

OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP



SIERRA LEONE

THIRD NATIONAL ACTION PLAN (NAP III)

Foreword

The 2018 general elections ushered in the Sierra Leone People Party led by His Excellency Julius Maada Bio whose New Direction agenda is a bold approach to maintaining the tenets of democracy, transparency, accountability, human capital development and continuous civil engagements.

Our government is committed to creating a united, peaceful, progressive and happy nation where the people have access to jobs, food, and education and health services and there is equal justice and opportunity for all. We seek to lay a firm foundation to become a Middle Income Country based on the Democratic Development State Model. Influencing positive change at the early level of a child (thus the creation of the National Council for Civic Education and Development) and the use of technology (creation of the Directorate of Science and Technology) are just few steps in achieving our goal.

It is refreshing to see a positive level of collaboration between champions of Open Government from the Executive, Legislature, Judiciary, and Local Councils, Civil Society organizations, the Private Sector and the media in the development of reformative commitments with quantifiable timelines.

The National Action Plan III formulation process reveals the power of civic participation at all levels, collaboration and partnership with civil society and the media to effectively deliver the primary goals and aspirations of Open Governance to change and transformation. This process seeks to give all Sierra Leoneans a sense of ownership and inclusivity, which will engender and sustain an atmosphere of peace, stability, security and development.

The National Action Plan III speaks of maintaining an inclusive system that will address a decline in corruption, an increase in effective service delivery, addressing gender equality, creating opportunities and eventually working toward building public confidence.

We are committed to creating reforms that may impact transparency, participation and citizen's engagement and we must now ensure that these ideals are made to work for every Sierra Leonean.

The Government of Sierra Leone under the leadership of H.E. Julius Maada Bio is aware of the several challenges we face, ranging from sustainable human development, national cohesion and peace but we are committed to unfolding beneficial companies that engage with government, address excessive tax relief and exemptions, increase access to information on all government policies, contracts, and open up citizens access to justice by reforming the justice system or the use of traditional mechanisms to resolve disputes and opening up Parliament for public scrutiny.

The Government of Sierra Leone is committed to utilising the OGP process to ensure transparent and accountable governance. I commit to make government more open and accessible through frequent engagement with citizens, using different platforms and working with all sectors to ensure equitable service delivery.

I thank the National Council for Civic Education and Development, the entire Steering Committee, the media and the experts who have been working on this process with diligence all through the year. I will continue to work with you to support the implementation process.

Mohamed Rahman Swaray

Minister of Information and Communications
OGP Ministerial Lead

National Action Plan 2019–2021

1. Introduction

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) process supports governance reforms geared towards transparency, accountability, citizen's engagement and the use of technology to strengthen governance through a multi stakeholder approach.

The aim of the Open Government Partnership is to improve transparency of government and eliminate corruption. The significance of being a member is that it has become a central policy making body in partner countries. Member countries produce action plans in collaboration with civil society that contain commitments to advance access to government information, civic participation and public accountability. The Open Government Partnership provides a unique platform where Government and civil society work together with camaraderie using delicate negotiation and mediation to address crippling issues of trust and helps both sides see that they are working towards a shared goal. The OGP frequently engages behind the scenes building critical relationships and alliances that support difficult open government reforms at country level.

Thus OGP can also be used as a vehicle to achieve the Government of Sierra Leone's goals as it encompasses service delivery, fiscal transparency, managing natural resources and improving cooperate accountability.

Sierra Leone has been engaged in the OGP process since 2013. During this period, the country witnessed a devastating experience with the Ebola epidemic, which contributed to a significant decline in the economy, characterized by double-digit inflation, low domestic revenue mobilization, high domestic debt burden, that subsequently led to the government adopting biting austerity measures.

In the years leading to Sierra Leone acceding to the OGP process, the country spent more on tax giveaways than on its development priorities, with mining firms as the biggest beneficiaries. In 2011 and 2012, tax exemption and duty waivers amounted to more than eight times Sierra Leone's health budget and seven times its education budget. The losses arising from GST waivers (Le 648bn) granted to six mining companies alone far exceed all the actual GST revenues collected by the government (Le 410bn). If tax exemption continues on its current trend, it is likely that Sierra Leone will lose more than US\$ 240m per year from tax incentives.

The country was also losing much needed revenue through badly negotiated foreign investments that have not benefited the country and citizens. As a result, companies neglected their corporate social responsibilities, while committing serious human rights abuses. In the current National Action Plan (NAP) II, Sierra Leone has committed to meeting obligations of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) related to public disclosure of beneficial ownership of licenses and others in the sector. EITI requires public disclosure of identity of beneficial owners as well as identifying owners, which will have the status of politically exposed persons. We believe this will go a long way in ensuring transparency and openness in the conduct of business, not only in the extractive industries, but in doing business generally in the country.

The justice sector in Sierra Leone is marred by poor service delivery, limited access to justice, limited allocation of resources, and shortage of staff within the justice system and limited capacity for dispensing justice. The biggest challenge for the Judiciary today is the growing erosion of public confidence. For many outside actors, there is a lack of clarity about how and why Sierra Leoneans decide where to pursue cases. Moreover, there is even less understanding of the workings of the various informal systems, which are used by the majority of citizens. Much of the literature postulates that citizens' decisions to bring cases before these informal systems results, at least in part, because they comply better with local values and perspectives (such as a preference for restorative versus retributive justice), and are faster, cheaper, easier to reach, and easier to understand (WDR 2006, ICG 2003, Duthie 2005 and Alterman 2002). However, the faith in chiefs and customary systems has diminished somewhat since the end of the civil war, and some traditional systems and practices have come into question. (Fanthorpe 2004, Alterman et al 2002). (World Bank research document Access to Justice Review).

Sierra Leone's educational system has been fraught with challenges. The devastating civil war that lasted from 1991 to 2002 decimated the education system, wiping out about 1,270 primary schools and forcing 67 percent of all school aged children out of school by 2001. According to Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6, 2017)¹, only 13.7% of children of pre-primary school age attend pre-primary school, while only 82% of children of primary school age attend primary school. The number drops significantly to only 36% of children at junior secondary school age who attend junior secondary school. The number further declines to only 29% of children of senior secondary school age attending at that level. The situation is further compounded by the limited number of teachers at all levels. The MICS report also shows that girls living in rural communities find it most difficult to reach the secondary school level, because of reasons not limited to early child marriage, teenage pregnancy and religious and cultural beliefs. One of the most significant failings of the educational system is the neglect of tertiary institutions, including universities and technical and vocational institutes.

Given that education is the flagship priority of Government and that 21% of the country's annual budget has been allocated to the education sector, it is vital to use the OGP to monitor resource allocation to the education sector and ensure efficient service delivery.

Sierra Leone is generally a patriarchal society. Achieving gender equity remains a challenge in Sierra Leone. Women are confronted with limited access to decision making processes, and access to and control over resources. There have been issues of marginalization and underrepresentation of women in all spheres of life, including in leadership and decision-making institutions such as chieftaincy, ministerial appointments, heads of parastatals, representation on Boards, etc. The Gender Directorate of the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) is responsible for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Three Regional Gender Desk Officers have been deployed with logistics to ensure coordination, monitoring and supervising gender mainstreaming and other programming initiatives with Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Local Councils, and NGOs/CBOs. The establishment of the MSWGCA as the national machinery for the promotion of the gender

¹ Statistic Sierra Leone, UNICEF, 2017

agenda is a major step in efforts to enhance women's empowerment. These and other initiatives have established the institutional framework for the promotion of gender equality. A number of policies and laws have been developed to fully promote gender equality and women's advancement. The Parliament of Sierra Leone passed into law the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, 2019 in September 2019, which seeks to amend the Sexual Offences Act of 2012 and provides for the increase of the maximum penalty for rape and sexual penetration of a child from fifteen years to life imprisonment; and makes provision for the introduction of the offence of aggravated sexual assault.

Sierra Leone passed the Right to Access Information Act in 2013 to ensure that government is more open and transparent to citizens. The Right to Access Information Commission was set up in 2014. Since then, the Commission has established regional offices and has also embarked on nationwide public education and awareness-raising on right to access information. Nevertheless, challenges still remain, including with supporting the proactive disclosure scheme and improving women's right to access information.

The National Records and Public Archives Act is essential in ensuring effective implementation of the Right to Access Information Act. There are no proper records management systems of key government documents. Effective records management is vital for accountable and transparent operation of public institutions. The National Records and Public Archives Act has been drafted and consultations have already been held in consultation with the Public Sector Reform Unit. However, it is yet to be tabled in Parliament. Passing of the National Records and Public Archives Act will serve as a key tool to inform database management and archiving of key government documents that will be stored in formats that are accessible to citizens.

