



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION

OF THE

**PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES
FOR THE DECADE 2001-2010**

January 2006

I. Introduction

1. Poverty reduction remains a major challenge for the Government and people of Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leone Integrated Household survey conducted in 2003/2004 indicates that 70% of the population live below the poverty line and poverty remains pervasive and endemic. There is also the need to pursue accountable, transparent and corruption-free policies for stability as well as to ensure a carefully sequenced opening up of investment and trade to deliver economic growth and development. The relatively large external debt which stands at US\$1.7 billion in 2004 militates against a sustainable economic recovery since the servicing of this debt continue to divert the much needed resources from the social sector which may impact on the timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the goals and targets contained in the Brussels Programme of Action. However a recent IMF review indicates that Sierra Leone will manage its external debt on a sustainable basis by mid 2006 when it is expected to reach the HIPC completion point.

2. At the time of adoption of the Programme of Action for the LDCs for the decade 2001-2010, Sierra Leone was still a conflict country, a conflict that lasted for over a decade with all its attendant consequences. The conflict was officially declared ended in January 2002. The end of the war opened up the entire country for the free movement of goods and services, greatly improved resource allocation and utilisation and boosted the economic and social recovery process. Even before the end of the War Sierra Leone was and continue to implement series of interventions aimed at post war economic recovery and meeting global commitments including the Brussels Programme of Action and Millennium Development Goals. The goals and targets of the BPoA were internalised in national documents such as the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the National Recovery Strategy, Vision 2025 and in the full PRSP. In early 2005, with the completion and commencement of implementation of the Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy, the country has transitioned from post conflict emergency to a poverty reduction based development framework. Significant strides have thus been made in the implementation of the Programme of Action with a number of actions and policy measures relating to the commitments of the Brussels Programme of Action adopted or undertaken. With much international support, progress has made in consolidating security, in rebuilding the social sectors and economic capital and supporting the vulnerable. This not withstanding there still remain challenges which need to be addressed for the successful implementation of the programme of action by 2010.

II. Mechanisms for Follow-up on BPoA

4. Following the adoption Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA), a National Focal Point was appointed in the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning who coordinates follow-up and reporting on the BPoA implementation. A National Forum which draws largely from the membership of the National Preparatory Committee for the Brussels Conference was also constituted. This

Forum reviews the annual national reports before submission to the UN-OHRLLS and work closely with the MGDs Report Task force to ensure harmonisation of reporting. The task force also meets from time to time to discuss issues relating to the BPoA and propose ways in which follow-up could be enhanced. Also through the Results framework of the Development Partnership Committee, which is partnership framework, issues which relate to the goals and targets of the BPoA are reviewed on a regular basis.

5. This report looks at progress recorded so far, challenges/constraints to the successful implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, lessons learnt provides some recommendations for the way forward.

III. Commitment 1: Fostering a people-centred policy framework

6. With the cessation of hostilities in 2001 and in order to develop a framework that is people oriented and people centred, an interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper which, among other things, sought to empower people living in poverty through improving their access to basic social and other types of services and productive resources was prepared. A National Recovery Strategy (NRS) which supported the transition from peace-keeping to peace-building and provided the framework for the recovery efforts of the country was prepared in 2002. The NRS laid the foundation for the Vision 2025 and eventually the full PRSP. The Vision 2025 which was prepared in 2003 articulates the overall vision of the long-term development agenda for Sierra Leone and it is within this long-term vision that the Poverty Reduction Strategy is set. The three pillars of the Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy (SL-PRS) are aligned to the Millennium Developed Goals and thus the goals and targets of the BPoA.

7. The Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy (SL-PRS) which was submitted to the World Bank in March 2005, articulates a strategy that supports a wide ranging set of policies aimed at poverty reduction, progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and the goals and targets of the Brussels Programme of Action. The SL-PRS considers a number of short to medium-term challenges that should not only impact immediately on the living conditions of the people but also lay a solid framework for addressing the long-term causes of conflict and poverty. It also considers a number of short-term challenges that need to be met immediately. These include the impact of the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases such as malaria, typhoid and wide-ranging communicable diseases, the need to provide adequate human settlements, water and sanitation to households that are still lacking these services. It is hoped that the successful implementation of the SL-PRS will result in the achievement of the MDGs and the goals and targets contained in the Brussels Programme of Action. Already some modest achievements have been recorded. The first Millennium Development Goals Report for Sierra Leone prepared in mid 2005 shows that the country is on track in meeting some of the MGDs particularly that relating to universal primary education.

