



**Report of the Implementation of the Least Developed Countries (LDC)  
Programme of Action 2011-2020**

Sierra Leone

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Republic of Sierra Leone comprises five regions – North, North West, East, South and Western Regions consisting of sixteen administrative districts, namely: Bo, Bombali, Bonthe, Falaba, Kailahun, Kambia, Karene, Kenema, Koinadugu, Kono, Moyamba, Port Loko, Pujehun, Tonkolili, Western Rural and Western Urban. Sierra Leone is bordered by Guinea to the north and northeast, Liberia to the south and southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. The country has a total area of 71,740 km<sup>2</sup> (27,699 sq m?), divided into a land area of 71,620 km<sup>2</sup> (27,653 sq mi) and water of 120 km<sup>2</sup> (46 sq mi). The population of Sierra Leone according to the 2015 Housing and Population Census is estimated at 7.557 million and composed of several ethnic groups. English is the official language of Sierra Leone and most Sierra Leoneans can speak and write English (is this true given our literacy rate). Creole is widely spoken followed by indigenous languages.

This report highlights progress that has been made in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the LDCS for the period 2011-2020. The report lays out critical challenges that the country face in its quest to transform the economy with the ambition of becoming a middle-income economy by 2039 as outlined in the Medium Term National Development Plan 2019-2023. The report also proffers recommendations on what the next Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries can focus on from the perspective of Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone currently implements a Free Quality Education for Children in Public Schools up to high School level. It also implements a Free Health Care Programme for under-five children, pregnant and lactating mothers, and victims of the country's Ebola virus disease outbreak as well as for persons living with disabilities. These have contributed significantly to the economic and social cohesion of the country. Support to inclusive development, gender equality and women's empowerment are being addressed in successive national development plans and activities geared to meeting targets set out in various national development plans and global agreements.

Significant reforms have been undertaken since the end of the country's civil war to transform itself from a war torn country to a stable country with good and accountable governance institutions that contributes to putting behind the legacies of war, enhance competitiveness and put the country on the road to achieving a middle income status. These include consolidating fiscal performance and improving public sector efficiency; improve the business climate; widen the sphere of opportunity through participation, social inclusion and sustainability; and establishment of several agencies as part of the machinery of Government.

## **II. INTRODUCTION**

Sierra Leone is a small West African country blessed with abundant natural landscapes, a vibrant culture and mineral wealth. The country became an independent country in 1961 and a Republic in 1971. From 1991-2002, the country experienced a horrific civil war that claimed the lives of thousands of Sierra Leoneans and destroyed the majority of the country's economic and social infrastructure. . Since the end of the war, significant progress has been made in consolidating peace and towards achieving sustainable development, even though many challenges still remain. Poverty remains a key challenge with the poverty rate estimated at 57 percent; of which 10.8 percent live in extreme poverty.

Sierra Leone participated in the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 9-13 May 2011, where the Istanbul Programme of Action was adopted. Sierra Leone remains committed to meeting the commitments contained in the Programme of Action through the implementation of various national development plans and strategies.

It is worth noting however that soon after the adoption of the IPOA in 2011, Sierra Leone was one of the fastest growing economies in the world with a growth rate of 20.72 in 2013. This was largely attributed to the boom in the mining sector. However, in 2014, the country experienced an outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease and soon after, the price of iron ore, the country's main export commodity, dropped significantly. Between 2016 and 2017, as the country started recovering from the Ebola, flooding and a devastating mudslide occurred leaving over a thousand people dead and destruction of property worth millions of Leones. Consequently, within few years, the impressive growth rates of the Sierra Leone economy plummeted significantly. These incidents affected the extent to which country has been able to implement the IPOA.

This report is drawn largely from the national documents; in particular, the current Sierra Leone's Medium Term National Development Plan- 2019-2023; and the country assistance programmes of development partners, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Sierra Leone 2020-2023, Statistical surveys including the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) and the Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey (SLIHS).

## **III. THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS**

Sierra Leone's national development planning process is guided by the principles of inclusivity and national ownership. Since the adoption of the IPOA, Sierra Leone has developed two National Development Plans- the Agenda for Prosperity spanning the period 2013-2018, and the MTNDP which cover the period 2019-2023.

The Agenda for Prosperity is developed around eight pillars, which mainstreamed the Millennium Development goals as well as the commitments of the IPOA as follows:

- Pillar 1: Economic Diversification to Promote Inclusive Growth
- Pillar 2: Managing Natural Resources
- Pillar 3: Accelerating Human Development
- Pillar 4: International Competitiveness
- Pillar 5: Social Protection
- Pillar 6: Labor and Employment

Pillar 7: Governance and Public Sector Reform

Pillar 8: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Building on earlier national development plans, the thrust of the 2013-2018 National Plan was to lay the foundation for Sierra Leone's path to achieving middle income status and sustainable development and ultimately graduating from the Least Developed Country Status. The realization of the objectives of this Plan was thwarted by the twin shocks of 2014, the outbreak of the Ebola Virus disease and the fall in price of iron ore in the global market.

The successor National Development Plan is the Sierra Leone Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) for the period 2019-2023 developed through extensive consultations across the length and breadth of the country and catalogues what needs to be done for the country to achieve its development aspirations by 2023, the 2030 Global Agenda and middle-income status by 2039. The MTNDP prioritises human capital development as the overarching goal of the Government. The plan also seeks to promote innovation as the basis for achieving inclusive growth, a resilient economy and to achieve middle income status by 2039. The MTNDP mainstreamed the Sustainable Development Goals; the African Union Agenda 2063 and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States' Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals. . The MTNDP is based on eight complementary Clusters as follows:

Cluster 1: Human Capital Development

Cluster 2: Diversifying the Economy and Promoting Growth

Cluster 3: Infrastructure and Economic Competitiveness

Cluster 4: Governance and Accountability for Results

Cluster 5: Empowering Women, Children, Adolescents and Persons with Disabilities

Cluster 6: Youth Employment, Sports and Migration

Cluster 7: Addressing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience

Cluster 8: Means of Implementation

The Medium Term National Development Plan is predicated on the Governments' vision of for national transformation that has four strategic goals:

Goal 1: A diversified, resilient, green Economy

Goal 2: A nation with, empowered, and healthy citizens capable of realizing their fullest potential

Goal 1: A society that is peaceful, cohesive, secure and just

Goal 1: A competitive economy with a well-developed infrastructure

#### **IV. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ISTANBUL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE DECADE 2011-2020**

As indicated earlier the implementation of the IPOA in Sierra Leone was constrained by a number of factors, both internal and external. Nonetheless, Sierra Leone has registered progress in a number of areas in line with the commitments of the IPOA.

