

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Agenda for Change charted a clear roadmap for national action and international support as it is a robust national framework for growth, economic development and peace consolidation. This was underscored at the Peacebuilding Commission's High-level Special Session on Sierra Leone that took place on 10 June 2009. In this regard, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) called upon its member States and all development partners to accept the Agenda for Change as the core strategy document for Sierra Leone.

This report reviews the progress that the Government and its development partners have made against the priorities as set out in the Agenda for Change from January 2009 through to June 2010.

### **THE PRECONDITIONS**

#### *Peace, Security and Governance:*

To ensure that the Sierra Leone Police can adequately respond to any internal security threats support has been provided for required equipment and training through a number of initiatives. Coordination between the Police and the Military has also improved as shown when the Military Aid to Civil Power Policy (MACPP) was successfully evoked in order to respond to an upsurge in armed robberies. Through the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) the Sierra Leone Army continues to develop as a neutral, accountable and responsible element of the national security architecture.

During the reporting period, there was only one serious breakdown of security. This was in March 2009, when political tension between the ruling APC party and the opposition SLPP party turned violent. The President quickly facilitated dialogue between the leadership of both parties. Consequently, in close collaboration with the members of the diplomatic corps, the UN mediated a path away from the violence. The agreements were documented through a Joint Communiqué which also ensured follow-up actions throughout 2009 to ensure such a breakdown did not reoccur.

In the area of Good Governance, several initiatives are on-going that indicates that the country is improving in terms of transparency and accountability. A significant milestone was the creation of the second independent public service broadcaster in Africa - the independent Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC). The SLBC is a merger of the former UN radio and the government owned Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS). This independent broadcasting station was launched during the visit of the United Nations Secretary-General to Sierra Leone in June 2010.

*Public Sector Management Reform:* The ability of the public sector to manage and deliver quality services still remains a challenge for the implementation of the Agenda for Change. While significant progress was made in the reporting period, for example in public financial management and alignment issues, the low salary of civil servants is still a big challenge. The Government has therefore started to implement a Public Sector Reform Programme which is

aimed at addressing the management structure of Ministries and the issue of a comprehensive pay reform programme.

*Decentralisation:* progress has been made in the decentralisation programme with over 50 percent of the functions slated for devolution fully devolved. To ensure that the devolution process is completed by 2011, Action Plans for outstanding functions to be devolved have been prepared and are being rigorously monitored by the Task Force on devolution.

*Human Rights:* The minimal number of complaints and reports on human rights abuses suggests that this is not a national problem in Sierra Leone. However, there are lingering issues of rights for disabled persons, overcrowding and poor conditions in prisons, child labour, and harmful traditional practices.

*Macroeconomic Stability:* Prior to the global financial crisis, economic growth averaged around 7%. However, with the global financial crisis Sierra Leone experienced a drop in growth rate to 4% in 2009. Due to the stimulus package that was implemented by the Government, the country did not 'catch pneumonia due to the sneezing of the global economy'. Although the national currency depreciated during the reporting period, the exchange rate has now steadied and GDP growth is expected to increase to 5% by the end of 2010, and could reach 6% by 2012.

*Growing the Private Sector:* A number of reforms have been implemented to improve the business climate in Sierra Leone. The Government continues to remove administrative barriers to trade and investment. This has led to improvements in Sierra Leone's position in the World Bank's Doing Business rankings. Based on the last report, Sierra Leone is the easiest country to start a business within the Mano River region.

*The Mining Sector:* The Mining Sector remains the second highest contributor to GDP accounting for 30 percent of total GDP. However, given the new discoveries of iron ore, Sierra Leone is slowly transforming into a mining economy. The Government is therefore focussing on maximising the benefits from this sector and will be seeking technical assistance to enhance negotiation, implementation and monitoring of mining agreements. To this end, the Government will continue to show commitment to the EITI process.

*The Environment:* Since January 2009, some progress has been made in promoting environmental issues. The Government has been strengthening the capacity of the Sierra Leone Environmental Protection Agency (SLEPA) by employing key staff to run the institution.