The Sierra Leone Parliament was left out of the OGP process until now, thus making it very challenging for many of OGP commitments to be fully implemented. Currently, Parliament has very limited platforms to engage with citizens and CSOs. The inclusion of the Parliamentary Commitment on OGP in this NAP III has paved the way for Parliament to provide annual reports on their operations to demonstrate leadership in accountability and transparency.

2. Open Government Efforts to Date

The Government of Sierra Leone made significant strides during the first year of governance under President Julius Maada Bio. The successes of Sierra Leone's economic and financial policies implemented in 2018 were further reaffirmed and underscored when international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the African Development Bank reengaged the country in the delivery of budgetary support.

The Government of Sierra Leone successfully delivered on all policy measures and agreed prior actions, after these development partners had suspended their engagements in this area in the preceding year. In the area of domestic revenue mobilization, government streamlined duty and tax waivers, implemented the Treasury

Single Account (TSA), and undertook other important tax reforms. With respect to expenditure management, concerted effort was made to rationalize the wage bill through the introduction of the biometric verification process, reduction of official travel to only essential staff, the formulation of the arrears clearance strategy, updating the reference price norms for public procurement, increasing disbursements to Local Councils, conducting financial and technical audits which will help to make the Sierra Leone economy more efficient, transparent and accountable to the citizens of Sierra Leone in the coming years. Directly as a result of these efforts, the Ministry of Finance has helped to restore fiscal discipline and macroeconomic stability in the country. The Government has increased domestic revenues, strengthened budget execution and expenditure rationalization, improved fiscal devolution, improved coordination of donor-funded projects, and are now determined to reduce the stock of public debt.

1. Improving Public Service

This grand challenge emphasizes on improving government structures, systems and processes for efficient and effective service delivery at the highest level and it remains government's top priority. Some of the initiatives for improving public service delivery are as follows:

- **Revamping of the Open Data Portal:** The Open Data Portal will support the emergence of a proactive disclosure culture, one that resonates with the Right to Access Information Act and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. It shall serve as a one-stop shop to access all government documents and a platform for reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The portal is hosted at the Ministry of Information and Communications and managed by the National Open Data Council of Sierra Leone, steered by the Right to Access Information Commission and Statistics Sierra Leone.
- **Performance Contracts:** In line with Government's commitment to improving efficient and effective service delivery, the Service Delivery and Performance Management Directorate in the Office of the Chief Minister is leading on an integrated Performance Management system that obligates key government institutions, including MDAs, Local Councils and tertiary education institutions to sign performance contracts for key performance indicators which are assessed bi-annually. These institutional contracts are supported by individual performance contracts signed by senior civil servants. The integrated public service Performance Management system is an on-going initiative that links the institutional and individual performance monitoring systems managed by the Office of the Chief Minister, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Cabinet Secretariat and the Human Resource Management Office.
- **Free Health Care Initiative:** The free health care initiative was introduced in April 2010. It exempts pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under the age of five years from paying for medical services in all government hospitals and health centres. In the New Direction manifesto of President Julius Maada Bio, he promised that his government will provide free medical services for the physically

challenged and the aged. The Free Health Care service delivery is an on-going process.

- **Free Quality Education** The country achieved new heights with the launch of the Free Quality Education Program, attained improvements in the overall structure of the economy, and restored hope that Sierra Leone could also become a more globally competitive economy. Hence, at the beginning of his first term, President Julius Maada Bio made Free Quality Education his topmost priority. In the Ministry of Finance, planned educational expenditures as a percentage of the overall budget increased from 12% in 2018 to 21% in 2019. As a result of this singular effort, Sierra Leone was recognised by the World Bank for its bold stride in human capital development.

2. Increasing Public Integrity

The Anti-Corruption Commission which was established by an Act of Parliament in 2000 under the late President Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabba has since gained its independence to systematically root out corruption in public offices in order to improve service delivery. In 2014, former President Ernest Bai Koroma in his State Opening of Parliament made a commitment to fight corruption. Similarly, President Julius Maada Bio in his State Opening of Parliament speech in 2018 reiterated his zero-tolerance policy on corruption.

- **Archives and Records Management:** As part of government's commitment to build a reliable and trustworthy evidence-based information/data management system to support policy making and service delivery across the public sector, it is but prudent to establish an integrated records and information management strategy with a sound legal and organizational structure and a capacity building program.
- **Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Act:** The amended ACC Act of 2008 made Sierra Leone one of the countries in the sub region with the strongest anti-corruption laws. It allows the ACC to independently prosecute corrupt individuals without reverting to the Office of the Attorney General. Statistics shows that between 2008 and 2013 alone, the number of cases that ended in conviction was above 50, amongst which there were sitting Ministers and political figures of Local Councils.
- **Asset Declaration through the ACC:** This initiative is part of the government's efforts to check the high rate of unexplained wealth of public servants. All public servants are required by law to declare their assets, income and liabilities three months after assuming office and are required to provide yearly submissions until they vacate office. The declaration is done in private and could also be done via an online portal which is now operational. As of 2018, approximately 41,146 asset declaration forms were distributed nationwide to public servants and around 27,449 were returned to the Asset Declaration Unit of the ACC.
- **Pay No Bribe Campaign:** The Pay No Bribe citizen reporting platform was unveiled in September 2016. It is an innovative online and telephone reporting platform which enables citizens to anonymously report incidents of everyday corruption and bribery in public offices. This is done by educating citizens of their

rights through the publication and dissemination of service charters of key government institutions. Data collected from the public reporting will be managed by the ACC to scale down bribery and corruption.

- **The National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) 2019-2023:** The 2019-2023 NACS is a public-private initiative against corruption, focusing on confronting corruption as a threat to every sphere of national development and building an ethical and accountable republic that promotes zero tolerance for corruption to inspire integrity, transparency, accountability and the rule of law. This strategy recognizes that corruption does not respect national or organizational boundaries. Addressing corruption requires strong partnership among government, the private sector and CSOs. This falls within the priority areas of the New Direction Manifesto.

3. More effective management of public resources

The government of President Julius Maada Bio is working assiduously to improve the transparency across MDAs by bringing the citizens closer to governance. This has been one of the key priority areas of the government, especially in the area of managing public resources.

Key Actions:

- **The Public Financial Management Act 2016:** The Public Financial Management Act was passed in Parliament in May 2016 to ensure prudent and transparent management of public financial resources. Revenue collection started to pick up during the second quarter of 2018 following the implementation of key revenue enhancing measures including those issued under Executive Order 1 (streamlining of duty and tax waivers, implementation of the Treasury Single Account; converting the NRA Transit Accounts into a Sub-Treasury Account, out of which payments are swept and transferred into the Consolidated Revenue Account on a daily basis, liberalization of fuel prices and streamlining the payment of excise duties; and stronger enforcement of tax compliance).
- **Establishment of the Treasury Single Account:** The Treasury Single Account has been established in the Bank of Sierra Leone to consolidate all government bank accounts previously held in several commercial banks and to optimize the utilization of government cash resources. It separates transaction-level control from overall cash management to get a consolidated view of the country's cash position at the end of each day. In President Bio's Executive Order No. 1, he directed the Accountant General to fully implement the Treasury Single Account, which requires all Ministries, Departments and Agencies to deposit their revenues into the Consolidated Revenue Fund (one pot).
- **Audit Service Sierra Leone:** The Public Accounts Committee of Parliament has recently formulated policy to ensure that audit reports are reviewed and published within a shorter time frame. The audit report when published should be made public and at the same time tabled in Parliament for debate. As required by the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, the Auditor General's report should be tabled in Parliament within a twelve-month period. In addition, the Auditor General's Report will present a series of recommendations for Executive action.

- **Citizen's Budget:** The Citizen's Budget is a summary of the budget document that explains basic information on services the Government intends to deliver, how it will be done, and who will do it. It further shows how much they will cost and how citizens can verify if the services budgeted for were delivered accordingly. As of 2017, Sierra Leone's score on the Open Budget Index is 38 out of 100.

4. Creating safer communities

- **Three Gender Laws**

A number of laws provide legal and social protection to women, especially the three Gender Acts (the Domestic Violence Act 2007, the Devolution of Estates Act 2007 and the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act 2008) and the Sexual Offences Act 2012 and Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019.

