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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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As a programme of the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was launched in 2001, with the objective of eliminating poverty; improving the socio-economic status of African countries, facilitating the participation of women in all sectors, and empowering African countries to fully participate in the global economy and create the conditions that would ensure peace and stability.

In order to support the effort towards the formulation and implementation of effective assistance programmes foreseen under the objectives of the NEPAD Sub-Cluster on "Humanitarian Response and Post-Conflict Recovery", JICA and UNHCR launched a preliminary study on the development and causes of conflict in Sierra Leone, progress to-date in the recovery and reconstruction of the country and identify further measures that need to be taken to sustain the peace and accelerate development. The study encompasses political governance and transition, security, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and socio-economic development, human rights, justice and reconciliation, and gender. The report also attempts to make a preliminary set of recommendations to address major gaps and needs based on studies conducted by an independent consulting firm.

### Causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone

The civil conflict that officially ended in 2002 had its roots in:

- poor governance and an unaccountable military/security system;
- manipulation of ethnicity for political ends;
- alienated youth; and
- abundance of poorly managed natural resources;

The involvement of external actors, such as former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, who supported the RUF, implicated in the illegal exploitation and sale of diamonds and timber and, the proliferation of small arms in the region have also played a major role in exacerbating the conflict and complicating the process of its resolution.

**Poor governance and unaccountable military/security system:** Since its independence the governance of public affairs in Sierra Leone has been fraught with lack of transparency and accountability, slowly eroding public trust in the management of the Country's affairs. Politicians have for decades wasted the country's resources, which include fertile land and rich mineral deposits. A group of politicians, businessmen, soldiers and civil servants had formed networks of patronage or businesses that undermined state institutions. Moreover, as militarization increased in 1991-92 with the emergence of the RUF, recruitment into the rebellion was a relatively easy attraction for many unskilled and unemployed youth. The dangerous mix of poor leadership, lack of training and equipment on the one hand and, disillusionment and low morale among frontline soldiers on the other, soon exploded into a catastrophic violence against civilians. The horrendous atrocities committed against innocent civilians in the ensuing period are widely documented. Difficulty in identifying the attackers fostered a belief that both sides – army and rebels - were equally to blame for the violence.

**Ethnicity:** Although ethnic considerations were given weight in the set up of the system of political representation and composition of the security forces since independence, it did not effectively address issues of equity. The RUF attempted to rally support much less on grounds of ethnic favouritism but in protest against social and political exclusion.

**Alienated youth:** Decades of unaccountable governments created a large number of marginalized and disenfranchised youth who were easily attracted to recruitment by the RUF or by government security forces. These alienated youth were ill-equipped, poorly trained and sometimes without remuneration – providing more fuel to the conflict – in addition to the political agenda of their leaders.

**Availability of poorly managed natural resources:** The conflict in Sierra Leone was sustained through the illegal exploitation and sale of natural resources – especially diamonds which could be easily extracted from uncontrolled mines.

## **Peace processes**

**Early attempts at negotiation (1992-96):** Attempts at negotiations were made between the RUF and the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) – a military regime that came to power in 1992. The most notable effort took place in January 1996 when the RUF dropped its demands, agreed to a ceasefire, and began unconditional negotiations for the first time, following a campaign that destroyed a key RUF base in the Kangari Hills. This was followed by a period of relative stability that allowed the elections which took place in February 1996 to proceed.

**The Abidjan Accord (1996):** In November 1996, Sankoh, head of the RUF, agreed to sign the Abidjan peace accord after the government destroyed RUF headquarters in the southeast of Kenema. Sankoh insisted that the Abidjan agreement include departure of Executive Outcomes, a private foreign military company. President Kabbah agreed to the demand, believing in the sincerity of the RUF. However, three months later, without any external force to defend his government, President Kabbah was deposed in another military coup led by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

**The Conakry Accord (1997):** Lacking recognition by foreign countries and by the Sierra Leonean people, the AFRC agreed to sign the Conakry Accord in October 1997 by a delegation sent by the AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma, with the apparent intention of restoring elected President Kabbah. However, it turned out to be a ploy to buy time.