This section highlights the progress made and the challenges faced in implementing the priority areas for action in the IPOA.

##### ***a. Productive capacity***

Recognising that productive capacity has serious deficit following years of war and domestic as well as external shocks, Sierra Leone has in successive national plans focused on improving the productive capacity of the country to supply the domestic as well as the export markets. The Medium National Development Plan 2019-2023 as in the case of preceding national development plans focuses on improving the productivity and commercialization of the agricultural sector; improving productivity and sustainable management of fisheries and marine sector for both domestic consumption and export purpose; revitalize the tourism sector; revamping the manufacturing and services sectors; making energy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services accessible; and promoting an inclusive rural economy.

However, addressing issues of productive capacity faces major challenges which include limited paved road network and infrastructure deficit in energy, transport, and ICT. Collectively, these challenges impede private sector investment by increasing production and marketing costs and thereby preventing links between internal and external markets. According to the African Development Bank, Sierra Leone ranks 46 out of 54 countries in sub Saharan Africa on Infrastructure Development Index<sup>1</sup> in 2016.

##### **Road Network**

Sierra Leone's road network currently consists of an estimated 11,300 kilometres of roads of which 2140 kilometres are classified as trunk or primary roads connecting the various regions. An estimated 864 kilometres of primary roads are paved. An estimated 6056 kilometres are classified as secondary and feeder roads, of which only 24 kilometres are paved. These roads link major towns, farms and market places. An estimated 3104 kilometres are classified as local and township roads of which only 200 kilometres are paved. This reflects a 9 percent level of connectivity compared to 18 percent of the sub Saharan average.

##### **Port Facilities**

Sierra Leone has one of Africa's largest natural harbours. The Queen Elizabeth II (QE2), Freetown container port has been privatized and is managed by Bolloré Africa Logistics under a 20-year concession agreement reached in 2011. The QE2 port has recently been expanded to accommodate vessels carrying up to 6,500 containers, increasing possible traffic by more than 30%.

The major challenges facing sea transport and maritime administration are limited security; a weak and inadequate regulatory framework; weak institutional capacity; deteriorating physical

infrastructure; poor law enforcement and application; inadequate safety mechanisms; lack of inter-agency cooperation among subsector stakeholders; and exemption of private companies, especially mining entities from paying cargo levies on import and export, thereby denying much-needed revenue to the Government.

## **Air Transportation**

Growth in the air transport market for Sierra Leone over the past decade has been irregular. In 2014 and 2015, six out of the nine operational airlines in the country suspended their operations due to the Ebola outbreak. This resulted in 66.6 percent decrease in scheduled aircraft movement a 35.3 percent decrease in passenger traffic with a corresponding 44.3 percent decrease in revenue generated from passenger traffic.

To improve on air transportation, Government is doing the following:

- Partner with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), to implement a new safety oversight system in order to strength its safety capabilities.
- Reduce all landing fees by 34%
- Remove passenger handling fees, and reduced both passenger service charges and aviation service fees.

To transform the overall transport system, Government is working with partners to improving water infrastructure and communication technologies and fostering private sector growth. Government is convinced that the rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure and developing new infrastructure will transform the sector and stimulate economic growth.

The Office of the Presidential Infrastructure Initiative (OPII) has also identified a number of short, medium and long-term priority infrastructure projects that will be implemented based on available resources.

## **Tourism Development**

In line with Government's effort to diversify the economy, emphasis has been placed on the growth sectors with high value-addition, such as tourism. Sierra Leone has huge tourism potentials rooted in its ecological endowment and its rich colonial history. With stunning beaches of more than 400 kilometers, exotic islands, rich ecosystems, biodiversity, and historical slave trade sites, Sierra Leone's Tourism sector has huge potential. Key strategies to improve the tourism sector include:

- Adoption of the National Tourism policy
- Adoption of the National Ecotourism Policy in 2017 which seeks to attract up to 20,000 international and 30,000 domestic ecotourism visits by 2025. The policy lays significant emphasis on the protection of the environment, in collaboration with the Environment Protection Agency and the National Protected Area Authority
- Enhancing the environment for tourism operators, such as reducing visa costs for target markets

- Introduction of a visa on arrival policy adopted in 2019 and supporting the formation of a Tourism Federation and other related associations.
- Promote public-private partnerships in tourism development  
These initiatives led to an increase in International visitor arrival by 38,615 in 2010 to 81,250 in 2013 and an increase in international arrival by more than 300 percent between 2015 and 2016 after the end of the Ebola.

Going forward, as outlined in the Leone Medium Term National Development Plan, Government will:

- Improve the policy and legal framework
- Rehabilitate and development historic and cultural sites
- Promote eco-tourism and ensure the protection of the country's rich biodiversity

### **Electricity**

Despite the many efforts at improving electricity generation and distribution, Sierra Leone continues to face challenges of limited access to affordable and reliable electricity supply. During the period of the IPoA, the government of Sierra Leone continues to focus on increasing the energy capacity of the country. Special attention was on generation and distribution of electricity from renewable and clean sources and making it accessible to the majority of Sierra Leoneans.

Strategic interventions in the energy sector include:

- Unbundling of the power sector and creating new state utilities in 2015:
  - The Electricity Generation and Transmission Company for the generation and distribution of power; and
  - The Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority responsible for bulk power purchase from generators and scale to end users.
- The government with the support of development partners acquired thermal plans and developed mini hydro dams to complement Bumbuna Hydroelectric Dam so as to increase the supply of electricity.
- Installation of solar energy remote areas of the country.
- The establishment of the Barefoot Women Solar Institute, which trains uneducated women as solar engineers, thereby increasing access to electricity energy in many remote areas of the country.
- With support from DFID UK, the Government is providing rural communities with no prior access to electricity with renewable clean energy for social, economic and environmental development. This project provided solar systems for 54 Community Health Centers across the 16 districts and 50 installed mini-grids in 50 rural communities across Sierra Leone.



