone 2021 Economic Update produced by the World Bank forecasts that 'Agriculture will contribute about half of all real sector growth over the medium term.'





NATIONAL PRIORITIES TOURISM AND CULTURE

Sierra Leone has vast and untapped potentials for tourism investments.

Sierra Leone is endowed with tremendous touristic potentials. The country prides itself in having some of the world's most beautiful white and pristine golden beaches stretching several kilometres along the peninsula, with beautiful hotels and resorts for perfect relaxation. The country's capital sits near the Atlantic Ocean and has one of the largest natural harbours in the world.

Sierra Leone has a vibrant tropical forest teeming with exotic wildlife and excellent climate. From the exquisite Bonthé and Banana Islands, the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, which provides a haven for Chimpanzees, the bountiful marine resources, sprawling hills and ranging Lion Mountains overlooking the city, to Bunce Island – once a Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade centre. This beautiful diamond-shaped country is one of the must-see ecotourism destinations to visit.

Sierra Leone is investing heavily in developing policies and infrastructure to revive its tourism sector. Sierra Leone has favourable tax policies for tourism investments. Tourism Investors are exempted from corporate income tax for the first five years. Tourism enterprises with up to six employees are exempt from the pay-as-you-earn tax for skills and expertise not readily available in Sierra Leone for the first three years of employment.

“

Tourism Investors are exempted from corporate income tax for the first five years.

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President Dr. Julius Maada Bio congratulates Her Excellency Fatima Maada Bio as an African Champion of Sanitation and Hygiene.



Praises for First Lady Fatima Bio at HRC

Among the main highlights of the Sierra Leone's UPR this year were the praises showered on our First Lady, HE Mrs. Fatima Bio, for her great work around protection of girls from sexual predators, the Hands Off Our Girls campaign. State delegate after state delegate applauded Mrs. Bio dedication and passion, and the positive effects the 'Hands Off Our Girls' campaign is having in Sierra Leone and Africa on protection of girls and women.

The Office of the First Lady is an extension of the Office of the President. To increase visibility to her "Hands-off-our Girls" campaign, the First Lady conveyed a summit in Freetown. The summit was attended by other First Ladies in West Africa, including those from the Mano River Union countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire.

Few months later, the Office of the First Lady launched the campaign. The campaign has succeeded in bringing to the public discourse the high numbers of sexual assault and rape cases. In response, His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio on 7th February 2019 declared a National Emergency on Rape and Sexual Violence as a major step towards addressing this social malaise and form of discrimination against women and girls. Also promoted "Free Sanitary Pads" to pipuls across the country.

The above and many other efforts by Her Excellency Fatima Maada Bio attracted the attention of the African Union. On 27 May 2021, the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) recognised Her Excellency Fatima Maada Bio as an African Champion of Sanitation and Hygiene. Sierra Leone's First Lady was the third prominent person to be honoured as such after Rwanda's President Paul Kagame and former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.



H. E. Samuel U. B. Saffa Esq. and H. E. Dr. Lansana A. Gberie.



Sierra Leone @ 60 In Switzerland

Sierra Leone gained independence from Britain 60 years on 27 April. Commemorating that day, Sierra Leone's embassies, organisations, and citizens around the world mounted colourful displays, organised events and solemn thanksgiving services and prayers to mark Sierra Leone's Independence Day. In line with the limitations imposed by the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, the Embassy and Permanent Mission of the Republic of Sierra Leone in Geneva organised a COVID-19 sensitive event starting with the cutting of the Independence cake at the International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG) where the Ambassador had earlier on the day chaired a meeting of the ATT. Later, the staff team of the Mission hosted a group of Sierra Leoneans to commemorate Independence Day.

Re-echoing the words of His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio, Sierra Leone's Ambassador and Permanent Representative in Geneva, Dr. Lansana Gberie, called for unity, tolerance, and patriotism among Sierra Leoneans in Switzerland. The Ambassador encouraged Sierra Leoneans in Switzerland to actively contribute to the development of Sierra Leone.