## **THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

**Energy:** The provision of reliable power supply is a strategic priority of the 'Agenda for Change'. To this end, the Government has completed and commissioned the Bumbuna Hydroelectric Dam which is providing regular supply of electricity to Freetown and its environs. Plans are underway to extend the Bumbuna Hydroelectric Project to towns along the transmission line such as Lunsar, Makeni, Magburaka and Bumbuna Town.

In addition, the Government is implementing a comprehensive Rural Solar Electrification programme which will provide basic clean electricity to remote villages nationwide. The pilot stage of electrifying seven villages has been completed and a training centre is being constructed to start the nationwide solar electrification drive in the fourth quarter of 2010.

Government is fully aware that the current output of Bumbuna will not be sufficient for future electricity demand. Therefore the Government has started negotiations for the second phase of Bumbuna which will double the current output.

However, sustaining the electricity generation is still a challenge due to old and worn out transmission and distribution system which is causing significant line and technical losses.

**Transportation:** The Government has embarked on a large scale national roads rehabilitation and reconstruction programme including extensive feeder road works and the reconstruction of all weather trunk roads. In addition to the implementation of donor and Government funded projects, there have also been intense road maintenance activities on trunk and feeder roads nationwide. Despite the Government's efforts to expand the road networks there has been inadequate funding for the implementation of projects. To improve on air transportation, the runway of the Lungi International Airport is being resurfaced and new navigation equipment is being installed. The challenge is to ensure that Sierra Leone Civil Aviation Authority is autonomous and independent in carrying out its oversight function.

**Agriculture:** Agriculture remains the backbone of Sierra Leone's economy contributing nearly fifty percent to GDP and engaging two-thirds of the population. Government has embarked on implementing a National Agricultural Response Programme (NARP), which focuses on providing support to farmer-based organisations, developing agricultural markets and enhancing the capacity of other institutions to support agricultural development.

The Smallholder Commercialisation Scheme introduced 2009 has created cooperative clusters using a value chain approach. Consequently almost 400 farmer cooperatives are now engage in the scheme.

*Fisheries:* In the area of fisheries, progress has been made with regards to establishing effective fisheries surveillance mechanism to prevent illegal fishing. Surveillance interventions have started yielding results as demonstrated by the arrests of two illegal fishing boats and fines amounting to over US\$ 500,000 levied. Additionally, the Government has introduced community surveillance and facilitated the functioning of the Joint Maritime Committee (JMC). The fisheries sector has also become a significant revenue generating sector. The challenge here is to ensure that standards are improved to ensure fish and fisheries products can be exported to EU and other markets.

**Human Development:** To improve access to education and health, the Government has abolished user fees in these sectors.

*Education:* The primary objective of the Government is to increase access in order to achieve Universal Primary Education. In this regard, access to education continues to increase both in primary and secondary schools. However, as access improves there are concerns that the quality of education is not improving and might even be deteriorating. This is primarily because the teacher-pupil ratio at present is at 1:50. Junior secondary school enrolment lags behind primary school enrolment implying there is a need to step up efforts to ensure a smoother transition of pupils from primary to junior secondary school. In some areas, this is due to the lack of adequate infrastructure to support junior secondary schools. Pupils, especially the girls, often drop out of school during this transition period.

Government therefore has stepped up its Gender Parity Programme through its Girl-Child Support Programme in junior secondary schools. This programme is not only improving access but also enhancing retention rate of girls in Junior Secondary Schools.

*Health:* Improving access to health care is a key priority for the Government. Given that Sierra Leone has one of the highest infant, and maternal mortality rates in the world, the Government launched in April 2010, the Free Health Care Initiative for children under the age of five years, pregnant women and lactating mothers. The initiative involves the provision of cost free medical care and drugs to these vulnerable groups. It also provides significant improvements in the compensation to professional health workers towards the elimination of user fees in all government hospitals and health centres.

While problems in implementing the Free Health Care Initiative have been encountered, the initiative is a huge step forward for a country at the bottom of the Human Development Index. In addition to the budgetary implications (the additional cost of the initiative is currently estimated at 1.2 percent of GDP) the challenges to the Free Health Care Initiative are widely recognised, such as providing drugs and equipment and storage facilities, improving standards of training for health professionals and strengthening management, planning and monitoring systems. There is also the issues of influx of people in neighbouring countries, crossing the border to access the programme.