## Science, Technology and innovation

The Government of Sierra Leone is committed to making science and innovation as a key driver of economic growth and transformation.

. Strategies to promote Science, technology and innovation include:

- Creation of a Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) in October 2018 under the Office of the President to give it the political visibility it needs to impact various sectors of the economy of Sierra Leone. The DSTI's will harness technology and use data, computer science, and design to bolster development in Sierra Leone. DSTI supports Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), as well as the local tech and innovation ecosystem. DSTI has developed relationships with leading institutions for technology and research globally; these include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, UNICEF Innovations, TED, eGovernance Academy of Estonia, Kiva, Tony Blair Institute, and the World Bank.
- DSTI has facilitated the establishment of GoSL Integrated GIS Platform, the Free Quality Education Data Hub, and ePets, as a part of a larger national financial data services mapping platform to integrate and track government spending.
- On October 31, 2019, the Directorate launched the National Innovation and Digital Strategy (NIDS), which is Sierra Leone's framework for using technology and science to accelerate national development and the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

In the area of telecommunications, Sierra Leone has made significant progress in improving telecommunications:

- The Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) submarine cable, which extends from France to South Africa, was commissioned to link to the Sierra Leone network in February 2013.
- With the assistance of the World Bank, the fibre-optic cable landed in Sierra Leone in 2016. This offshore fibre-optic "super highway" is aimed at meeting the rising demand for voice and data services and offers vast improvements to the ease of doing business and the provision of education and health services in the country.
- The installation of the fiber-optic cable has lowered the cost of international connectivity. The connection is managed by a Government of Sierra Leone owned special purpose vehicle, Sierra Leone Cable Ltd (SALCAB).
- A reduction in the wholesale cost of internet connectivity bandwidth by almost 50% was announced by SALCAB in November 2018.
- The country is now also benefiting from the ECOWAS Regional Backbone and e-Governance Program (ECOWAN) project that was completed in Sierra Leone in December 2015. As a result of ECOWAN, most of the major towns and cities now have fibre optic cable terminating or passing through them and a high speed wireless network has been established in Freetown for use by government agencies.
- SALCAB is also in the process of attracting capital investment that will allow it to implement a second submarine cable.

Challenges in this sector include a proper legal framework and regulatory environment as well as high costs. Consequently, Sierra Leone has still not fulfilled its international obligations of transitioning from analogue to digital broadcasting as well as that of ease of access to ICT

including mobile, voice and communication services for the population. The cost is relatively still high with a significant proportion of the population still without telecoms access.

### **Private Sector and Manufacturing**

The private sector in Sierra Leone has the potential to be an engine of economic growth as it is in many other LDCs. However this potential is yet to be realized. The latest growth diagnostics indicates that the country's economy has remained largely undiversified and prone to fluctuations. Thus a shift of focus to diversification of the economy anchored on developing the private sector by promoting local businesses while creating the enabling environment for attracting foreign direct investment.

The manufacturing sector remained small, with the sector contributing to only 2 percent to GDP, in 2012, 4.5 percent in 2016 and 4.9 percent of GDP in 2017 before dropping to 3.3 percent of GDP in 2018 (2019' MTNDP). These rates fell far below the African Least Developed Countries averages. Energy constraints and other bottlenecks have largely contributed to this scenario.

Linkages between the manufacturing sector and productive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and minerals have been weak. The sector consists mainly of locally manufactured consumer goods such as alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, confectionery, cement, paint, juice, flour, soap, textiles, apparel, handicrafts, and furniture. Industries are concentrated mainly in the capital Freetown, with very few scattered among the regional headquarter cities. Low participation of women in the value chain is also part of the broader problem the sector faces. While a small number of women own medium- and large-scale enterprises, the majority are engaged in micro-production, with no access to formal sector skills and capital. In addition, the lack of value addition to raw materials has inhibited the growth of the manufacturing sector.

Access to capital is a huge constraint to private investors, especially for the entry of new entrepreneurs and those living in rural areas. According to the 2014 Labour Force Survey, 47 percent of household enterprises reported that they were unable to borrow the necessary capital for their businesses. This is reflected in the informal sector's inability to take advantage of value-added opportunities.

To address some of these challenges, a National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (2017-20) was developed and launched in late 2016.

The World Bank's Doing Business index ranked Sierra Leone 148 out of 190 in 2017, and the Global Competitiveness Report ranked Sierra Leone 133 out of 134 countries surveyed in 2012. Subsequent ranking did not change significantly and stood at 132 out of 138 countries surveyed.

Sierra Leone however has huge opportunities for private sector development and the growth of the manufacturing sector. The country has the largest natural rutile reserves in the world, as well as huge energy potential and high domestic demand. These represent a significant opportunity to secure considerable investment financing from the massive stock of private resources available internationally. The country is therefore implementing strategies aimed at developing the private as a way of boosting the manufacturing sector which needs massive capital investments for it to develop.

As already highlighted in the report, infrastructure development presents both critical challenges and substantial investment opportunities for investors in Sierra Leone. Without the resources to significantly reduce the infrastructure gap, the GoSL has looked to attract private sector investors through the implementation of policies and legislation to promote PPPs and mitigate the risks inherent in Greenfield investments.

Strategies for developing the private sector and boosting the manufacturing include:

- Created an investment board co-chaired by the President and the Vice President to facilitate the investment process and provide necessary after-care for investors.
- Revamped the regulatory and legal framework to protect investments including significantly simplifying and shortening the process of registering, establishing, and running a profitable business in Sierra Leone and we continue working to revamp various related institutions; and applying multisectoral incentives for private sector investments.
- Robustly fighting corruption as it stifles good businesses and good governance
- Established a Directorate of Science, Technology, and Innovation in the Office of the President in order to seed, test, and scale technology for private sector growth, governance, research and education, and public service delivery.
- The establishment of a PPP Unit in the Office of the President with the mandate to provide coordination and transactional support to Government agencies across a range of potential PPPs.
- Mainstreaming of the manufacturing and private sector development in the country's national development plans.
- Launch of the National Strategy for Financial Inclusion in 2016 in order to overcome the difficulty of accessing credit for SMEs.
- Committing to establishing a diversified and resilient economy through creating a favourable environment for private sector growth.