**The Lomé Peace Agreement (1999):** Under the Lomé agreement, the RUF was brought into the government, gaining four cabinet positions, heading a number of public sector directorships and filling some ambassadorial posts. Most controversially, there was a blanket amnesty for all crimes committed during the war, however terrible they were. Sankoh was rewarded with the status of vice president and chairmanship of the Strategic Mineral Resources Commission, effectively giving him access to the country's diamond resources. Given the extent of concessions to the RUF, President Kabbah was reluctant to sign the agreement. He bowed, however, under international (particularly US) pressure.

**The Abuja agreements (2000 and 2001):** Following the events of May 2000, when the RUF took 500 members of UNAMSIL hostage, a new cease-fire was necessary to re-establish the peace process. This agreement was signed in Abuja in November 2000. However, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) did not resume following the new cease-fire agreement and fighting continued. A second Abuja Agreement had to take place in May 2001. This latter agreement initiated a new phase for the resumption of DDR on a wider scale and in an effort to significantly reduce violence and chaos in the country.

## **Impact of the conflict**

The impact of the decade-long conflict was devastating. According to the Government of Sierra Leone, an estimated 20,000 people were killed and thousands more injured or maimed. The UN estimated the number of deaths at 50,000. Over 2 million people were displaced out of which an estimated 500,000 fled to neighbouring countries. Most of the country's social, economic and physical infrastructure was destroyed. The social and productive infrastructure of local communities, such as markets, stores, rice mills and community service buildings were completely damaged. At the height of the civil conflict, there was almost a complete breakdown of civil and political authority in the country, giving rise to tremendous human rights abuses. Mining and agricultural activities were essentially brought to a halt excepting the illegal exploitation of resources by armed groups. Farms were ravaged or abandoned, while the livestock population was almost entirely wiped out.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was prominent during the 10-year-long civil strife in Sierra Leone with women and girls bearing the brunt of violence. As many as 257,000 (more than a quarter of a million) women and girls from Sierra Leone are estimated to have been raped and subjected to other forms of sexual and GBV during the civil war. Sexual violence was used to terrorize, punish and subdue the civilian population. Sixty percent of abducted children were girls.

The conflict in Sierra Leone had the most severe impact on children, as their rights were systematically violated by all of the armed factions. Children suffered abduction, forced recruitment, sexual slavery and rape, amputation, mutilation (including female genital mutilation (FGM)), displacement and torture. They were also forced to become perpetrators of heinous crimes and carry out other aberrations violating the rights of innocent people. At the end of the conflict, surviving victims of the war included thousands of homeless children; children who have witnessed or been the victims of amputations, rape and thousands of former child soldiers who were abducted and forced to fight and commit atrocities. These children were deprived of their childhood, normal life, education and other rights in addition to being confronted with the most brutal expressions of human cruelty at an early age, shattering their childhood. Although the end of the conflict brought in a new day of hope, many of these children would still require substantial help in order to build a better future.

According to the UN, 1.6 million people were displaced in 1996 within the country (the majority in Freetown and major provincial towns) and 370,000 became refugees in neighbouring countries. After the 1997 coup, 530,000 refugees fled Sierra Leone; a further 237,000 left as a consequence of the renewed hostilities beginning in February 1998. Further displacements also occurred with the resumption of fighting in 2000 as a result of bombing and helicopter-gunship raids by government forces. The government estimated in 2005 that 90% of those who were refugees abroad have returned and one million IDPs have been resettled.

The massive displacement of civilians during the civil war has tremendously undermined the already inadequate social services, including the healthcare system in the country. Cities in provinces were overwhelmed with civilians fleeing the violence, resulting in overcrowding, malnutrition, outbreaks of disease and the collapse of already overburdened social services.

HIV/AIDS prevalence rate was estimated at 7% for the general adult population and up to 25% in the military. The propagation of the disease was also exacerbated by the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, the breakdown of social structures, lack of government capacity to create a national policy and mechanisms of control for the disease and, the difficulty to surmount cultural taboos as noted in the reluctance of the public to discuss the disease openly.