*Water:* Sierra Leone is endowed with huge natural water resources potential; however, harnessing water resources has remained a challenge. This compounded by the old distribution network which suffers from severe wastages.

To improve access in the Western Area, the Government has constructed Public Water Standposts; procured Water Bowsers and rehabilitated and expanded the capacity of existing reservoirs. To improve access in the rural areas the plan is to rehabilitate 42 water supply facilities. Although funding is still a challenge some funds have accessed for some of the provincial headquarter towns.

*Gender:* To eliminate gender disparity at all levels, the Government has reviewed existing laws, rituals and practises that contributes to the subordination of women at all levels. To this end, the three Gender Acts have been passed by parliament. In addition, a National Gender Strategic Plan is being developed and will be finalised for implementation shortly. The Government is also committed to the domestication of the CEDAW and as such has submitted the sixth and final draft of Sierra Leone's response to CEDAW to the Department for the Advancement of Women and the Treaty Office in Geneva. Also a National Committee on Gender-Based Violence has been established,

**Responses to Major Risks:** Three major risks were identified in the Agenda for Change, those being Corruption, Illicit drugs and Youth Unemployment.

*Corruption:* The Government remains firmly committed to the fight against corruption and continue its strong support to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). 2009 was the second year of the implementation of the three year strategy of the ACC. Much has been achieved in this period during which Sierra Leone moved from 1.9 in 2008 to 2.2 in 2009 in the Transparency International Index. The Global Corruption Barometer conducted by Transparency International found that 64% of Sierra Leoneans believed that the Government's efforts to fight corruption were effective, and the Global Integrity Indicator Scorecard gave the ACC and the 2008 Anti-Corruption Act (ACA) 80%, showing progress while underlining that challenges remain.

The main challenge is the permissive attitude towards corruption throughout government agencies, private sector and the general population. This challenge has been met by sustained efforts by the ACC, which has strengthened its capacity to investigate, try and convict cases of corruption. The ACC has also put great effort into decentralising its services and engaging in various outreach programmes to educate and advance anti-corruption attitudes throughout the entire population.

To ensure that corruption is recognized when it occurs and to mobilize general opposition against it, the Public Education and External Outreach Department kept the public informed on specific cases, new developments and trends, and the efforts to combat corruption in the country. Programmes were strategically designed to target different audiences within public, private and non-governmental organisations.

In 2009, a number of ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) had their systems reviewed to identify weaknesses and loopholes that could lead to corruption, to further the reformation of the practices and procedures in these MDAs for improved productivity and service delivery. However, support from the public and private sector remains varied and only some institutions have embraced the fight against corruption. Likewise better coordination amongst the public sector as well as the donors remains a problem in pushing for greater transparency and accountability.

*Illicit Drugs:* Taking advantage of its porous borders and weak state and security institutions, Sierra Leone is increasingly being used by drug traffickers as a transit point for drugs bound for Europe from Latin America, posing a great danger to the security and stability of the country. It is estimated that 50 tons of cocaine transit West Africa annually and several seizures suggest that

heroin is trafficked through the region. As a post-conflict country, the fight against transnational organised criminal activities is a herculean challenge for the security sector. Drug traffickers and money launderers target Lungi airport almost on a weekly basis and drug trafficking is viewed as an easy and profitable route to income by large parts of the population.

Through the Transnational Organised Crime Unit (TOCU) national and international cooperation has been centralised in one interagency unit. The TOCU comprises a wide area of expertise from different units trained and equipped to fight transnational organized crime and to coordinate their activities in an international framework. The TOCU has the following responsibilities: Collect, collate and analyse information and disseminate criminal intelligence in relation to transnational crime and drug trafficking, proactively develop targets for investigation of complex transnational organized crime cases, act as the primary contact point in the country for transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and cross-border matters and coordinate cross-border investigations through INTERPOL and liaison officers.