#### ***b. Agriculture, food security and rural development***

The agriculture sector accounts for 55.1 percent of Sierra Leones GDP and remains the biggest contributor to the country's GDP.

To reduce Sierra Leone's dependence on mining, successive National Development Plans for Sierra Leone have identified economic diversification as a key policy shift. . At the center of economic diversification is the development of the agriculture sector which employs the majority of Sierra Leoneans in the rural areas. Between 2013 and 2018, the sector accounted for 61.3 percent of rural employment but Sierra Leone still remains a net importer of its staple food, rice. This is due to the fact that agriculture in Sierra Leone is characterized by smallholders engaging in subsistence agriculture; low yields and extremely low labour productivity. Consequently, 43.7 percent of Sierra Leoneans are food insecure. Agriculture yields in Sierra Leone are among the lowest in the West African sub-region.

In order to improve the productivity of the sector and address food insecurity, the Government has implemented the following strategies:

- developing value chains for key agricultural products;
- support mechanization and the commercialization
- Promote agricultural research and the use of appropriate farming technologies.
- Increase farmer's access to agricultural inputs by operationalizing 52 Agricultural Business Centers (ABCs) and transforming these ABCs into functional cooperatives along several crops' value chain.
- Construction of feeder roads linking ABCs to production and market centres
- Improve food and nutrition security, and increased resilience to climate change and other shocks.
- Prepared a National Agricultural Transformation strategy to facilitate rice self-sufficiency, livestock development, and crop diversification: improving the policy environment, promoting women and youth in agriculture, setting up private sector-led mechanization, and sustainably managing biodiversity.
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### ***c. Trade and Commodities***

The importance of improving the Balance of Trade has been highlighted in successive development plans in Sierra Leone as the trade sector is dominated by large imports and relatively low exports. The country's main exports are in the mining and agriculture sectors. Mineral exports comprise of iron ore, titanium, diamonds rutile and bauxite. The agricultural export marine include cocoa, coffee and fish. The imports include rice, machinery and transport equipment (largely relating to mining and oil investment projects) and cars.

Between 2016 to 2017 Sierra Leone's formal trade balance widens to 19.5 percent of GDP from 12.0 percent. This is largely attributed to increased imports of food, manufactured goods, and transportation equipment and machinery

To promote trade and investments in import substitution, the government of Sierra Leone adopted several policy reforms to support trade and investment which includes the establishment of the Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA) and the Sierra Leone Investment Board. SLIEPA has been effective in facilitating inward investment in various sectors as well as promoting exports. Road corridors linking district headquarter towns, as well those linking neighboring countries such as the Gberi Junction-Pamelap Road between Sierra Leone and Guinea and the Bo-Bandajuma between Sierra Leone and neighboring Liberia have been constructed. Other measures to boost trade include:

- developing a value-added export sector;
- Implementing a restrictive trade regime that started with selective tariffs
- launch of the Made in Sierra Leone initiative; and
- Improving the regulatory framework.

The major barriers preventing greater integration of the Sierra Leone in the global value chains is the infrastructure deficit and the underdevelopment of the manufacturing sector.

#### ***d. Human and Social Development***

##### **Education**

The provision of quality education has been identified as a cornerstone in Governments efforts to transform Sierra Leone into a middle income country. The focus is to improve basic education for all children, provide relevant higher education that will meet the demand for skills set in the workplace. A separate ministry has been created for Technical and Higher Education to focus solely on the improvement of higher education. Government is also implementing the following programmes to improve on the educational standard:

- Introduction of the Free Quality School Education (FQE) programme which seeks to increase enrolment and promote education through the payment of school and examination fees, provision of teaching and learning materials, targeted school feeding.
- Introduction of school bus system in major towns and cities
- Establishing a of Trust fund for partner participation in the FQE
- Increasing budgetary allocation the education sector from 14 percent to 21 percent.

##### **Population and primary Health**

In Sierra Leone, preventable non-communicable diseases, malnutrition, pregnancy, and newborn complications accounts for nine in ten under-five deaths, with malaria taking the lead, followed by acute lower respiratory tract infections and other non-communicable, perinatal, and nutritional conditions. For maternal mortality, the deaths are largely preventable, with the main cause being postpartum haemorrhage, which accounted for 33 percent of all deaths and 10 percent of unsafe abortions among adolescents. Teenagers account for almost half of all maternal deaths, which is not surprising, given the high adolescent birth rate of 125 per 1,000 live births (2019, MTNDP). To address this challenge, several measures have been adopted by the Government of Sierra Leone including:

- Free medical and treatment for Pregnant and Lactating mothers and under-fives
- Provision of antiretroviral drugs
- Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission Project (PMCT)
- Education on stigma and discrimination
- Training of healthcare workers
- Distribution of bed nets
- Free Malaria curative and preventive drugs at cost recovery

##### **Youth Development**

Sierra Leone has a very youthful population and about 80 percent of the youths are unable to earn enough to lift themselves and their families above the US\$2 per day poverty level.

. The Government has therefore introduced the following initiatives to support youth development:

- Skills Training for youth through TVET;
- Internship Program
- Setting up of the Youth Commission

- Youth Employment Scheme (YES)
- Promote youth engagement in agriculture
- Youth in Car Wash
- National Youth Service
- Support youth to engage in small and medium scale entrepreneurship ventures, such as in agriculture and other livelihood activities

## **Shelter**

The Government of Sierra Leone agrees with the universal declaration of Human Rights that the right to housing is a fundamental human right. However, the housing situation in Sierra Leone is plagued with overcrowding in household as the average household size is 8.8 persons per dwelling. This situation is compounded by the lack of adequate water and sanitation facilities, leading to frequent health issues such as diarrhea, malaria, and cholera. The overdependence on imported building materials, the lack of large-scale housing developers and the land tenure system make owning a house a big challenge.