- The Domestic Violence Act is the first statutory law to explicitly criminalize domestic violence. It empowers the Sierra Leone Police (Family Support Unit) to respond to domestic violence. It also provides a broad definition of domestic violence that includes economic abuse; harassment; emotional, verbal or psychological abuse; intimidation; physical abuse; and sexual abuse.
- The Devolution of Estates Act ensures that husbands and wives now have the right to inherit property from each other equally. Likewise, children of either gender inherit property of their parents equally without a will. However, customary law differs as to how it treats inheritance of property in the case of widows. The Devolution of Estates Act also ensures that surviving spouses of either gender are entitled to remain in the family home until they die; it is now a criminal offence to eject them from the home.
- The Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act stipulates 18 years as the legal age for marriage and that there must be consent from both parties for the marriage to be legal. It also provides that application can be made for spousal and child maintenance of a reasonable level. The Act supports the provisions of the Child Rights Act of 2007. This Act also requires every marriage to be registered.

- **Sexual Offences Act 2012**

The Sexual Offences Act 2012 consolidates all laws in Sierra Leone relating to sexual offences. It defines the offence of rape for the first time in Sierra Leone law and provides that a person under the age of 18 cannot consent to an offence under the Act. It asserts that marriage is not a defence to any offence under the Act. The Act also requires the Sierra Leone Police to assist victims of sexual offences to obtain medical treatment, which should be provided free of charge. Unfortunately, the Sexual Offences Act 2012 decreased the maximum penalty for rape or sexual penetration of a person under age 18 to fifteen years imprisonment.

- **Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019**

The Parliament of Sierra Leone passed into law the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, 2019 in September 2019. This Act, among other things, seeks to amend the Sexual Offences Act of 2012 and increases the maximum penalty for rape and

sexual penetration of a child from fifteen years to life imprisonment. It also makes provision for the introduction of the offence of aggravated sexual assault.

5. Improving corporate accountability

- **The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative:** This Initiative seeks to promote transparency and accountability in the management of the nation's mineral and oil/gas sector. A multi-stakeholder group was established, comprising government ministries, mining companies and civil society organizations to provide effective oversight, develop policies and implement programs and activities in line with their mandates. There will be a Government of Sierra Leone online Repository that contains data on all rights, expert licenses and related payments managed by the National Minerals Agency and all forestry licenses issued by the Ministry of Agriculture's Forestry Department.
- **The National Corporate Governance Code 2018:** As Sierra Leone is striving towards reforming, redefining and repositioning itself to be recognized for transparency and good governance on the global stage, one evolution that has taken place is the establishment of the Corporate Affairs Commission, which is supervised by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Together they have developed the National Corporate Governance Code. The Code carefully sets out guidelines, rules, procedures and practices for the corporate sector with the objective to protect the profitability of companies, ensure accountability of boards and management, and protect the business aspiration of companies or similar organizations (social accountability).

In line with the government's priorities, the NAP III provides approaches to open government that are guided by the aforementioned pillars.

The NAP III is a working document to attain the ultimate goal of open government and consequently attain the enjoyment of its benefits by all Sierra Leoneans. This is ensured through not just a complete address of the diverse range of development issues but also actually laying heavy emphasis on civic participation and public accountability. The NAP III, therefore, in concordance with the government's priorities addresses the following:

- Improving public services;
- Increasing public integrity;
- More effective management of public resources;
- Creating safer communities; and
- Improving corporate accountability.

The previous NAPs already recognize the OGP proposal for the need to elevate "...open government to the highest levels of political discourse, providing 'cover' for difficult reforms..." first through engagement with, and then the support of, all relevant

stakeholders. This obviously derives from recognition of the need for open and transparent governance to the extent of actual sustained development in the country.

3. National Action Plan Development Process:

At the conclusion of Sierra Leone's NAP II in 2018, the country was in transition between one government to another following democratic elections in March 2018. A visit from the OGP Global team, led by the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, to the newly elected President Julius Maada Bio in August 2018 helped to reboot the OGP process in Sierra Leone after a lull. As a result, Sierra Leone could not submit a NAP in 2018 and requested an extension to 2019. Therefore, Sierra Leone's NAP cycles switched to odd-numbered years, with the NAP III planned for 2019-2021.

A wide range of representatives from different civil society organizations, the media, donor agencies, and government officials met at the Ministry of Information and Communications conference room and recommended that the erstwhile Steering Committee be reconstituted because the membership was deemed very large, resulting in weak participation of its members. They all agreed to recommend civil society organizations that are working on thematic areas to represent the wider multi-stakeholder forum. A 14-member Steering Committee was formed with equal representation from government and civil society organizations and the process was led by the National Council for Civic Education and Development (NaCCED). The role of the Steering Committee is to co-create the National Action Plan, monitor the implementation of the commitments and provide technical leadership in the overall OGP process. The Steering Committee meets every fortnight.

The formal announcement of the start of the NAP III process was done during the Ministry of Information and Communications weekly press briefing on 7 February 2019. Since then several radio programs and live television programs have been held to sensitize and update citizens on the OGP NAP III development process.

The Chairman and a cross-section of the Steering Committee held a pre-Cabinet briefing on the OGP process. The Cabinet specifically recommended that the Steering Committee include certain commitments, such as records and archives management and a proactive disclosure element of an access to information commitment, in the NAP III. The Steering Committee also met with many stakeholders to discuss possible commitments. A wide range of recommendations were made. These proposed commitments were shared with the public for their comments through WhatsApp and the NaCCED Facebook page. Monthly interactive radio discussions and live television programs were also held to engage the public about the NAP III commitments.

The NaCCED set up three different WhatsApp groups – the NAP III SC group, the Multi-stakeholder forum which comprises 50 representatives from different civil society organizations across the country, and the Federation Link group which comprises radio station managers and newspaper reporters across the country. The Council used these media to update the OGP community on the NAP III development process and to solicit feedback on the commitments and the process.

The NaCCED and a cross-section of Steering Committee members conducted regional consultations on the NAP III in Bo, Kenema, Makeni, Port Loko, and Freetown. Interactive radio discussion programs were held on community radio stations and simulcast across the regions. The following day, representatives from government, local councils, civil society organizations, the media, students and the public participated in town hall meetings. After presentations on the OGP process, participants were divided into groups to discuss the proposed commitments and milestones to solicit their feedback and input on the NAP III document.

Feedback from the regional consultations was compiled and the NaCCED with support from Budget Advocacy Network, The Westminster Foundation and the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) held expert meetings with key government players and representatives from relevant civil society organizations to discuss the commitments and develop specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound (SMART) milestones in line with government priorities for the next two years.

The NaCCED held a one-day workshop with members of the OGP Steering Committee to discuss the feedback from the expert meetings, consolidate the commitments and milestones and prepare for a pre-Cabinet briefing on the final commitments in the NAP III. NaCCED and members of the Steering Committee (specifically civil society representatives) held individual meetings with specific Ministers whose ministries will be implementing OGP commitments in order to refine the commitments ahead of final validation. The NAP III was validated in October 2019.

4. Commitments

| Commitment 1 | |
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| Access to Justice | |
| Commitment Start and End Date: September 2019 – August 2021 | |
| Lead implementing agency or actor | Attorney General and Ministry of Justice |
| Commitment Description | |
| What is the public problem that the commitment will address | <p>According to the Government of Sierra Leone’s situation analysis of the justice sector, it has been ‘marred by poor service delivery, limited access to justice, limited allocation of resources, shortage of staffing and limited capacity’. As of early 2018, there were only 21 judges and 20 magistrates covering the entire country, with only few based out of Freetown. Limited judicial staff, backlog of cases, delays in the dispensation of justice, and corruption within the judiciary has all contributed to the erosion of public confidence in the judiciary and formal justice system as a whole.</p> <p>Community-based and informal justice service delivery has been shown to be used more frequently throughout the country than the formal justice system and result in a higher rate of resolution of legal problems. A 2018 survey conducted by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) of 52 chiefdoms across Sierra Leone revealed that in only 8% of cases did respondents initiate a formal court process and in only 10% of cases did they seek the assistance of lawyers to address one or more legal problems they have faced in the last two years. Instead, 13% sought the assistance of an informal community leader or organization for mediation or arbitration and 14% used dialogue or reconciliation processes. Of the formal court processes initiated, only 4% of respondents were actually involved in a court hearing and only 18% of the cases initiated in court were completely resolved. In contrast, where engagement occurred through an informal mechanism or mediation, about 54% of cases were completely resolved.</p> |
| What is the commitment | <i>Ensure access to justice for all by expanding community-based justice services and increasing transparency in local level structures</i> |
| How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem | This commitment seeks to increase access to justice for all by expanding legal services to marginalised, vulnerable, poor, and/or rural populations provided by legal aid boards, community-based justice service providers (paralegals), NGOs, and CSO non-lawyers. It |

