

**Peacebuilding Commission
Informal Thematic Discussion
Sierra Leone Energy Sector Development
Tuesday, November 13**

Chair's Summary Note

1. The primary purpose of the meeting was to hear presentations from the government of Sierra Leone and other key stakeholders on plans to address the country's energy crisis and explore ideas for possible support from the Peacebuilding Commission. The meeting was chaired by Ambassador Majoor, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands. The government of Sierra Leone was represented by Hon. Zainab Bangura, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Hon. David Carew, Minister of Finance and Economic Development and Hon. Haja Afsatu Kabba, Minister of Energy and Power.

2. In addition to the representatives of the Sierra Leone government, representatives of the European Commission, United Kingdom (DFID), World Bank, China, Italy, African Development Bank, and the UN took part in the meeting in Sierra Leone. The following PBC members also participated in the discussion: Italy, Guinea, India, African Union, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sweden, Russia, and Japan.

3. Ambassador Majoor in his opening remarks reaffirmed the broad agreement that Sierra Leone's energy crisis impedes progress on peacebuilding priority issues and represents a critical challenge for the country's recovery and economic development. He noted that shortcomings in the electricity supply constitute a critical and overarching issue affecting all priority areas highlighted in the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework.

4. Hon. Zainab Bangura began by conveying greetings from H.E. President Koroma noting his personal commitment and that of his government to addressing the energy situation in Sierra Leone. Hon. Haja Afsatu Kabba stressed that the energy sector and in particular the electricity sub-sector in Sierra Leone is in a state of crisis. The current electricity needs of the country stand at 250 MW with current production at 10 MW (7 MW in Freetown and 3 in Kenema and Bo provinces). The Minister reaffirmed that the government of Sierra Leone is committed to expanding access to reliable and sustainable sources of energy and has established a Presidential Task Force to address the issue. The Hon. Minister noted that the provision of energy services will have a significant positive impact on employment generation, public revenue generation, poverty reduction, and the overall recovery of the country. It will also deliver a critical and long-awaited peace dividend to the population five years after the end of conflict.

5. To address the current energy crisis, the government has adopted a three-phase approach. A key focus for the immediate phase will be the completion of the Bumbuna HEP and the associated transmission line anticipated for the end of 2008. As an interim measure, the government has put in place an emergency plan to generate 15 MW of emergency power for delivery to Sierra Leone's Western Area (Freetown). The emergency plan also addresses the needed repairs to the distribution network, tariff analyses, pre-paid meter installation,

National Power Authority restructuring, and the way forward with respect to the West African Power Pool.

6. Hon. David Carew provided a briefing on measures already being taken by the government as part of the emergency plan and the outstanding requirements. In particular, he noted that the government, with the help of the World Bank, has secured a contract to supply 15 MW of electricity to the Western Area by the end of December for a period of one year at the cost of \$35 million. It has also completed negotiations and secured pledges from international partners in the amount of 30 million euros to complete the Bumbuna HEP. The work on the transmission line from Bumbuna to Freetown has also been commissioned at the cost of \$10 million. The government has also purchased \$100,000 worth of safety equipment and is planning to introduce nation-wide pre-paid meters at a cost of \$5 million. The Hon. Minister noted that what is still needed in the short-term is support for upgrading of the distribution network and the transmission lines in Freetown and strengthening of the National Power Authority management arrangements which is in charge of generation, transmission, distribution, supply and sale of electricity. The associated costs for these projects are estimated to be about \$23 million.

7. All participants agreed that the condition of the energy sector has far reaching effects. It weighs down the economy, hinders growth and the delivery of services to the poor such as health and education, and adds to unemployment in an already volatile and economically depressed environment. It was highlighted that with only seven percent of the population able to access electricity, Sierra Leone has one of the lowest connectivity rates in the world. Furthermore, with a run-down power distribution network and a financially struggling National Power Authority even those with electricity access suffer unreliable service and are forced to generate their own power using personal generating sets. Participants also stressed the need to consider the sub-regional aspects of energy sector development including in the context of the West African Power Pool and possibly the Mano River Union.

8. A number of international partners such as the WB, EC, AfDB, DFID, China, Italy, and Japan are already supporting the government's efforts to turn around and stabilize the current energy crisis. However, it was stressed that the energy sector's challenges exceed the current efforts and additional support is required, especially in the short term.

9. Stakeholders noted that the Peacebuilding Commission can play an important role by broadening the number of international partners active in the energy sector and assisting the government of Sierra Leone with resource mobilization, especially in support of its emergency plan. Many participants stressed that in order to do so most effectively, the government of Sierra Leone should develop a comprehensive and costed energy sector strategy.

10. The meeting concluded with an agreement to include the energy sector as an overarching priority issue in the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework and list commitments and actions to be taken by the government of Sierra Leone and the Peacebuilding Commission in support of the government's emergency plan.