Over the years, successive governments have implemented programmes through the Sierra Leone Housing Corporation, the Home Finance Company, and the National Social Security and Insurance Trust to increase access to affordable housing for Sierra Leoneans.

However urbanization over the years and relatively high poverty levels, has led to an increased number of slums and informal settlements, particularly in the capital city, Freetown. Currently, there are over 72 slums and informal settlements in Freetown and its environs.

To start addressing the housing situation, Government has developed

A National Housing Policy to work on programs of reform, resettlement, and reconstruction. Government has also built 40 houses to for slum dwellers and flood victims in Freetown. The new National Land Reform Programme provides a unique opportunity and the necessary goodwill to address the numerous challenges in the dual land tenure system.

## **Water and Sanitation**

Many of the major causes of death and disability in Sierra Leone can be traced to challenges with environmental health and sanitation. Use of improved sanitation facilities has had a mixed performance, rising from a low base of 13 percent (MICS, 2008) to 16 percent (MICS, 2017). Urban dwellers are much more likely to have improved sanitation facilities than rural households (27 percent and 7.9 percent, respectively). The most common toilet facility is the latrine with slab (33.1 percent), which is much more likely to be used in rural areas (44.7 percent) than in urban areas (23.7 percent). About 27.7 percent of the rural population practices open defecation. Sanitation is far below the reasonable SDG target of 66 percent for the country, and the budget allocation for the sector is less than 0.02 percent of GDP (2019 MINDP).

The environmental health and hygiene subsector is fraught with many challenges. The system lacks an integrated, comprehensive policy, strategies, standard operating procedures, and sectoral coordination, which might be due to inadequate technical/human and financial

capacity and limited research capability in the Directorate of Environmental Health and Sanitation. Again, there are low levels of sanitation coverage in both rural and urban areas, as well as in health facilities, schools, and other public institutions.

Waste disposal and management remains. Mining companies and other industrial operations have high-volume discharges that are not well treated. In addition, wastewater and sewage treatment and disposal systems are weak in communities. Solid waste management in all cities, towns, and villages is also weak. Climate change–related effects, including frequent floods and the risk of rising sea levels, have further aggravated the sanitation challenges of communities.

Measures and Strategies for increasing water efficiency and access to water in rural and remote Communities include:

- The Three Towns Water Supply Project
- Upgrading water transmission and distribution networks
- Rehabilitate existing reservoirs and water facilities
- Introduction of monthly cleaning exercise with residents mandated to stay in their homes on the first Saturday of every month from 6:00am to midday in order to clean their surroundings and properly dispose of the waste
- Implementation of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programme

### **Gender equality and empowerment of women**

Despite declaration by successive Governments that gender inequality will be addressed, Sierra Leone ranks 184 out of 189 countries in the UN 2017 Gender Development Index and only 12.4% of Parliamentarians are women. This is attributed to social and cultural norms and gender stereotyping that dictates relationships, roles, and responsibilities between men and women, as well as access to power, resources, and privileges.

The key challenges that women and girls continue to grapple with are: domestic and sexual violence; discrimination; weak systems/institutions to address gender issues; and poor collaboration among the agencies responsible for addressing women's issues

Over the past decade, the government has made numerous efforts to develop and enact a range of laws, policies, and strategies at the national level to tackle gender inequality and discrimination. These include;

- Enacting three 'gender justice laws', which respectively address domestic violence, women's access to land through inheritance, women's rights in marriage and divorce.
- Enacting Sexual Offences Act 2012 which defines all sexual activity without consent as an imprisonable crime.
- Establishing a Ministry for Gender Affairs which focuses on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment across board
- Establishing a Family Support Unit within the Sierra Leone Police
- Mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in the national development plans
- Incentives for the girl child including scholarships for girls pursuing science and mathematics at the university

- Domesticated the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Promote Advocacy Groups for Women's Empowerment.

## **Social Protection**

In the last 15 years, Sierra Leone has experienced civil conflict, Ebola outbreak, floods, and mudslides that resulted in loss of lives and properties. Global economic shocks, such as the global financial crisis and falling commodity prices, also severely affect households' economic conditions. 57 percent of Sierra Leoneans live below the poverty line, 10.8 percent of whom are extremely poor, 49.8 percent of households across the country are food insecure life expectancy of 42 years, and 37 percent of the population is literate and for women 25 percent.

In line with the principle of leaving no one behind, successive Governments has been implementing a combination of social protection programmes as follows:

- Developing a National Social Protection Policy.
- Implementing programmes to support the most vulnerable which includes:
  - cash transfer to very poor households with children;
  - social pension targeted at war victims and the elderly; and
  - Labour-intensive public works programme.

These programmes have to some extent possible reduced inequality and social exclusion and cushioning shocks while establishing key building blocks for resilience.

### ***g. Multiple Crises and Other Emerging Challenges***

Since the end of the civil war, Sierra Leone has faced monumental challenges in its development aspirations relating to the economy, human resource capacity, the environment, health care, and social and cultural development.

These challenges include deforestation due to loss of flora species from logging and farming, land degradation due to bad land management and use, and unregulated use of chemicals by industries and large-scale mining operations and agricultural entities.

Climate change has further added to the scale and complexity of the risks faced by Sierra Leoneans. The 2013 Verisk Maplecroft Index ranked Sierra Leone the number three country in the world with the least capacity to respond or adapt to environmental change. Accordingly, this has adversely affected the environment, agriculture, food security, and even the livelihoods of communities. Storms have affected the lives and livelihoods of fishing communities, and flooding has negatively impacted agriculture and human habitat. There are occasional outbreaks of water-borne diseases (i.e. typhoid, dysentery, cholera, diarrhea, etc.) resulting from shortage of safe drinking water.



Progress made in rebuilding resilience after the end of the civil war in 2002 was undermined by disease outbreak and natural disasters. The Ebola outbreak (2014/2015) had telling effects on Sierra Leone's macroeconomic, social, and disaster-responses systems. The weaknesses in the country's health-care system, in addition to the poor infrastructure and road system, exacerbated the epidemic. The outbreak made an already weak system more vulnerable. The August 2017 landslides in Freetown on Mount Sugar Loaf resulted in the deaths of more than 1,000 citizens and destroyed hundreds of properties, amounting to millions of Leones.