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| | <p>also seeks to increase local provision of justice services through grievance redress mechanisms within local councils and existing community governance structures. The commitment’s emphasis on supporting non-lawyer interventions and the non-formal justice sector are meant to increase citizen participation in justice delivery, while promoting transparency and accountability in the local justice delivery structures that communities are most likely to engage.</p> |
| <p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values</p> | <p>This commitment is a natural extension of the second prong of Commitment 9 on Access to Justice under the NAP II, which focused on increasing transparency in case management and establishing structures at the local level to improve access to justice.</p> <p>The commitment’s emphasis on supporting non-lawyer interventions and the non-formal justice sector are meant to increase citizen participation in justice delivery (a public service), while promoting transparency and accountability in the local justice delivery structures that communities are most likely to engage. Increasing justice interventions at the local and community levels ensures rule of law and helps to increase public safety in communities.</p> <p>Furthermore, access to Justice is complementary to transparency and access to information. Implementation of the Right to Access Information Act is key to access to justice because the public and paralegals need information from the judiciary and police and sector-specific data on health, education, and more to be able to know their rights and hold public officials accountable.</p> |
| <p>Additional Information</p> | <p>Ensuring access to justice by expanding community-based justice services features explicitly in the government’s New Direction agenda under ‘Advancing Rule of Law, Promoting Justice and Human Rights’ under Pillar IV on ‘Improving Governance’. Among the challenges the government itself has identified in justice sector is ‘the growing erosion of public confidence’ in the judiciary. As part of its plan to ‘overhaul the judiciary and justice delivery system in the country with a view to restoring public confidence in its independence and impartiality and make justice accessible and available for all’, the government has committed to ‘train a cadre of ‘paralegals’ to support the sector in the country’s extreme rural communities where the services of trained legal practitioner’s currently pose a huge challenge’. While the government’s New Direction agenda also includes strengthening the country’s Legal Aid programme to</p> |

continue to provide legal aid services to indigent and vulnerable citizens, expanding community-based justice services goes beyond those provided by LAB paralegals and includes community justice services provided by civil society. The President has reiterated this commitment on several occasions, including the State Opening of Parliament and during the UN General Assembly in 2018.

During the 2018 UNGA, President Bio gave additional details on the government's plan for the justice sector. Prominently featured were plans to train more paralegals to support the justice sector in remote rural communities that cannot access formal courts and establish local administrative justice and other grievance redress mechanisms in order to free up the Magistrate and High Courts (i.e. the formal justice system) to deal with more complex cases. Local councils are already subject to a number of transparency provisions in the Local Government Act 2004, such as publishing an annual development plan and budget. If local grievance redress mechanisms are established through the Local Councils.

This commitment also consolidates government's commitment to achieving SDG 16 and the open government agenda, which are inextricably linked. Promoting access to justice through community-based paralegals and structures is also part of the government's commitment to achieving SDG 16.3, which encourages acceleration in the provision of justice to people and communities outside the protection of the law. The Attorney General and Minister of Justice, representing Sierra Leone as a co-chair of the global Task Force on Justice, has announced plans to use data to better understand why people 'want to resolve their problems and disputes informally or through customary justice systems.' At the 2019 UNGA, she announced the government's plans to open a Justice Innovation Centre (JIC) to further access to justice data collection and aggregation. As mentioned above, some data already exists. However, this is just a small sampling and the OGP's emphasis on open data would be vital to building the evidentiary base necessary for developing the relevant community-based paralegal and justice structures and that the government provides adequate financing to address the actual needs and patterns associated with community-based justice delivery in the country.

| | | The commitments on Access to Justice and Access to Information are complementary. Implementation of the Right to Access Information Act is key to access to justice because the public and paralegals need information from the judiciary and justice sector and sector-specific data to be able to assert their rights or address the problems they are facing in their communities. | |
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| Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable | | Start Date | End Date |
| 1. Develop a national access to justice policy framework. | | October 2019 | March 2020 |
| 2. Establish an Access to Justice Directorate within the Ministry of Justice. | | October 2019 | March 2020 |
| 3. 300 ² community-based justice service providers identified or recruited, and trained. Data on recruitment and training of community-based justice service providers reported to Ministry of Justice on a quarterly basis. | | March 2020 | June 2021 |
| 4. Administrative justice mechanisms and grievance redress mechanisms at the local level are identified and mapped. | | November 2019 | August 2021 |
| 5. A Justice Innovation Centre is established with a data aggregation system that promotes interaction between community justice service providers and the formal justice system. | | October 2019 | June 2020 |
| 6. The legal assistance fund provided for the in 2015 National Land Policy for legal and paralegal assistance to communities in negotiation with potential large-scale land investors is established. | | November 2019 | June 2020 |
| Contact Information | | | |
| Name of responsible person from implementing agency | | Mr. Shahid Korjie Acting Coordinator, Justice Sector Coordination Office Ministry of Justice | |
| Email and Phone | | Email: skorjie@yahoo.com ; Phone: +232 76 565 059 | |
| Other Actors Involved | State actors involved | Legal Aid Board (LAB); Judiciary; Local Councils; Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation (Office of the President); Ministry of Lands (community justice fund); Ministry of Finance; Human Rights Commission; Office of the Ombudsperson | |
| | CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups | Namati; National Coalition for Community Legal Empowerment (NaCCLE); Advocaid; Open Society Initiative for West Africa; Open Data Council | |

² Average of 1.5 community-based justice service providers in each of the 190 chiefdoms in Sierra Leone.

| Commitment 2 | |
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| Education | |
| Commitment Start and End Date September 2019 – August 2021 | |
| Lead implementing agency or actor | Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education |
| Commitment Description | |
| What is the public problem that the commitment will address | Access Equity and completion – Some of the major challenges within the education sector in Sierra Leone are access to schools and school completion. School census reports over the years reveal that only 82% of children of primary school going-age actually access primary education. Out of this cohort, only about 29% go on to complete senior secondary school. Various factors are responsible for this result, ranging from limited access to schools in some locations to teenage pregnancy, poverty, etc. There is a stark disproportionality in the number of primary schools to that of junior secondary schools. Many pupils graduating from primary schools cannot access junior secondary schools or are forced to drop out of junior secondary schools when they move to different locations. This movement away from home and families is largely responsible for the school drop-out rate, especially in rural areas. Exacerbating the problem in the education sector is the issue of integrity. Examination malpractice especially in the conduct of public examinations has become pervasive and endemic. This has the tendency to undermine the quality of learning and invariably has a direct consequence on learning outcomes. |
| What is the commitment | <p>The commitment will ensure that pupils have access to Junior Secondary Schools in their localities, thereby affording them the opportunity to live with their families whilst in school and eventually eliminating the challenges they would likely face if schooling away from home and which contribute largely to their dropping out. The commitment will ensure that there is an increase in access to Junior Secondary Schools, increase in retention and eventually completion rates.</p> <p>This will invariably lead to increase in retention rates as well as in completion rates. It will also contribute to more improved learning environments and eventually lead to improvement in learning outcomes.</p> |
| How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem | This commitment will improve access, quality and completion by increasing educational resources in remote areas. In particular, the commitment will increase the availability of teachers and educational materials to those who need it most at primary and junior secondary |

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| | <p>school levels. Creating incentives for qualified teachers to provide their services in remote areas improves the overall quality of education throughout the country. These efforts will ultimately improve student performance throughout the country.</p> | |
| <p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values</p> | <p>Improving public services – The commitment will improve public service delivery in the education sector Effective management of public resources- Promote transparency and accountability This commitment is relevant for the following but not limited to them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate transparency and accountability in the use of the 21% budget allocated to education • Addresses two grand challenges which are; improving public service and effective management of public resources. • Help government to meet national and international targets and protocols from EFA and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 as priority to fulfil the growing need for skilled labour in the workplace and leveraging on civic engagement on free quality education | |
| <p>Additional Information</p> | <p>The Government of Sierra Leone has committed 21% of its annual budget to the education sector. As part of attainment of its vision of an appropriately educated, entrepreneurial and innovative citizenry, who are tolerant, productive and internationally competitive, the government’s Education Sector Plan 2018-2020 commits to providing opportunities for children and adults to acquire knowledge and skills, as well as nurture attitudes and values that help the nation grow and prosper.</p> <p>The Free Quality School Education (FQSE), launched by the Government of Sierra Leone in 2018 aims to greatly reduce the illiteracy level in the country, especially among girls. The programme includes provision of subsidies to schools to cover school fees, free school materials to all children, and school feeding for children in deprived communities.</p> | |
| <p>Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable</p> | <p>Start Date</p> | <p>End Date</p> |
| <p>1. Increase transition level from primary to junior secondary school by 9 percent.</p> | <p>November 2019</p> | <p>November 2020</p> |

| 2. Recruitment and deployment of 5000 teachers across the country, especially in remote communities. | | November 2019 | November 2021 |
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| 3. Increase equitable access to senior secondary education by 3 percent. | | November 2019 | November 2020 |
| 4. Payment of remote allowances to qualified teachers in rural communities. | | November 2020 | November 2021 |
| 5. Provision of core textbooks to all children in government and government-assisted schools. | | October 2019 | November 2021 |
| Contact Information | | | |
| Name of responsible person from implementing agency | | Mr. Amara Sowa National Programme Coordinator, Free Quality School Education Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education | |
| Email and Phone | | amarasowah@yahoo.co.uk +23276788783 | |
| Other Actors Involved | State actors involved | Ministry of Basic and Secondary School Education, Office of the Coordinator – Free Quality Education Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Information and Communications, Ministry of Lands, Teaching Service Commission, Attorney General and Ministry of Justice Office, Parliamentary Committee on Primary Education, Cabinet Secretariat | |
| | CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups | CSOs Coordination group in Education, Sierra Leone Teachers Union, Education For All Coalition, Budget Advocacy Network, Nacot, Open Data Council | |