The adult literacy rate is one of the lowest in the world. Sierra Leone is ranked 153rd out of 177 countries surveyed for the combined enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

National institutions have been weakened due to the brain drain caused by the flight of a large number of professionals since the beginning of the war.

Although Sierra Leone is rich in mineral resources, it is one of the poorest economies in the world. Since the 1960s, the country has experienced negative growth, and suffered severe stagnation and recession from the early 1980s to the end of the 1990s. Prior to the war, the economy had already suffered from decades of unaccountability, lack of transparency and mismanagement.

## **Preliminary recommendations**

### **1. Political governance and transition**

#### **Free and fair elections**

Although the election of 14 May 2002 marked a first step towards the return of democracy in Sierra Leone, the peace and the democratic process remained fragile. As the country prepares to undertake its second elections since the end of the conflict, the following measures need to be taken in order to sustain the peace and help the country embark on reconstruction and development. Following actions are needed to be taken:

- Continue improving security at all levels;
- Foster a culture of respect for genuine dialogue on national issues, differences of political opinion and the opposition;
- Enable the judiciary to function without interferences;
- Build the capacity of institutions such as the Electoral Commission;
- Rehabilitate the country's transport and communication systems;
- Provide civic education and raise awareness among the population on human rights, the need for active participation in governance and the impact that community-based approaches could have on peacebuilding and reconstruction;
- Create an enabling environment for participation of the International Community by providing support to their efforts and monitoring the electoral process.

#### **Constitutions and institutions**

More than a decade of war left the judiciary and law enforcement institutions in a dire situation and civil liberties remain constrained in many ways. Although there are protections provided for in the law, enforcement of these rights is hindered by lack of institutional capacity. At least three-quarters of the country's population is left without effective access to judicial services in a language that they understand. The following actions may be considered to address the situation:

- Build the capacity of institutions;
- Improve the remuneration of the police force;
- Strengthen the judicial system;
- Undertake further reforms in the security system in order to enhance the effectiveness and accountability of the police, armed forces and other security organs;
- Further promote respect for human rights and humanitarian law;
- Take increased and comprehensive measures against corruption.

## **Accountability, transparency and administrative reform**

Absence of accountability lies at the heart of the collapse of state authority and legitimacy in the decades prior to the start of the war in 1991 and there are still some reports that this problem remains fairly extensive. The problem is also believed to be strongly related to an administration system that is encumbered with excessive bureaucratic regulations and registration requirements. The problem may be addressed through further efforts as follows:

- Promote transparency and accountability in government institutions;
- Enhance institutional capacity for delivering services, including through continual administrative reform;
- Strengthen the roles and responsibilities of the Anti-Corruption Commission;
- Take decisive steps (including timely prosecution) on cases of lack of accountability and corruption;
- Enhance the judiciary, including by increasing its resources, to ensure that it functions at an optimal level, that it is effective and independent of interference from other organs of government or any other influence.

## **Religious and ethnic pluralism**

Although State policy does not discriminate against ethnic, cultural and linguistic rights of minorities, there appears to be an exception in the treatment of ethnic Lebanese residents, many of whom cannot become citizens due to *jus sanguinis* -or “right of blood”. Hence the need to:

- Ensure equal treatment before the law of all residents;
- Enhance respect for the rights of all residents in the country.

## **Decentralization**

The decentralisation process is making progress with the establishment and consolidation of local councils in spite of, continued challenges including economic malaise, widespread poverty, weak accountability and mismanagement, along with high rates of unemployment and still widespread discrimination against women. Further effort to enhance the decentralization process may include:

- Build the capacity of local institutions;
- Improve the decentralization policy at the local, state and federal levels;
- Consolidate the establishment of local councils.

## **Media and civil society organizations**

Sierra Leone's constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the presence of dynamic media outlets point to the development of social norms that support free speech. However, there have been several cases of official charges being made against the press and the media, alleging libel, low professional standards and threats to public order. To enhance the progress made in this area it would be essential to:

- Strengthen the press and media with focus on broadcasting that reaches a bigger section of the population;
- Establish functioning regulatory frameworks;
- Protect basic rights such as freedom of speech;
- Promote skills development and enhance ethical and professional standards;

- Increase literacy among the population.