The Embassy staff in pictures



H.E. Dr. Lansana A. Gberie

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and
Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone



**H.E. Samuel U.B.
Saffa Esq.**

Deputy Ambassador
and Deputy Permanent
Representative



**Patrick H.M.
Koroma Esq.**

Minister Counsellor and
Acting Head of Chancery



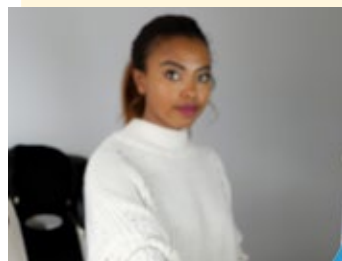
**Mr. Mohamed
Sheriff**

Information Attache'



**Mrs. Fatmata
Alpha**

Financial Attache'



**Mrs. Essate
Weldemichael**

Executive Assistant to
the Ambassador



**Mrs. Mildred
Kabba**

Secretary and
Administrative Assistant



**Mr. Tesfaye
Habtemaryam**

Ambassador's Driver



**Mr. Ambrosio
Reyes**

Driver



Some UN Specialised Agencies with Current Heads and Deputies

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

Director-General Antonio Vitorino
Deputy Director-General Amy Pope

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO)

Director-General- Guy Ryder
Deputy Director- General-Martha E. Newton

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

Secretary-General- Mr Houlin Zhao
Deputy Secretary-General- Mr Malcolm Johnson

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO)

Director-General- Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Nigeria)
Deputy Director- General- Ms Angela Paolini ELLARD
(United States)
Deputy Director- General -Ms Anabel González (Costa Rica)
Deputy Director- General-Ambassador Jean-Marie Paugam
(France)

UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION (UNIDO)

Director-General- Li Yong
Deputy Director- General Mr. Hiroshi Kuniyoshi

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

Director-General-Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Deputy Director-General-Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab

WORLD METROLOGICAL ORGANISATION (WMO)

Secretary-General- Petteri Taalas
Deputy Secretary-General- Elena Manaenkova

Sierra Leone Presidency of ATT Ends, with ...

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handed over the presidency to Ambassador Thomas Goebel, the Permanent Representative of Germany to the Conference on Disarmament.

H. E. Mr. Sheik Omar FAYE, Minister of Defence, Republic of the Gambia, delivered a well-received statement committing the Gambia to join the ATT.

Praises for Ambassador Gberie dominated the closing day of the Conference and after for his successful handling of the proceedings of the Conference and building consensus that resulted in the adoption of all the draft decisions submitted at the Conference. During the previous 6th Conference, five draft decisions were not adopted. Ambassador Dr. Gberie and the ATT community worked on those five decisions, which were eventually adopted at the Seventh Conference.

Ambassador Gberie assured the President of the Eighth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty of his unflinching support, particularly on treaty universalization.

Sierra Leone ratified the Arms Trade Treaty on 12 August 2014 as the 43rd UN Member State and 4th African country to join.

The ATT is the key instrument for regulating the global arms trade, covering the production, movement, and stockpiling of weapons and their component. It also aims at reducing human suffering and preventing the diversion of weapons. Against these objectives, Ambassador Gberie's thematic paper on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpile Management was adopted by the Conference for further implementation. Ambassador Gberie's thematic focus was also included in the annual ATT's resolution A/RES/75/64 adopted in the First Committee of the 75th Session of the United Nation General Assembly in December 2020 (<https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/75/64>).

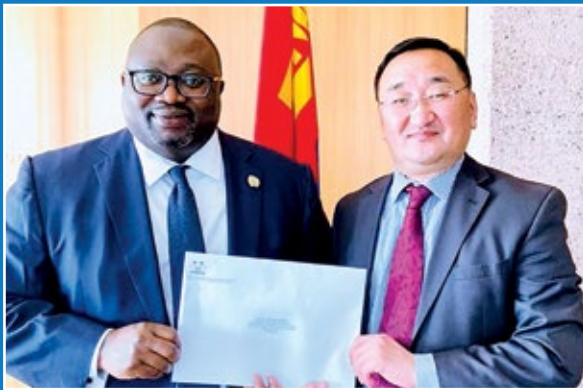
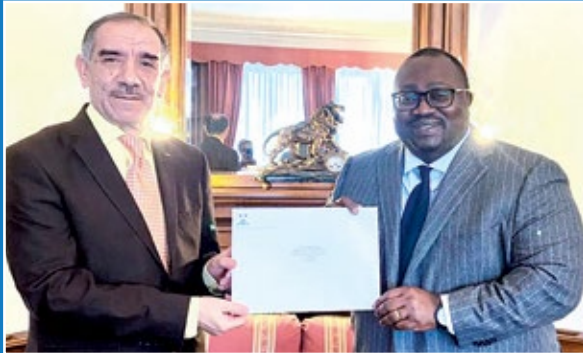
Ambassador Gberie was formally appointed to be Co-Chair of the ATT's Working Group on universalisation on 20 October 2021.

PICTORIAL

Sierra Leone Emba



Embassy and Permanent Mission in Geneva





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