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| Commitment 3 | |
| Duty and Tax Exemption | |
| Commitment Start and End Date: September 2019 – August 2021 | |
| Lead implementing agency or actor | Ministry of Finance |
| Commitment Description | |
| What is the public problem that the commitment will address | <p>Taxes raised from companies and individuals fund key public services needed to promote the welfare of the population and reduce poverty. But tax incentives granted by the government are a major reason for Sierra Leone’s low tax revenues. The UN estimates that Least Developed Countries need to raise at least 20 per cent of their GDP through taxes to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Yet Sierra Leone is way off this target, currently raising only around 10.9 per cent of GDP in taxes. The major tax incentives provided by the government include exemptions on customs duties and payments of the Goods and Services Tax, along with reductions in the rate of income tax payable by corporations, which are being granted supposedly to attract foreign investment.</p> <p>In 2012, Sierra Leone lost \$224 million dollars through tax incentives – tax breaks given to multinational corporations, mostly in the mining sector. At the time, this equated to 59% of the entire government budget, and more than eight times the health budget and seven times the education budget. Government also grants INGOs, NGOs and other institutions duty waivers on the bases that they will contribute in providing services to the people of Sierra Leone. These waivers are part of government expenditure to these sectors and as such the citizen should know who these waivers are grant to for monitoring purpose.</p> |
| What is the commitment | <p>A transparent tax system supports good governance and the accountability of policy-makers towards the public. But the granting of special tax incentives in opaque deals, at the discretion of individual without public scrutiny, undermines good governance and can increase the risk of corruption. In Sierra Leone, parliament and the public lack information about the tax incentives granted and are usually not aware of the details until after they have been agreed, and sometimes not even then. It is currently impossible for elected</p> |

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| | <p>parliamentarians, the media and civil society to scrutinize and debate these deals properly to ensure that the country optimally benefits.</p> |
| <p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem</p> | <p>By enabling accountability for public spending, fiscal transparency can also reduce fiduciary risks and improve efficiency and effectiveness of public spending around tax incentive. Analyses have shown that countries whose public finances are more transparent have better fiscal discipline, a lower perceived level of corruption around the granting of tax incentive.</p> <p>It will also increase the Sierra Leone Open Budget Index score, hence increasing the credibility and openness of the government at international level.</p> <p>In addition, CSOs can also use the published information to hold government and the institutions granted the tax incentive accountable on how they use the incentive.</p> |
| <p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values</p> | <p>Access to information: Citizen will have access to tax incentive information</p> <p>Public accountability: Government will account for all tax incentives granted. Citizen will also use the published information to hold government accountable</p> |
| <p>Additional Information</p> | <p>This commitment is also linked to the Sierra Leone National Development Plan under the following section:</p> <p>2.5.1 Fiscal Policy medium-term measures – Rationalizing tax and duty waivers</p> <p>8.8 Potential areas for resource mobilization to finance the MTNDP – Publish tax expenditure Reporting- Publish estimates of revenue foregone through each individual tax exemption scheme; periodically review the costs and benefits of each scheme with respect to the objectives of the MTNDP.</p> <p>It is also linked to the SDG 16 and the target below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels |

| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements | |
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| Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable | | Start Date | End Date |
| Publish all tax incentives, on a half yearly basis starting 2019 in government website | | | |
| a) Tax exemptions granted from January to June 2019 are published by December 2019. | | November 2019 | December 2019 |
| b) Tax exemptions granted from July to December 2019 are published by March 2020. | | January 2020 | March 2020 |
| c) Tax exemptions granted from January to June 2020 are published by September 2020. | | July 2020 | September 2020 |
| d) Tax exemptions granted from July to December 2020 are published by March 2021 | | January 2021 | March 2021 |
| Publish in the annual budget the annual tax incentives granted | | | |
| a) For 2020 budget | | October 2019 | December 2019 |
| b) For 2021 budget | | October 2020 | December 2020 |
| Contact Information | | | |
| Name of responsible person from implementing agency | | Idrissa Kanu- Director -Tax and Revenue Unit of the Ministry of Finance Tel: +232 79 946595 Email: idrissakanu@gmail.com | |
| Name of responsible person from implementing agency | | Dr. Philip Kargbo – Director –Monitoring, Research and Planning – National Revenue Authority Tel: +232 79 640155 Email: philipkargbo2003@yahoo.com | |
| Other Actors Involved | State actors involved | Parliament, National Revenue Authority | |
| | CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups | Budget Advocacy Network, Christian Aid, Action Aid, Network Movement for Justice and Development | |

| Commitment 4 | |
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| Beneficial Ownership | |
| Commitment Start and End Date September 2019 – July 2019 | |
| Lead implementing agency or actor | Corporate Affairs Commission |
| Commitment Description | |
| What is the public problem that the commitment will address | <p>In 2016, the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) established a requirement that all implementing countries, of which Sierra Leone is one, should, by 2020, require all mining, oil and gas companies to disclose the identity of their beneficial owners. In addition, any politically exposed persons (PEPs) who are beneficial owners must be identified.</p> <p>Furthermore, it is worthy to note that as Foreign Investments are pivotal to Sierra Leone’s economic development enormous effort is being made by government to encourage foreign investments to boost the country’s ailing economy. Notwithstanding, there is the ardent need to ensure that there is integrity, transparency, accountability and prudent financial management in all foreign investments. To ensure this, there is the need for adequate and transparent information to be available of the nature of all foreign investment ventures, to ensure that they are worthy, credible and purposeful investments. This will go a long way to forestall the unfortunate situations that the country has faced regarding foreign investments that have proved to be fraudulent, masterminded by politicians for their personal benefit and these have ended up in companies neglecting their corporate social responsibilities and abuse the human rights of their workers and communities in which they have operated with impunity with dire consequences. In view of this, there is the need for a more proactive beneficial information disclosure regime in all foreign investments in the country. This is of necessity as once this is obscure it gives room for all negative consequences faced so far in terms of foreign investments</p> |
| What is the commitment | <p>Beneficial Ownership disclosure or Transparency has become a growing interest at global and national levels. This interest not only focuses on corporate beneficial ownership information disclosure but also seeks to expose conflict of interest among public office holders otherwise known as Politically Exposed Person (PEPs). It derives from the need to trace criminals who hide their</p> |

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| | <p>identities behind corporate structures to defraud countries through corruption, tax evasion, undue favoritism, money laundering and illicit financial flows.</p> | | |
| <p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem</p> | <p>Presently Sierra Leone does not have a Comprehensive Law on Beneficial Ownership Disclosure not a comprehensive database of all companies operating in all sectors. To this end the Sierra Leone Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative conducted a Legal and Institutional Review of Beneficial Ownership Disclosure in Sierra Leone. Action is yet to be taken to bring this to fruition. As it stands, this will pose a challenge even with Sierra Leone being regarded as compliant with the EITI requirement specified above by 2020.</p> | | |
| <p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values</p> | <p>Beneficial ownership disclosure is relevant because it will help to promote transparency and credibility of foreign business investments. It will safeguard against fraudulent and self-seeking investments especially by public official. It will ensure compliance with the local and international laws and standards. Furthermore, it will assist in promoting the anti-corruption and anti-money laundering campaign. .It will ensure that foreign investments in the country contribute positively to growth and sustainable development which will in turn help the government deliver on its campaign promises and ultimately fulfill the aspirations of citizens for effective national development</p> | | |
| <p>Additional Information</p> | | | |
| <p>Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable</p> | | <p>Start Date</p> | <p>End Date</p> |
| <p>1. Implement Recommendations 1, 2 and 4 in the SLEITI Report on Legal and Institutional Review of Beneficial Ownership Disclosure in Sierra Leone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 1: Amend the Companies Act (2009) to include beneficial ownership disclosure requirements for all corporate entities, including mining, oil and gas companies • Recommendation 2: Put the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in charge of administering beneficial ownership disclosure requirements for all corporate entities, including mining, oil and gas companies. • Recommendation 4: Arrange technical assistance and capacity building for the CAC, SLEITI, NMA, and Petroleum Directorate to strengthen beneficial | | <p>September 2019</p> | <p>August 2021</p> |