Some initiatives have provided opportunities for lessons from these disasters – an Ebola recovery strategy, a rapid damage and loss assessment, and land policy reforms – to prepare the country for resilience and to improve the vulnerability ranking. Demographic changes and anthropogenic activities have exacerbated vulnerability in the country. These have been compounded by policy shortcomings and human activities that accelerate land degradation. The climate-sensitive agriculture sector, which provides livelihoods for the rural population and contributes significantly to the country's GDP, is still grappling with the serious challenge of increasing productivity and enabling land acquisitions for industrial agriculture projects (2019, MTNDP).

Measures to address these environmental concerns include:

- Establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency, by an Act of Parliament, charged with the responsibility of enforcing environmental compliance.
- Establishment of the National Protected Area Authority with the mandate to supervise all protected areas, and biodiversity in and out of the protected areas.
- Building the capacity of stakeholder institutions, including the security sector, the judiciary, and civil society,
- Environmental awareness and education efforts with different stakeholders at national and local levels.

#### **h. Mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity-building**

##### Domestic Resource Mobilization

Even though domestic revenue collection has improved in recent years, the domestic revenue to GDP ratio remains low. This is a contributory factor in budget deficits being financed partly by borrowing from the domestic banking sector, thereby crowding out private sector investment activities.

Domestic revenue averaged around 12.5 percent in the last decade, well below the African average of 18 percent. Yet public expenditure has been increasing, driving up the fiscal deficit from 1.9 percent of GDP in 2013 to an average of 11.4 percent in 2016 and 2017 (including grants). Additionally, the external debt stock increased from US\$1.04 billion in 2013 to \$1.51 billion in 2017 and further to \$1.53 billion in June 2018.

Lack of economic and policy buffers leaves Sierra Leone vulnerable to changes in external conditions. Mining production and exports are susceptible to weaknesses in global prices, with negative consequences for growth, revenues, and foreign exchange earnings, particularly while mining is skewed toward lower grade iron ore. Less-than-expected donor financing in recent years have complicated fiscal management and limit the ability to reorient spending toward social priorities and infrastructure.

Policies for Increasing Domestic Revenue Mobilization include:

- Implementing reforms such as the Extractive Industry Revenue Bill, aimed at improving the fiscal regime for mining companies, allowing for better government oversight and increased revenue.
- Reforming the operations of the National Revenue Authority (NRA) including tax policy reforms, core revenue mobilization reforms and revenue enhancement measures to impact the overall turnover in revenue collection.
- Revenue mobilisation reforms for enhanced Revenue Systems Infrastructure has are also being implemented including the migration from ASYCUDA++ to ASUCUDAWORLD.
- The setting up of an Extractive Industry Revenue Unit at the NRA to provide the legal base and promote efforts to consolidate the tax system in Sierra Leone
- Implementation of the Integrated Tax Administration System
- Establishment of NRA units in all revenue generating entities in the country to maximize the efficiency of revenue collection in those entities.

Key challenges in domestic revenue mobilisation in Sierra Leone include the decline in commodity prices particularly in the Iron Ore sector and high rates of tax evasion and avoidance. There is need to address the dependence on an undiversified mining sector with structural constraints that impedes potential export revenues.

Official Development Assistance

Sierra Leone is still a highly aid-dependent country. As of at 31 December 2018, external debts stood at US\$1.5 billion. Domestic debt stands at Le 4.9 trillion (US\$636.4 million) (2019, MTNDP). On average, a total of Le 110 billion is used to service debts monthly and debt service payment plus salaries constitute about 85% of domestic revenue collected. As a country still recovering from over a decade of civil war in which government capacity is low, progress on aid effectiveness is critical.

The country benefits from the support of various international agencies, including UN Agencies, the World Bank, the European Union, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the African Development Bank and the US Agency for International Development and other bilateral partners.

External Debt

The debt service payment remains a major challenge to the development of the country. The fiscal position of the government and the underperformance of domestic revenue mobilization *have led to a sharp rise in the stock of public in recent years*. In 2018, the GoSL reports that it has cancelled three loan agreements totaling over US\$1.5 billion on the basis that they constitute a significant risk for debt sustainability. The GoSL plans to continue to

- Implementing a debt management strategy that focuses on reducing roll-over risk and borrowing costs
- linking the borrowing ceiling to its medium-term debt management strategy;
- limiting the external financing of social services to grants

- Reforming the institutional and legal framework for access to external and domestic debt for the central and local governments and other public bodies.
- Undertaking periodic debt sustainability analysis
- Cancelling loans that constitute significant risks for debt sustainability.
- Adopting a budget financing strategy that prioritizes highly concessional loans and more reliance on grants, where possible based on consultations with donors.

The Government of Sierra Leone is firmly committed to reducing and better managing debt, and has preparing a Medium-Term Debt Management Strategy that focuses on reducing roll-over risk and borrowing costs. Inability to clear and prevent new arrears however poses a sizeable risk to securing debt sustainability.

### ***i. Good Governance at all Levels***

Sierra Leone continues to enjoy peace and have had five successive democratic elections and three peaceful transfers of power to democratically-elected presidents. The country remains committed to good governance at all levels; and with the support of development partners is working to strengthen accountability, good governance, and responsive public institutions.

The government's commitment to good governance is also demonstrated in the reforms it has been implementing since the end of war in 2002. These include:

- Operating a decentralized system of governance that empowers sub national institutions to manage their development.
- The implementation of the PFM strategy that addresses prudent, efficient, effective, and transparent management and use of public financial resources.
- Reforms focusing on improving revenue generation; effectively addressing fiscal risk; improving public debt management; advancing integrated financial management information systems; strengthening procurement and public asset and payroll management; and improving ICT and e-governance.
- The fight against corruption
- Building the capacity of state institution to effectively deliver services to the population.