### **Regional and international cooperation**

As Sierra Leone's economy still heavily relies on aid and the country is surrounded by others that are affected by war, there is a need to:

- Enhance regional cooperation aimed at sustaining the peace and ensuring common security;
- Adopt economic policies that increasingly promote self-sufficiency;
- Undertake regional projects that can benefit from economy of scale and address common problems.

## **2. Security sector**

### **Law enforcement and lawlessness**

Restoration of state governance and local government after the civil war has reinforced state authority by increasing control on security, including the revenue from diamond mining which used to fuel the conflict. However, there are still capacity limitations in the armed forces and the police to deliver fully on their responsibilities for security across the board. Moreover, there are still reports of lack of transparency and accountability within the security forces. Considering the departure of UNAMSIL and continued instabilities in the sub-region, the following actions may be helpful in strengthening security:

- Enhance governance within the security system and enforce standards of professional ethics;
- Further promote and institutionalize transparency and accountability;
- Build the capacity of the police and military;
- International partners need to provide support to enable the country effectively enforce control over its borders.

### **Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR)**

The demobilization process has provided disarmed ex-combatants with basic necessities to prepare them to enter civilian life with the provision of Transitional Safety Net Allowance (TSA) that was aimed at supporting them during the first three months in their places of resettlement. However, problems of reintegration to former communities persist, due to high-level of unemployment and challenges of grassroots level reconciliation due to the high-level of trauma experienced by populations during the conflict. It would be helpful to:

- Enhance the review, evaluation and further implementation of DDRR activities;
- Ensure the sustainability of reintegration through targeted and community-based interventions;
- Undertake carefully-designed programmes that enhance reconciliation particularly at the grassroots level.

### **DDRR for children**

Sierra Leone's civil war has left the country with tens of thousands of homeless children who are separated from their families. Most of these children are psychologically and physically scarred by

the ordeal they had to go through, including abduction, forced military service and labour, sexual violence, and other forms of abuse. Limitations in the DDRR process have left the needs of most of these children unattended. It is necessary that the following additional measures are considered to address these problems:

- Provide long-term and adequate material assistance and reintegration services to traumatized children;
- Ensure that traumatized, separated and homeless children are provided with community-based counselling and psycho-social advice to accelerate their recovery and reintegration in society;
- Provide the children with various skills training, basic and civic education to build their sense of worth and citizenship.

### **Small arms control**

Small arms were the most common and favourite tools of destruction in Sierra Leone's civil war because they were easy to obtain, transport and hide due to their size. They also require minimal maintenance and logistical support and they can be smuggled effortlessly through weakly-guarded borders. The following measures may help enhance control of the proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons:

- Implement a comprehensive policy on the possession and circulation of small arms;
- Enhance the capacity of the police and armed forces;
- Strengthen the efforts of concerned international and national institutions through administrative support, enabling legislation and increased allocation of resources;
- Request further international support to increase the country's capacity to patrol its borders, train customs officials and other security agencies.

### **Landmines and UXOs**

In spite of the report from the Landmine Monitor that most of the landmines used during the civil war had been removed by ECOMOG, there are still problems of unexploded ordnance (UXOs) and booby traps in some parts of the country. The support given to survivors for treatment and rehabilitation, including emergency surgery, is also very limited. The following additional measures may be considered:

- Map out the location of remaining mines/UXOs and booby traps and ensure their removal;
- Expand public awareness campaigns;
- Expand support for the treatment and rehabilitation of mine/UXO survivors;
- Increase participation in international activities, focusing on the banning of land mines and implement existing treaties.

## **3. Humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and socio-economic development**

### **Basic social services**

Sierra Leone is among the poorest of the world's poor countries. Its social indicators reflect the country's dire situation as shown by its ranking as 176<sup>th</sup> out of 177 in the 2005 UNDP Human Development Index. The high poverty rate among youth indicates lack of economic opportunities, slow and weak rebuilding of state institutions as well as failures in tackling extreme poverty. The following broad set of actions may be considered to improve the situation:

- Focus on creating employment across the country;
- Improve access to education, training and skills development;
- Accelerate the rebuilding of state institutions;
- Decentralize and devolve power and the management of socio-economic activities to foster accountability of state institutions.