8. The successful implementation of the IPRSP and the NRS resulted in Economic recovery in 2001-2004. Real GDP expanded from 5.4 percent in 2001 to 6.8 percent in 2004 and 7.2 percent in 2005. Gross capital formation as a percentage of GDP increased from 14.3% in 2003 to 19.6% in 2004 (World Development Indicators database 2005). According to the Sierra Leone Integrated Household survey conducted in 2003/2004, approximately 70% of the population was found to be below the poverty line, 26% is unable to meet the basic dietary needs and the share of the poorest quintile in consumption is 6.6%. To consolidate the gains made so far and improve on the areas still lagging behind, bold economic and structural reforms aimed at sustaining economic recovery and improving public financial management and service delivery so as to meet internationally agreed goals and targets, continue to be undertaken. Most of these reforms are at an advanced stage and progress has been made in strengthening accountability and transparency, anti-corruption and monitoring of service delivery. Data from the Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey was carried out in 2003/2004 and the National Population and Housing Census conducted in December 2004 will be helpful in shaping up government policies and programmes that are people centred and people oriented.

9. Within the framework of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the United Nations Country Team and other donors are assisting the Government of Sierra Leone in the areas of poverty reduction, human rights and reconciliation, good governance, peace and stability and economic recovery.

IV Commitment 2: Building Good Governance at the National and International Levels

10. Good governance is a strategy in the fight against poverty and underdevelopment in Sierra Leone. It is one of the three pillars of the Sierra Leone Poverty Strategy. Wide ranging and comprehensive governance reform measures are therefore being undertaken. This includes the enactment of the Anti-Corruption Act in 2000; Anti-money Laundering Act in 2004; a new Public Procurement Act 2004; the Local Government Act in 2004; the new Government Budgeting and Accountability Bill; and an Investment Code in 2005. Institutions have also been set up to improve governance in the country. The Anti-Corruption Commission was set up in 2000 and its capacity to tackle the issue of corrupt practices especially in public financial management in a more robustly is being enhanced. A National Anti Corruption Strategy, which outlines the measures needed to reduce the opportunity for corrupt acts to occur, is being implemented. Several initiatives such as the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court were undertaken. A National Commission for Privatisation was established to implement the divestiture programme and the National Revenue Authority was set up to improve tax administration and management. Public service reforms

continue and modalities are being firmed up for the introduction of a Senior Executive Service in order to improve the productivity of the Civil Service. Judicial and legal reforms have been undertaken and are improving the justice system; and the security system has been significantly restructured. Sierra Leone has acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

11. The Government of Sierra Leone embarked on a decentralisation process in 2004. The first local government elections in 32 years were successfully conducted in May 2004 following Paramount Chieftaincy elections in 2003. The elections were aimed at reactivating local government administration at district level, decentralisation of central government functions and building local level capacity to manage the decentralised system. A comprehensive plan for devolving central government functions to the local councils as well as the sequencing of the devolution process has been prepared. A decentralised public financial management system has also been established with the aim of improving public financial management nationally; a special financial management unit has been established in the Ministry of Finance., The World Bank, the EU, UNDP, DFID and other donors are facilitating the devolution of power to local authorities and the participation of the citizenry in the development process. The budget is now presented in the form of a medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF). Budgetary Oversight Committees have been created to assist the determination of budgetary priorities.

12. The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been presented to the Government and contains recommendations for improving governance and ensuring that atrocities of the past are not repeated. The report is now being transformed into a Government White Paper for approval and implementation of its recommendations. Effective civil society especially NGOs and other stakeholders' participation is evident in all the development processes. Budget discussions continue to be held in public. The preparing the PRSP had the active engagement of civil society including NGOs and local communities.

V. Commitment 3: Building Human and Institutional Capacities

13. The promotion of human and institutional capacity is critical if any meaningful development and poverty reduction are to be achieved. The third pillar in the SL-PRS which is the vehicle for implementing the BPoA addresses human development. Government's strategic focus has been and continues to centre on promoting basic education, providing basic health care and other social services and empowering vulnerable people.