### Measures against Corruption and Increasing Transparency

Several measures have been adopted to fight corruption in Sierra Leone. An independent Anti-corruption Commission was established with strong Anti- corruption Act of 2000. The act was reviewed in 2008 which further enhanced the powers of the commission, including the power to prosecute and establishes an Anticorruption court to fast track the trail of corruption offences. The Anti-corruption Act 2008 was further reviewed in 2019 to make provision for plea bargaining. Other measures to support the fight against corruption include:

- The implementation of National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) which serves as a blueprint for Government, the private and business sectors and civil society organizations, to help coordinate and support their efforts to curb corruption.
- An independent Audit service agency – The Audit Service Sierra Leone audits government agencies on an annual basis and make recommendations to government.

- Setting up Commission of Enquiry into the conduct of public official as means of deterrent.
- Implementing the Pay No Bribe (PNB) campaign
- Retrieving monies acquired through corrupt means by public officials.

Challenges in the fight against corruption include limited implementation or non-implementation of the recommendations of Audit Service Sierra Leone; lack of a commensurate reward system in public and private sectors; weak staff capacity; scarcity of strong evidence and credible witnesses to gain convictions; absence of a whistle blower policy; and weak collaboration among partners (2019, MTNDP).

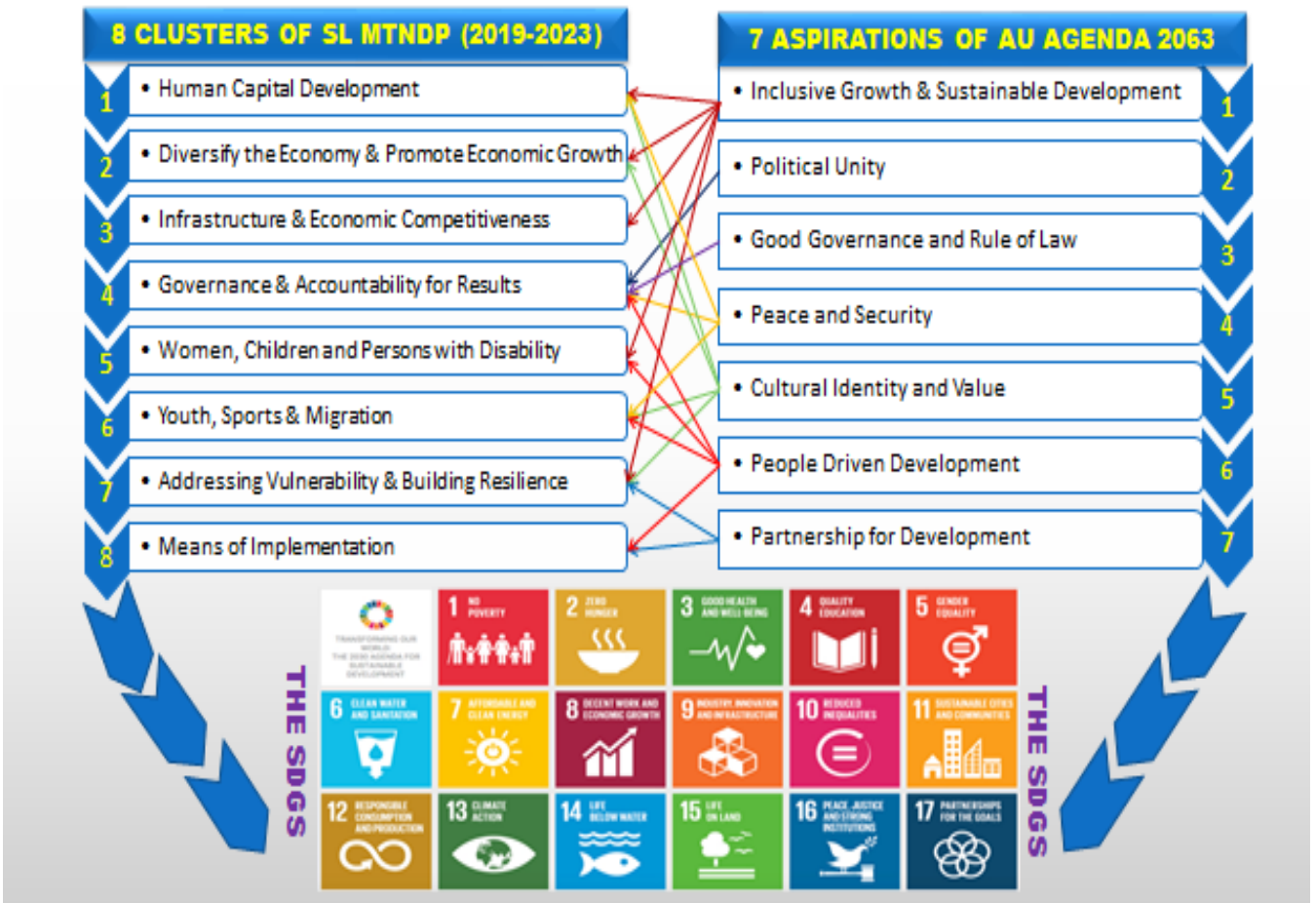
***j. Progress Towards Graduation***

Sierra Leone’s progress towards graduation has been challenged by both external and internal shocks ranging from the debilitating Ebola Virus Disease outbreak to the drastic fall in the country’s main export commodity, Iron Ore. The prolonged socioeconomic effects of the Ebola disease and iron ore have hampered the chances for Sierra Leone graduation. Sierra Leone therefore needs enormous investment in building resilient development systems. Against this backdrop, Sierra Leone is not on track in meeting the graduation criteria set out the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs.

**V. COHERENCE AND LINKAGES WITH THE 2030 AGENDA AND OTHER GLOBAL PROCESSES**

Sierra Leone’s Medium Term National Development Plan is consistent with the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063; and the New Deal Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs). Growth and development initiatives of Mano River Union (MRU) and the Economic Community of West African States, sub regional and regional respectively have also been also been duly noted in the National Plan. The figure below shows the linkages between the National Plan and global development processes.

**Figure 1: Linkages between the Sierra National Development Plan, Agenda 2030 and the AU 2063 Agenda**



## VI. TOWARDS THE NEXT LDC AGENDA

### *Recommendation and Priority Actions*

In the Sierra Leone context, and against the backdrop of preceding sections of this report, the following recommendations are proffered for the eradication of poverty and achieving sustainable development in LDCs for the next ten years.