## **Education**

The progress made in extending primary education in both government-assisted and non-formal community schools since the end of the war is commendable. Literacy rates in Sierra Leone are among the lowest in the world. The education system, nonetheless, continues to be adversely affected by the compounded effect of low quality of instruction, poorly qualified teachers and, shortage of infrastructure and materials. It is thus essential to consider further actions that include:

- Expand education at all levels and improve the quality of instruction;
- Support manpower development in the education system;
- Promote and expand access to basic education with a focus on girl children;
- Promote tertiary training, improve the learning environment, as well as build the capacity of the sector through improved planning, additional resources and better management;
- Promote HIV/AIDS prevention, reconciliation and civic education at all levels in the education system.

## **Public health**

Major public health challenges in Sierra Leone include the lack of medical professionals, proliferation of untrained practitioners, lack of health care facilities and funding for ongoing operational activities. There is also a problem of weak managerial and institutional capacity in the healthcare system. The following recommendations may be useful to address these challenges:

- Educate and empower women to tackle maternal health issues;
- Initiate and encourage increased public awareness campaigns;
- Recruit, train, and place adequate numbers of medical professionals together with the provision of reasonable financial incentives;
- Seek increased international assistance to improve the health sector;
- Build the capacity of institutions including by addressing management and organizational problems.

## **HIV/AIDS**

The displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, breakdown of the social structure, lack of government capacity to create a national policy for HIV/AIDS and reluctance to speak about the disease publicly have enabled HIV/AIDS to spread at a fast pace. Steps to stem the situation may include:

- Further promote HIV/AIDS awareness especially at the grassroots level;
- Increase campaign for the prevention of and response to sexual and Gender-Based Violence (GBV);
- Promote safe practices (including use of condom) and enhance possibilities of access to affordable treatment with anti-retroviral drugs.

## **Food security**

Major constraints against attaining food security are subsistence-level production, poor technology and rural infrastructure. The overall quality of average food intake is also poor. In order to alleviate these problems, further action should be taken including the following:

- Establish and implement early warning systems;
- Build, reconstruct and maintain roads, especially in rural areas;
- Encourage the development and application of more productive farming technologies through research and increased inputs;
- Establish a comprehensive agricultural database;
- Provide education and awareness training to the population on nutrition, farming and cultural practices.

## **Water and sanitation**

The majority of people in the rural areas still rely on unprotected water sources, including rivers, pools, shallow wells, springs and swamps, all of which are often polluted and can lead to the contracting of various diseases. The situation regarding sanitation is also precarious with the majority of households using pit latrines, buckets, bush and rivers/streams as their sanitation systems for human waste disposal. The following recommendations may be implemented as a priority:

- Provide safe drinking water to deprived communities in the peri-urban areas of Greater Freetown, District Headquarter towns and rural areas, including the rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of existing water supply facilities damaged during the war (e.g. hand-dug wells, spring boxes, traditional wells, gravity fed systems, etc.);
- Provide adequate liquid and solid waste disposal facilities;
- Increase community awareness of good hygiene practices including those relating to the safe collection and storage of drinking water, use and maintenance of sanitary facilities and other environmental sanitation issues;
- Strengthen and coordinate the operations of service-providing institutions.

## **Economic recovery**

Remarkable progress has taken place in Sierra Leone in stabilising the economy, achieving broad-based economic recovery (with significant output gains), reducing poverty and also consolidating the peace. Further steps that may be taken to build on this progress include:

- Implement further measures in tackling governance problems;
- Encourage development of the private sector;
- Promote increased savings and investment;
- Tighten fiscal policy to ensure that expenditures do not exceed projected revenue;
- Put inflationary pressures under control;
- Restore overall policy making and supervisory authority of the state on the economy;
- Rebuild communities through resettlement of the population and restoration of basic services;
- Revive agricultural production, expand manufacturing, strengthen the mining sector and rebuild infrastructure.