*Youth Unemployment:* About 50% of Sierra Leone's youths are unemployed, depriving the country of its most valuable human resource. If left unchecked, this level of unemployment could result in social unrest and threaten the country's path to peace and stability. In December 2009, the National Youth Commission (NYC) was approved by Parliament. The search for a suitably qualified Commissioner and Board Members has been on-going since then. It is expected that the NYC will be operational by September 2010. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (YES) Secretariat will form the initial technical core of the NYC and it is expected that the staff and skills will be expanded so that the NYC is able to fully undertake its role.

In 2009, over 30,000 people have been provided with short-term paid work through Cash-for-Work (CFW) and Food-for-Work (FFW) projects to improve agriculture assets such as irrigation systems in inland valley swamps, smallholder tree crop plantations and feeder roads. In 2009 the Government (with support from PBF funding) has supported 17 projects on a range of interventions from skills training, enterprise development and agriculture production. In total, 11,000 youth were supported

**Key Recommendations:** The following recommendations are intended to provide a list of actions whilst moving forward towards the next Joint Progress Report. More specific recommendations are available in the chapters that further explore the priority areas of the *Agenda for Change*.

- 1. Build on the Peace Dividend:** Ensure continued support to the Political Parties Registration Commission as well as the National Electoral Commission and continue to promote a strong dialogue among the political parties in the spirit of the Joint Communiqué. Continue to advance political reconciliation and strengthen national cohesion. Ensure that the operations of the Security Sector are not be hampered by party political agendas and that all institutions acknowledge the coordinating role of the Office of National Security in security and operational matters.
- 2. Ensure Macroeconomic Stability and Manage Risks from External Shocks:** Maintain macroeconomic stability by managing inflation, fiscal stability, widening of tax

base and improving revenue administration, prudent debt management and continue to closely monitor the impacts of any external shocks.

3. **Close the Infrastructure Gap and Boost Productive Sectors:** Address remaining regulatory and institutional reform issues in the energy, ports and transport sectors. There is a need to develop capacity in government to prepare credible investment proposals for external financing. Develop the growth engines by implementing the Smallholder Commercialisation Programme and in concert address land tenure issues. In fisheries strengthen surveillance against illegal fishing and enhance the employment and income-generation potential for the artisanal fisheries sector.
4. **Deliver on Public Sector Reforms:** Provide momentum to public sector / civil service reforms, including by concluding an affordable pay reforms package. Renew the focus on building up the capacity of the middle-level civil service and clarify institutional arrangements within government to implement these reforms. The Action Plans from the functional reviews would need to be implemented.
5. **Manage Extractive Industries for National Development:** Sierra Leone is poised for new opportunities in the mining and oil & gas sectors – these however also come with risks. The Government should continue to commit itself to transparency in the sector by taking forward the EITI process, ensuring that these resources are managed for the full benefit of the people and their local environments, and raising necessary revenues for the country. There is also a need to further strengthen the regulatory environment and institutional capacity to negotiate agreements and ensure their effective implementation.
6. **Free Health Care Initiative:** The Free Health care Initiative must stay on track. It is important to sustain the initiative and expand the abolition of user fees in health.
7. **Continue to Fight Corruption:** Continue combating corruption and ensure the Anti Corruption Commission has necessary capacity and powers to enforce compliance. Continue combating corruption by maintaining a zero-tolerance approach and pursuing wider attitudinal change.
8. **Continue to Respond to Youth Unemployment:** Implement the new Youth Employment Strategy by strengthening efforts to match skills training with market demand and operationalizing the National Youth Commission as soon as possible.
9. **Continue to Fight Transnational Crime:** Promote the building of capacity of the Transnational Organised Crime Unit to monitor and interdict the trafficking of illegal goods, including narcotics and small arms and light weapons. Also improve surveillance of territorial waters and coastline.
10. **Grow the Partnerships:** Continue to align international assistance behind the *Agenda for Change*, respond to emerging funding needs and help channel new money through Direct Budget Support, the United Nations Multi-Donor Trust Fund and sector pooled funds as key mechanisms for financing further peace consolidation and economic development.
11. **Report on Progress:** In order to make future reporting even more effective there is a need to develop a Results Framework for the *Agenda for Change* – this should set out priority policy and institutional actions and output and outcome indicators. Also, Sierra Leone must remain up to date in meeting its reporting obligations on Human Rights treaties.