| ownership information collection and verification processes. | | | |
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| 2. Compile and make publicly available (including online) a Comprehensive Beneficial Ownership Register. | | November 2019 | December 2020 |
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| Contact Information | | | |
| Name of responsible person from implementing agency | | Michala Mackay CEO and Registrar of Companies Corporate Affairs Commission | |
| Email and Phone | | +23278989898 michala.mackay@cac.gov.sl | |
| Other Actors Involved | State actors involved | SLEITI, NMA, MMR, MLCPE, ACC, SLEIPA, FIU, Petroleum Directorate | |
| | CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups | Transparency International Sierra Leone; Campaign for Good Governance; Society for Democratic Initiatives; Institute for Governance Reform; Centre for Accountability and the Rule of Law | |
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| Commitment 5 | |
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| Access to Information | |
| Commitment Start and End Date : September 2019 – August 2021 | |
| Lead implementing agency or actor | Right to Access Information Commission |
| Commitment Description | |
| What is the public problem that the commitment will address | <p>A number of data initiatives have been conducted to assess the data ecosystem in Sierra Leone. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data assessment conducted as part of the Open Data Readiness Assessment Report for Sierra Leone • Post-2015 Data Test (under the auspices of Southern Voice) • Data Revolution and Roadmap report on the Sustainable Development Goals <p>In addition, best practices suggest that there are often major projects being conducted through government that have inherent data dependencies, either in its development or need.</p> <p>The Proactive Disclosure component of the Right to Access Information Act 2013 governs all public authorities. Specifically, in Part 2 Section 8 (1), the Act delineates a minimum of 22 classes of information that will form the core proactive publication for every public authority in the country. This law aims to advance transparency and accountability among all government ministries, departments and agencies by implementing the law, as enacted. In 2018/2019, ten Ministries, Departments and Agencies were targeted through a World Bank funded Public Financial Management Integrated Consolidated Project (PFMICP) to produce publication schemes. Notably amongst them was Statistics Sierra Leone which sits on 43% of official statistics and amongst the first to produce a publication scheme.</p> <p>This commitment aims to upscale work done to include more Ministries, Departments and Agencies and non-state actors with a gendered lens and the notion of leaving no one behind. This commitment will also consider previous studies and available data sources and conduct a rapid data inventory exercise across core institutions and stakeholders to better understand the data topics currently available and quality. Twenty (20) key Ministries, Department and Agencies and ten (10) non state actors will participate and will be required to produce a proactive publication scheme on data availability and publication schedules on the open data portal.</p> |

A number of tools will be applied in the publication scheme to assess overall coverage including the Carter Foundation Implementation Assessment Tool, Open Data Barometer, Open Data Index, Open Data Inventory, the Carter Center Gender the Minimum Essential Data Package available as a module through the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Toolbox and the IAEG SDG Data Indicators list. The intent is to be able to capture high-value data (in terms of its potential use), understand who produces and uses data, capture data quality issues, and collect data to pilot how data coordination and sharing can take place across institutions and stakeholders. This activity will further refine assumptions in previous studies, align to the SDGs and further populate the open data portal illustrating potential use cases and value of open data. Proactive publication of information/data is the mainstay of timely availability of data. However, publication schemes have to be tailored to the specific operations of each Ministries, Department and Agency.

Demand-side stakeholders will also be trained on data literacy, for them to effectively use and interpret the data available. Due to the major shifts in society driven by technological advances in the collection, analysis and use of large data sets that has become commonplace, civil society organizations (non-state actors) need training and support to keep pace with global developments in the private and public sectors, so that they can continue to mediate between increasingly complex social groups and sectors in a digitalized future. The representation of the interests of civil society actors and their beneficiaries in a data-driven polity, and the development of innovative, robust and scalable solutions to social problems will all increasingly require data literacy from civil society organizations' that is currently not there.

In Sierra Leone, women are often excluded from the flow of information, both essential and strategic information as evidenced in the 'Multi Sector Impact Assessment of Gender Dimensions of the Ebola virus in Sierra Leone'. Limited access to information inhibits women's physical, economic, political autonomy, the reduction or elimination of structural obstacles, negative attitudes and perceptions of women, and gender based violence.

This commitment will therefore address more effective management of public resources and will also increase gender inclusion and accountability in Sierra Leone. This commitment will support the advancement of a robust and

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| | <p>effective access to information regime and improve access to information for women and girls in Sierra Leone.</p> |
| <p>What is the commitment</p> | <p>Increase the right to access information for all Sierra Leoneans</p> <p>Access to Information, as defined by OGP’s Access to Information Working Group Plan 2015, is established on the foundation that public information is a crucial component to open government, and “therefore a focus must be placed on enhancing the capacities of both institutions and society to identify, publish and disseminate useful information.” The plan also communicated access to information as a staple of OGP’s principles that when utilized, “is crucial to addressing the most pressing social needs, solving public problems, and improving the effectiveness of government institutions.”</p> <p>This commitment therefore will improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Proactive Disclosure of information held by public authorities. ✓ Improved access to information for women and girls. ✓ Timely and accurate reporting on the sustainable development goals indicators and the national agenda through open data. ✓ Effectiveness of public institutions by strengthening the whole of government and multiple stakeholders. |
| <p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem</p> | <p>The Right to Access Information Commission established the National Open Data Council (ODC) of Sierra Leone to push the frontiers of Open data and ensure that greater awareness and compliance is achieved, by all Public Authorities, in proactively strengthening availability and access to quality data and information, by the general public. This can only happen if all the key mechanisms are strengthened and strategic and concerted efforts are made by all stakeholders to achieve a society that subsist on quality, accessible and trustable open data and information required for quality decision making. The requirement for achieving a free, fair and just society points to the rightful access by society members to relevant quality data that is open.</p> <p>The proactive disclosure of information and leaving no one behind approach empowers citizenry who requires a sustainable development of their circumstances by all actors. Proactive disclosure and other means of making information accessible to women will allow women to make meaningful and informed decisions, engage authorities, and improve their socio-economic conditions. Additional data on</p> |

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| | women’s access to information allows stakeholders working in various sectors to refine their interventions aimed at empowering and improving development outcomes for women. | |
| Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values | <p>Access to quality, timely and user-friendly datasets and institutional information required by government, at all levels, for policy and evidence-based decision-making, is a major challenge for most government, non-governmental and public institutions. Data and information that speaks to indicators in the country’s National Development Plan that are aligned with the SDGs and expected to be reported on by MDAs, are difficult to access and use. Moreover, information on specific operational dimensions of the MDAs are also difficult to access which leads to less transparency, ineffective governance and poor accountability which impacts negatively on sustainable development. Additional challenges include data quality, effective sustainable access and inappropriate leveraging of technology to provide better access and management of the high priority datasets and information.</p> <p>This commitment therefore recommends</p> <p>Access to information: With the notion of leaving no one behind, every Sierra Leonean will have access to information held by Public Authorities.</p> <p>Public accountability: Public Authorities will account for information held by them in a user friendly manner.</p> | |
| Additional Information | <p>https://raic.gov.sl/index.php/en/ https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/ati/atlan-ta-declaration-for-the-advancement-of-womens-right-of-access-to-information.pdf http://www.data4sdgs.org/node/424</p> | |
| Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable | Start Date | End Date |
| The Right to Access Information Commission to prepare annual and special reports on women’s right of access to information to the Government of Sierra Leone, UN and Regional Special Rapporteurs, Working Groups, and Independent Experts. | September 2020 | September 2021 |
| 20 Public Authorities develop, identify and proactively disclose information and data sets meaningful for women. | December 2019 | December 2020 |