- Supporting LDCs like Sierra Leone achieve the SDGs- Sierra Leone was one of the first set of countries to present a VNR at the first High Level Political Forum in 2016. In 2019, Sierra Leone presented a second VNR and show-cased it strides in meeting the Education and Justice SDGs. The Government of Sierra Leone's Free Quality Education Programme and providing access to justice for the marginalized in society requires huge resources for their sustainability; and to accelerate the achievement of all the other SDGs.

- b. Promote private investment in key sectors of the economy such as Agriculture; Manufacturing; Tourism, Technology and Innovation and Fisheries.
- c. There is a need to address the skills gap to enable a move from trade in primary mineral commodities like iron ore and rutile to export of value added goods and high value crops to tap into premium prices.
- d. Need to prioritize and implement strategies to strengthen good governance and build effective institutions at all level
- e. Focus on economic diversification and substantial and continuous support to private sector development.

## VII. STATISTICAL ANNEX

### Selected Indicators

Main Indicators	2011	2013	2015	2017	2018
GDP Growth rate (%)	6.32	20.72	-20.60%	4.21	3.73
Public debt (%)				40	
Current account deficit (%)				14	
GDP per capita (%)	\$448	\$717		\$499	\$523
Total Revenue to GDP (%)					
Tax revenue to GDP (%)					
Life Expectancy at birth				52.2	
% Population below Poverty Line					
GNI Per Capita	\$430	\$660	\$550	\$520	\$500
Fiscal deficit as % of GDP				5.7	3.4%
Inflation Rate (%)	6.79	5.52		18.22	16.86
Manufacturing Output % of GDP	2.25%	1.64%		1.96%	
Trade Balance % of GDP	-48.18%	-30.20%		-21.98%	
Exports % of GDP	16.27%	28.63%		26.05%	
Trade (% of GDP)	80.72%	87.45%		74.09%	
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.74%	4.55%		4.33%	4.31%
Foreign Direct Investment % of GDP	32.30%	8.73%		20.10%	
Maternal Mortality Rate Per 100K Live Births	1,580.00		1,360.00		

Data Source: World Bank |Marco Trends and UNDP HDRs

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Manufacturing Output % of GDP	2.25%	1.64%	1.96%	
Trade Balance % of GDP	-48.18%	-30.20%	-21.98%	
Exports % of GDP	16.27%	28.63%	26.05%	
Trade (% of GDP)	80.72%	87.45%	74.09%	
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.74%	4.55%	4.33%	4.31%
Foreign Direct Investment % of GDP	32.30%	8.73%	20.10%	
Maternal Mortality Rate Per 100K Live Births	1,580.00			

Source: Sierra Leone's Medium Term national Development Plan (2019-2023)

## School enrolment from 2003 to 2017

<b>Pre-primary</b>								
	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Male</b>	9,906	10,794	18,247	23,639	25,748	28,480	38,162	38,103
<b>Female</b>	9,162	9,838	19,104	25,367	28,292	31,585	42,761	42,016
<b>Both Sexes</b>	19,068	20,632	37,351	49,006	54,040	60,065	80,923	80,119
<b>Primary</b>								
<b>Male</b>	618,982	698,387	611,604	628,329	648,303	665,103	702,178	736,275
<b>Female</b>	515,833	582,466	582,899	624,025	650,605	673,107	710,346	750,664
<b>Both Sexes</b>	1,134,815	1,280,853	1,194,503	1,252,354	1,298,908	1,338,210	1,412,524	1,486,939
<b>Junior Secondary</b>								
<b>Male</b>	80,963	93,822	134,096	144,174	143,132	146,661	161,964	156,394
<b>Female</b>	52,438	61,230	110,393	131,741	133,461	139,796	154,438	156,525
<b>Both Sexes</b>	133,401	155,052	244,489	275,915	276,593	286,457	316,402	312,919
<b>Senior Secondary</b>								
<b>Male</b>	26,292	28,541	67,283	71,236	78,812	86,769	91,675	94,187
<b>Female</b>	12,032	16,383	40,960	53,649	60,835	69,751	79,749	85,034
<b>Both Sexes</b>	38,324	44,924	108,243	124,885	139,647	156,520	171,424	179,221

Source: Sierra Leone's Medium Term national Development Plan (2019-2023)

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>DHS 2008</b>	<b>DHS 2013</b>	<b>MICS 2017</b>
<b>IMPACT INDICATORS</b>			
Neonatal mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	36/1,000	39/1,000	20/1,000
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	89 /1,000	92/1,000	56/1,000
Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	140 /1,000	156 / 1,000	94/1,000
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	857 /100.000	1,165 /100,000	-
Prevalence of HIV (percent of pop. aged 15–49)	1.5 percent	1.5 percent	-
Adolescent birth rate		125/1,000	101/1000
Total fertility rate	5.1	4.9	4.1
<b>OUTCOME / OUTPUT INDICATORS: Reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health</b>			
Percent births attended by skilled staff (public and private)	42 percent	54 percent <sup>1</sup> maternal and child health aide 14 percent, nurse 44 percent	81,6
Percent pregnant women making 4 antenatal visits	> 50	76	77.5
Contraceptive prevalence rate (percent of women 15–49)	14 percent	16 percent	22.5
Unmet need among married women for family planning	28 percent	25 percent	26.3 percent
Percent children < 1 year fully vaccinated	40	58	62.7
<b>OUTCOME / OUTPUT INDICATORS: Nutrition</b>			
Prevalence of underweight (wt/age) among children 6–59 months (2SD)	21 percent	16 percent	11.7 percent
Prevalence of stunting (ht/age) among children 6–59 months (2SD)	36 percent	38 percent	26.4 percent



<b>Prevalence of Wasting (ht/wt) among children 6–59 months (2SD)</b>	10 percent	9 percent	5.1 percent
<b>OUTCOME / OUTPUT INDICATORS: Communicable diseases</b>			
<b>No. health facilities with voluntary counselling and testing / prevention of mother-to-child transmission / antiretroviral drugs</b>	398/351/111	708/691/136	
<b>Percent children sleeping under long-lasting insecticide-treated net the night before</b>	26 percent	49 percent	

*Source: Sierra Leone's Medium Term national Development Plan (2019-2023)*