## **Economic policies**

Economic policies in Sierra Leone were seriously affected by lack of accountability and transparency since independence, wastage of limited resources on the war effort and dependence on foreign grants. The following measures are recommended to strengthen the effort to develop and implement effective policies:

- Promote further transparency and accountability in government institutions;
- Strengthen monetary policy and reduce interventions in the foreign-exchange market by the Central Bank (the Bank of Sierra Leone);
- Make more effective use of interest rates to combat inflation and encourage investment;
- Encourage economic activities that ensure increased state revenue in order to avoid dependency on foreign grants.

## **Poverty reduction strategy**

The PRSP released in April 2005 outlined strategies that the government should focus on. The government should:

- Improve capacity of the security forces to respond adequately to external and internal threats to the state and public safety;
- Increase domestic food production to sustain an affordable food supply;
- Provide skills training for productive employment;
- Increase participation of women in the governance of the state;
- Increase donor financial support and capacity building of key ministries, including in fiscal management and accountability in order to restore donors confidence.

## **Private sector development**

Although Sierra Leone has emerged within the past few years as a country ready for peace, there are still many factors that inhibit investment in the country. It is necessary to:

- Coordinate sectoral reform (particularly in the infrastructure sector) where substantial preparations are required in developing sector policies, structures and regulatory frameworks before any privatisation of facilities can take place;
- Advance the divestiture of smaller businesses in competitive markets;
- Reform the regulatory and judicial system to make them friendlier to the private sector.

## **Reintegration of returnees and IDPs**

In order to ensure sustainable reintegration and rehabilitation of former ex-combatants, returned refugees, IDPs and other displaced populations and prevent their return back to violence, it is essential that programmes for their reintegration and rehabilitation are strengthened including through:

- Provide and implement skills training, peace education, employment and income generating projects;
- Ensure security in all parts of the country;
- Support economic recovery activities in rural and peri-urban areas.

#### **4. Human rights, justice and reconciliation**

Protecting and promoting human rights, improving accountability and redress for past abuses are essential for long-term stability and security in Sierra Leone. To this end the following measures may be recommended:

- Reduce the level of crime and actively and publicly promote justice;
- Provide civic and ethics education to the population including about ethnic and religious rights;
- Promote respect for the rule of law, including through 'leading by example' within government institutions;
- Improve the institutional framework for respect of the rule of law;
- Take further measures to reduce gender-based violence (GBV);
- Fully activate national institutions such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to conclusively and publicly deal with past injustices;
- Ensure respect of prisoners and publicly denounce violations of international human rights and humanitarian law;
- Increase the number of judges, magistrates, prosecutors and support personnel;
- Foster a culture of peace, negotiation and consensus-building;
- Ensure an impartial and independent mechanism for effective monitoring and verification of human rights;
- Strengthen the independence of the judiciary;
- Reform the military and civilian police force;
- Ensure adherence to international standards.

#### **5. Gender**

The following measures may be considered in the effort to improve the status of women in Sierra Leone:

- Integrate a gender perspective into sectoral policies that have optimal impact in addressing problems relating to gender. In line with Sierra Leone's PRSP and the Millennium Development Goals, a systematic gender mainstreaming approach should be adopted;
- Update and revise the current national legal framework to address the critical issue of GBV and discrimination;
- Institute enhanced measures to prevent female genital mutilation (FGM) and GBV against women, including through public advocacy, awareness building, tasking of law enforcement institutions, and rigorous prosecution of violations and provision of all-rounded support to victims of violence;
- Increase awareness and foster behavioural change in the society;
- Educate the general population about women's rights and gender issues;
- Extend micro-credit facilities and other financing instruments to strengthen women's capacity to be engaged in the economy;
- Bolster girl-child education and incentives to keep young girls in school;
- Foster attitudinal and cultural changes to allow for girls to attend school;
- Develop adequate and sustainable systems to deliver basic healthcare for women and girls;
- Inform and educating women about fertility, the risks posed by frequent pregnancies and the responsibilities of motherhood;
- Provide education about HIV/AIDS;
- Enhance the justice system to ensure focus on GBV;
- Fully implement and monitor gender empowerment policies.