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| 20 Public Authorities should place information in spaces accessible to all women through modes and means (language, formats, presentation, simplified language) that allow women to access and use the information, particularly marginalized women. | | December 2019 | December 2020 |
| 60 Ministries, Department and Agencies to identify and produce a designation of public employees to serve as Public Information Officers. | | November 2019 | March 2020 |
| 60 Ministries, Department and Agencies to adopt internal rules on freedom of information, and include access to information budget lines in their annual national budgets. | | November 2019 | March 2020 |
| Improve access to data held by the Finance, Education, Health, Agriculture and Climate sectors through the Open Data Portal . | | November 2019 | September 2021 |
| 60 Ministries, Departments and Agencies and 10 Civil Society produce a proactive Disclosure scheme. | | November 2019 | September 2021 |
| Develop and ratify an Open Data Policy for Sierra Leone | | November 2019 | December 2020 |
| Contact Information | | | |
| Name of responsible person from implementing agency | | Yeama Thompson Commissioner, West Right to Access Information Commission | |
| Email and Phone | | Yeama.thompson@raic.gov.sl Yeama.thompson@gmail.com +232 79107752 | |
| Other Actors Involved | State actors involved | Parliamentary Committee on Access to Information, Ministry of Information and Communications, Cabinet Secretariat, Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s affairs, Human Rights Commission , National Commission for Democracy, Anti-Corruption Commission | |
| | CSOs, private sector, multilaterals , working groups | Society for Democratic Initiatives, Open Society Initiative West Africa, National Open Data Council, Forward Sierra Leone, Initiatives for Media Development, UN Women | |

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| Commitment 6 | |
| Gender | |
| Commitment Start and End Date September 2019 – July 2021 | |
| Lead implementing agency or actor | Ministry of Social Welfare Children and |
| Commitment Description | |
| What is the public problem that the commitment will address | <p>Women make up 50.8% of the population of Sierra Leone (<u>2015 Housing and Population Census</u>). However this representation fails to be reflected in key areas such as literacy, economic empowerment and decision-making and political leadership. For instance, women account for only 12.33% of current parliamentarians. Although some strides have been made in areas such as legal reforms and increased gender awareness and activism, entrenched cultural beliefs and practices that discriminate against women and girls, and stereotypical perception of women and girls remain a stumbling block in achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment.</p> <p>Despite some progress made in the quest for gender equality and women’s empowerment over the years, Sierra Leone still has mammoth challenges affecting the efforts to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of rights by women and men. On the positive side, there is increased gender awareness among stakeholders, some institutions have been established to prevent GBV such as the Family Support Unit and some legal reforms have taken place to rectify gender-based injustices, which have resulted in the enactment of laws such as the three Genders Justice Acts. The number of women in executive positions in the civil service has increased and the first female Attorney General was appointed 2018 by the current government. The government has also just launched the Free and Quality Education which provides a unique opportunity for many more girls to complete secondary school. However, there still remains a glaring absence of women in decision-making and political leadership. There are only 18 women among 146 parliamentarians (12.33%). Gender-based violence including rape is still significantly prevalent and most of the institutions that should respond to victims and</p> |

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| | <p>survivors are either not available or are inadequately equipped especially in relation to human resource capacity and logistics.</p> |
| <p>What is the commitment</p> | <p>To advance gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in Sierra Leone. This commitment seeks to minimize incidences of GBV in the country and strengthen the mechanisms that protect women and children; improve women’s human rights by enhancing their access to justice through improved knowledge of their rights, legal reforms and enhancement of the capacity of law enforcement agencies; improve Sierra Leonean women’s access to political leadership and decision-making at all levels; encourage sectorial ministries to ensure the integration of gender-oriented goals into fiscal policies, processes and programmes and meaningful resource allocation focusing on women’s needs.</p> |
| <p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem</p> | <p>Women form critical mass of the population of Sierra Leone and therefore any initiative aimed at promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment will make a quantum leap in addressing discrimination and patriarchal issues. It will promote women’s empowerment in the political, social, economic and cultural fields. It will ensure accountability to normative frameworks including CEDAW, BDPfA, AU Protocol on Women, UNSCR 1325, SDGs and Agenda 2063 among others.</p> <p>The GEWE policy is to create a framework that promotes equal rights for women and men in Sierra Leone, as a precedent to legislation that ensures gender equality and women’s empowerment. The policy will ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed and promoted as a pertinent element to sustainable economic development. This will greatly depend on the meaningful and timely allocation of resources and the efficient use of those resources to create a society in which women and men have equal access to basic services and enjoy the same rights and opportunities in enabling environments.</p> <p>The Bill will enumerate specific rights that reinforce the equality of women and men, while providing in law mechanisms for ensuring substantive equality and women’s empowerment.</p> |

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| | <p>Gender-disaggregated data provides a clear picture of the status of women and the impacts of the interventions of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies. This allows for more targeted and refined interventions by government and other actors.</p> |
| <p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values</p> | <p>The commitment helps to create safer communities, particularly for women and girls, by putting in place mechanisms for their physical, social, and economic protection from all forms of GBV.</p> <p>Women’s participation in political and decision-making processes is integral to gender-responsive policy making and inclusivity. It amplifies women’s voices in shaping development priorities at local and national levels.</p> |
| <p>Additional Information</p> | <p>The Government of Sierra Leone has developed and officially launched the Medium Term National Development Plan (2019-2023) with a whole cluster Five on “Empowering Women, Children and Persons with Disability”. This plan was fully aligned to the SDGs and Agenda 2063 which will ease implementation and reporting. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs has also finalized the National Gender Strategic Plan and the Sierra Leone National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and 1820.</p> <p>The demand for gender quotas in Sierra Leone derives its legitimacy from the provisions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report where it is stated that 30% representation for women in elected offices, cabinet and other political appointed positions should be women. It was envisaged that would increase to 50/50 gender parity within 10 years. This is in line with the obligation of the state to take action on the CEDAW convention 1979 which has been ratified by Sierra Leone. The Government of Sierra Leone is also a signatory to other instruments including the <i>UN Beijing Platform for Action</i> which states that governments should commit themselves to “Take measures, including, where appropriate, in electoral systems that encourage elective and non-elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same levels as men” (FWCW 1995: Art.190b); the protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ rights on <i>the rights of Women in Africa</i> states that “States Parties shall take specific positive action to promote participative governance and the equal participation</p> |

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| | | of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action” (Art.9). |
| Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable | | Start Date |
| | | End Date |
| 1. Cabinet reviews and adopts Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy | | November 2019 |
| 2. Parliamentary approval of the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy | | June 2020 |
| 3. Review the draft Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Bill | | December 2020 |
| 4. Parliament passes the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Act | | November 2021 |
| 5. Availability of gender disaggregated data by district (health, agriculture, education) | | June 2021 |
| Contact Information | | |
| Name of responsible person from implementing agency | | Charles Vandí Director of Gender, MSWGCA |
| Email and Phone | | bondofele@gmail.com ; charles.vandi@mswgca.gov.sl +23276691205 |
| Other Actors Involved | State actors involved | Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development; Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Health and Sanitation; Ministry of Political and Public Affairs; Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Statistics Sierra Leone and other line Ministries |
| | CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups | Campaign for Good Governance, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, Irish Aid, African Development Bank, PLAN SL, Action Aid, Oxfam, International Rescue Committee (Development Initiative Programme), Trocaire, Women’s Forum Sierra Leone |

| Commitment 7 | |
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| Open Parliament | |
| Commitment Start and End Date: September 2019 – August 2021 | |
| Lead implementing agency or actor | Office of the Clerk of Parliament |
| Commitment Description | |
| What is the public problem that the commitment will address | <p>The Government of Sierra Leone has demonstrated a strong desire to implement Open Government Partnership (OGP) Commitments, as demonstrated through the National Council for Civic Education and Development identifying and adopting OGP as a strategic pillar. Yet the Sierra Leone Parliament is not playing a key role within the OGP process. It is assumed that without Parliament’s commitment and support in the process it will be challenging for many of the OGP commitments to be fully implemented and there will continue to be challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. For instance, Parliament currently has very limited platforms to engage with citizens and CSOs and the Parliament is yet to provide annual reports on their operations to demonstrate leadership in accountability and transparency as regards lawmaking processes, oversight, and representation.</p> |
| What is the commitment | <p>The commitment entails action that will enable Parliament to become more open and transparent to its citizens and effectively collaborate with other actors in dispensing its functions as enshrined in the Constitution of Sierra Leone.</p> <p>Outcome 1: More open, responsive democratic institution with increased civil society’s engagement, the following are expected progress markers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parliament working group commits to conduct oversight on the implementation of the National Action Plan - Parliament implement and monitor the developed mechanisms for citizens’ participation in the legislative and budgeting process. - Parliament to produce annual reports on all its activities in an accessible formats (including special needs group) and publish in the parliamentary website. - Parliament to hold consultations and hearings with civil society organizations on |

the budgeting process, implementation, critical public policy issues and the Auditor General's Report for constructive inputs and feedback.

Outcome 2: Greater access and inclusion of women and marginalized groups and informal political participation, the following are expected progress markers:

- Develop a Gender and Equity Compliance Checklist that will be utilized by Government functionaries including political parties.
- Percentage increase in women and members of marginalized groups contesting for leadership positions in formal political institutions in Sierra Leone
- Parliament to assess budgeting allocation and approval based on the submission of Gender and Equity Compliance Certificate to ascertain that such body meets the benchmarks set justifying the level of accessibility and benefit received by marginalized groups through government programmes.

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| <p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem</p> | <p>Three key approaches will be utilised in the implementation of this programme and these are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capacity building of critical Committees (Transparency and Accountability, Public Accounts, Finance Committee, Legislative and Education Committees) that will establish Parliament’s leadership in OGP and capacitating MPs and ‘OGP Working Group’ as ‘champion’ in applying the OGP principles in the delivery of their work. 2. Supporting inclusive mechanisms in Parliament using an integrated approach (we will be utilizing variety of resources for different interventions as a way of inspiring growth and positive output). 3. Building a network of marginalised groups promoting OGP in local communities and linking the work of marginalized groups to Parliament which includes women and the disability community. | |
| <p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values</p> | <p>If the Sierra Leone Parliament embraces the OGP principles in an inclusive way – through working in alignment at both the national and community levels with women, youths and other politically marginalized groups - OGP can be used as a tool to aid the Sierra Leone Parliament to carry out its legislative, oversight and representative roles to ensure better service delivery and enhanced representation, accountability and transparency.</p> | |
| <p>Additional Information</p> | <p>An ad hoc Parliamentary committee, the OGP Parliamentary Working Group, has been set as a permanent committee to champion open government issues in all Parliamentary proceedings going forward. In addition, Parliament has partnered with the National Council for Civic Education and Development to undertake constituency town hall meetings so as to keep constituents abreast of proceedings in Parliament.</p> | |
| <p>Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable</p> | <p>Start Date</p> | <p>End Date</p> |

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| Updating of the parliamentary APP to enhance citizens engagement in the business of Parliament (Legislature and oversight) | | October 2019 | September 2021 |
| Institute half yearly platform for CSO and Parliament to interact on various national issues | | August 2019 | August 2021 |
| Establish and train OGP working group to act as Parliamentary champions to ensure parliamentary openness and access to information | | October 2019 | October 2021 |
| Parliament shall develop annual report and ensure proactive publication of these materials to the public in an accessible format. | | August 2019 | December 2021 |
| Access to parliament for persons with disability through a provision of a ramp and sign language interpretation (for major debates) to ensure all citizens are given due consideration in terms of availability of space, safety and protocols. | | January 2020 | December 2021 |
| Parliament shall erect a service charter in 5 strategic locations and use of other media platforms(online, radio, TV) to enhance public knowledge on their mandates and services | | August 2019 | December 2021 |
| Contact Information | | | |
| Name of responsible person from implementing agency | | Hon. Paran Umarr Tarawally Clerk of Parliament | |
| Email and Phone | | hesed4sidida@gmail.com (+232) 78 649164 | |
| Other Actors Involved | State actors involved | Parliament of Sierra Leone specifically; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Departments: Information and Research Services (Public Relations, ICT, Research and Library) Finance (Parliamentary Budget Office) - Committees: Public Account, Transparency and Accountability, Finance, Legislative and Education. National Council for Civic Education and Development (NaCCED) | |
| | CSOs, private sector, multilateral s, working groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) • Campaign for Good Governance (CGG) • Sierra Leone Union on Disability Issues (SLUDI) • OGP Steering Committee • OGP Multi Stakeholders Group | |

| Commitment 8 | |
|---|---|
| Records and Archives Management | |
| Commitment Start and End Date October 2019 – June 2021 | |
| Lead implementing agency or actor | Ministry of Information and Communications |
| Commitment Description | |
| What is the public problem that the commitment will address | The Public Archives Act is an essential step in ensuring effective implementation of the Right to Access Information Act. Without proper records management systems of key government documents, they cannot be publicly disclosed. The critical lack of records has hampered the fight against corruption and achievement of international benchmarks, such as attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. |
| What is the commitment | This commitment is geared towards ensuring that Sierra Leone has a law on Archives and Records management which will support the implementation of the Right to Access Information. |
| How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem | <p>Effective records management is also important for accountable and transparent operation of public institutions. To complete the passage of the National Records and Archives Bill and to harmonize policies and procedures for managing digital records with the Right to Access Information law and the open data portal.</p> <p>This commitment will support the implementation of the Right to Access Information Act in a bid to improve public transparency. It will also support the fight against corruption by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increasing public integrity; ➤ Improving the effective management of public resources; and ➤ Using innovation and technology. |
| Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values | <p>Access to information: The passing of the Archives and Records Management Law will support the implementation of the right to access information law.</p> <p>Public Accountability: When there is a law that makes it mandatory for public officials to keep public documents, citizen will use it to hold public officials accountable especially when the records relate to service delivery.</p> |

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| | Technology and innovation: The assessment of digital records in the government agencies to determine what exists and to develop structures for coordinating, capturing, preserving and sharing these records will set the pace for accessing digital records. | | |
| Additional Information | <p>The Right to Access Information Act was passed in October 2013 and the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) was set up in 2014.</p> <p>Efforts were made to pass the Records and Archives Management Bill in 2016 and 2017, but it was stalled along the way before being tabled in Parliament.</p> | | |
| Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable | | Start Date | End Date |
| 1. Cabinet approval of Records Management Policy | | November 2019 | March 2020 |
| 2. Cabinet approval of the draft National Archives and Records Management Bill | | November 2019 | June 2020 |
| 3. Parliament debates and passes the National Archives and Records Management Bill into law | | June 2020 | November 2021 |
| Contact Information | | | |
| Name of responsible person from implementing agency | | Mr. Mohamed Jalloh Ministry of Information and Communications | |
| Email and Phone | | mjalloh@mic.gov.sl +23276242892 | |
| Other Actors Involved | State actors involved | Right to Access Information Commission, Human Resource Management Office, Public Sector Reform Unit, Directorate of Science Technology and Innovation, Office of the President | |
| | CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups | Mr. Muniru Kawa, Independent Consultant Society for Knowledge Management Society for Democratic Initiatives Federations | |

Annex A: NAP III Commitments by Grand Challenge

| Commitment | Grand Challenges | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Improving Public Services | Increasing Public Integrity | More effective management of public resources | Creating Safer communities | Improving Corporate Accountability |
| Access to Justice Ensure access to justice for all by expanding community-based justice services and increasing transparency in local level structures | | | | | |
| Education Ensure equity, efficiency and learning outcomes in schools | | | | | |
| Tax Exemption Increase transparency and accountability in the granting of tax incentive in Sierra Leone | | | | | |
| Beneficial Ownership A well instituted and functional Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Regime in Sierra Leone that will promote effective, credible and sustainable foreign | | | | | |

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| investments for economic growth and development by the end of the year 2020. | | | | | |
| Right to Access Information This commitment will support the advancement of a robust and effective access to information regime in Sierra Leone | | | | | |
| Gender To increase the number of women in political leadership as a measure to promote gender equality | | | | | |
| Open Parliament Open, Inclusive and Transparent Legislative Process that will be in the interest of all Sierra Leoneans. | | | | | |
| Records Management Pass a robust and proactive Archives and Records Management Bill to support the implementation of the Right to Access Information Act in a bid to improve public transparency | | | | | |

Annex B: Key Actors

Open Government Partnership

Ministerial Lead

Mr. Mohamed Rahman Swaray
Minister, Ministry of Information and Communications

OGP Point of Contact

Kalilu Ibrahim Totangi
Chairman, National Council for Civic Education and Development

Steering Committee

Yeama Sarah Thompson
Commissioner, West
Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC)

Marcella Samba Sesay
Executive Director
Campaign for Good Governance

Sonia Umu Karim
Director
Performance Management and Service Delivery

Abu Bakarr Kamara
Coordinator
Budget Advocacy Network

Sahr L Jusu
Financial Secretary

Lavina Banduah
Executive Director
Transparency International, SL

Aiah Togbawa
Director
Audit Service Sierra Leone

Mariama Sowe
Gender and Media Specialist
Initiatives for Media Development

Francis Ben Kaifala
Commissioner
Anti Corruption Commission

Eleanor Thompson Esq
Lawyer
Namati

Emmanuel Turay
Acting Director of Information
Ministry of Information and Communications

Charles Kamara
Project Officer
Education for All Coalition

Shahid Korjie
Acting Coordinator, Justice Sector
Attorney General and Ministry of Justice

Emmanuel Saffa Abdulai Esq
Executive Director
Society for Democratic Initiatives