14. In the area of education Government, in collaboration with a number of donors and NGOs is implementing programmes and projects aimed at rehabilitating basic education infrastructure. The Education Act was passed in 2003 making basic education compulsory, and contained punitive measures for

those hindering it. Fees for national school exams were waived in 2001. A SABABU Education Project was set up to undertake the reconstruction and rehabilitation of basic education facilities including primary and secondary schools. As a result of these policies, indicators for education have markedly improved. Data available from the Ministry of Education indicates that gross primary school enrolment rates have increased by 15% between school years 2002/2003 and 2003/2004. Female enrolment rate in primary school stands at 42% and Female literacy rate is 19%. Therefore, girls continue to be encouraged to go to school through several initiatives including incentive based schemes. For example full support is being provided to all girls in junior secondary schools in the Eastern and Northern regions of the country which have been lagging behind in female education. A Girl Child Project has been introduced with the aim of narrowing the gender gap in primary and secondary school enrolment. But there is still a problem of retention up to the secondary school as a large number of girls continue to drop out of school. The Government places emphasis on universal primary education and has progressively increased expenditure on education. The education budget has increased by 500% between 1999 and 2005. Primary school enrolment rate has increased substantially from just over half a million in 2002/2001 to over one million in 2005/2006 school year. This has put the country on track in achieving the MDG goal of universal primary education. Despite all these interventions the need for educational services still outstrips supply. More robust interventions are needed if Sierra Leone is to stay on track in meeting the universal primary education MDG target.

14. To promote and coordinate technical and vocational education, the National Council for Technical, the Vocational and other Academic Awards was established. As a result the number and quality of technical and vocational institutions continue to improve. A National Youth Policy has been adopted and vigorous youth empowerment programmes are being pursued. A youth project aimed at job creation for especially youths who cannot be absorbed into the formal employment due to lack of skills was presented at the November 2005 Consultative Group Meeting on Sierra Leone. This should help to remove youths from the streets and provide them with skills that can earn them gainful employment. This is also considered a strategy for maintaining peace and stability.

15. In the area of health, Government continues to implement programmes with the support of the World Bank, AfDB, EU, IDB, the European Union and other donors, all aimed at rebuilding health infrastructure. The health care delivery system is being rehabilitated, facilities are becoming functional, and accessibility to basic health services has improved. According to data from the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Under-Five Mortality Rates have reduced from a high of 284/1000 live births in 1999 to a current level of 265/1000 and Infant Mortality Rates is 170 per 1000 live births. About 40% of under-five children are malnourished. The national coverage for fully immunised one-year olds has increased from 28% in 1997 to 54% in 2004. Malaria and Tuberculosis (TB)

infection rates are currently 40% and 2.5% respectively. Malaria remains the leading cause of illness with a prevalence rate of 47% among under-five children. This is due to the fact that only a small number of under-five children and pregnant women are reported to be sleeping under treated bednets. Insecticides treated bednets usage among under-fives and pregnant women has only increased slightly from 2% in 2002 to less than 7% in 2005.

16. Maternal mortality rates remain high at 1800 per 100,000 live births. To date no study has indicated any reduction in maternal mortality rates in the country. This may be due to the fact that measuring maternal mortality rates requires large scale costly surveys or regular censuses. Only 42% of births are attended by trained health personnel and the majority of maternal deaths are due to obstetric complications that can be successfully treated. The national Contraceptive prevalence rate is only 4%. In order to address problems, a number of actions are being undertaken nationally. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation has established a "Healthy Mother and Child Task Force" to strengthen the coordination of healthcare delivery to all children and women of child bearing age. A Maternal and child health Project is also being implemented. Guidelines for Obstetric and new born emergencies have been prepared to assist doctors and nurses with a bid to reducing infant and maternal mortality rates. A Reproductive Health Policy for Sierra Leone is also at advanced stage of preparation. A Prevention of Maternal Mortality Association comprising of medical personnel, social scientist and NGOs has been formed to further address this issue. The MCH/EPI has been strengthened with increased coverage and access to basic health care for pregnant women, lactating mothers and under-fives.

17. The water and sanitation situation remains unsatisfactory. The SL-PRS sector reviews indicate a 45% national coverage for water. However, district survey by UNICEF and other partners indicate disparities among districts with the northern and eastern districts recording lower figures than 45%. The Water Supply Division estimate current national coverage of 25% for safe water and 15% for sanitation. Government continues to receive assistance from donors namely UNICEF, IDB and JICA in implementing water supply-related programmes in deprived rural areas.

18. The final report of the HIV/AIDS Seroprevalence and Behavioural Risk Factor Survey in Sierra Leone conducted in 2005 gives a national prevalence rate of 1.54% up from the revised prevalence rate of 0.9% observed by a survey jointly organised by Statistics Sierra Leone and the United States Centre for Diseases Control in 2002. The 2002 survey also observed a national condom usage among ages 12-49 of 17.9% - 11.4% for females and 20.7% for males. This may be due to the fact that only a small number of the population has the correct knowledge about HIV/AIDS. The 2002 survey shows that only 15.6% (21.2% males and 11.6% females) of the population had correct knowledge about the disease. As a result, the National HIV/Secretariat is scaling up its

interventions and is decentralising the implementation of HIV/AIDS programmes. A National Strategy Framework has been elaborated for 2005-2009 with the aim of preventing new infections and providing treatment and support to those already infected.

19. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs is addressing gender-and children-related issues. Gender and Child issues were mainstreamed into the PRSP. A National Gender-in-Development Policy has been formulated. This is aimed at enhancing the participation of women in decision-making at national, provincial, district and local levels. Furthermore, the Local Government Act of 2004 requires at least 50% female representation in District and Ward Committees. However only 10.9% of local councillors are female, 14.3% of seats in parliament are held by women. Female cabinet ministers represent 13% of cabinet ministers while female deputy ministers account for 20% of the total and 6.8% of paramount chiefs are female. The disparities in education persist. In primary and secondary schools nation wide, enrolment rates are 64% males and 37% females. The composition of students at the university level is 19% females and 81% males.

20. National training institutions are being restructured and strengthened to provide relevant training locally. Most of the key government institutions are receiving capacity building support and Reviews of line ministries' human resources and functions have been undertaken as a means of delivering improved essential services to its people. An Institutional Reform Capacity Building Programme was established to build local capacity to manage the decentralised system of governance.

VI. Commitment 4: Building productive capacity to make globalization work for LDCs

21. Government is pursuing a strategy of building its productive capacity so as to take advantage of the benefits of globalisation. In this regard a number of measures have been undertaken.

22. The road network is progressively being improved with the support of the European Union and the World Bank. Over 70% of the rural feeder road network, and about 320 key bridges and ferries have been rehabilitated. Several highway projects are ongoing including the Freetown-Conakry highway that links Sierra Leone and Guinea as part of the trans-West African highway. The requirement for improvements in the road sector is massive and need substantial investments.

23. Telecommunication usage is being encouraged in order to exploit fully the benefits of globalisation. Telecommunications facilities especially cellular phones have improved significantly. Between 2001 and 2005 cellular operators have increased from 2 to 5. According to data from the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the number of subscribers of cellular phones increased from

500 in 2002 to about 297,000 in 2005. The subscriber base for main is estimated at 23,327. The number of Internet Cafés is increasing at a fast rate. Whilst there is an increasing usage of computers by government ministries companies and non governmental organisation, computer use in universities and junior and high schools is still very limited and needs urgent intervention. A Science and Technology Policy has been prepared and the Science and Technology Council established to coordinate the implementation of the S&T Policy. A lot of Distance Learning is also taking place. Three Sierra Leoneans in 2005 earned Doctorate Degrees through distance learning. The process of formulating a National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) Policy is ongoing. The NICI plan is to be completed by mid 2006. Funds have been allocated by ECA for a baseline survey on ICT infrastructure as there is no currently reliable data on this.

24. The development of small and medium-sized enterprises is being pursued through the establishment of export processing zone, provision of micro finance; reactivation of skills training centres; facilitating the development of value added products for accessing markets in the United States and Europe through the United States African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the European Union's Everything But Arms (EBA) Initiatives; and formulating transparent investment guidelines. Government, through the Commonwealth, is implementing a pilot project for the development of small and medium scale enterprises. The aim is to develop and promote small scale enterprises, modernise and expand the present operations of these enterprises, reduce cost and improve quality, add value and develop skills. The National Commission for Privatisation has commenced the process of selling a number of public enterprises.

25. A new mining policy aimed at was approved in 2004. Government is pursuing the immediate reactivation of current mining leases, including the just reactivated Rutile, Bauxite and Iron Ore mines; mitigation of environmental degradation while encouraging investors to engage in small-scale artisanal diamond mining projects in partnership with local communities.

26. Government and donors are putting in place agricultural support measures such as the provision of machinery and improved seedlings to farmers and farming communities. This is expected to help not only in achieving Government's goal of food security but also encouraging crop diversification for both domestic consumption and export. Government is channelling support to the agriculture sector through various initiatives such as the food security programme known as "Operation Feed The Nation". With support from partners notably UNDP, FAO and the ADB considerable improvement has been made in the agricultural sector. With support from UNDP, Agricultural Business Units (ABUs) have been established with in the rural areas. The ABUs comprise more than 130,000 farmers that account for the anticipated increase in agricultural production.

27. Tourism is being stimulated but the infrastructure to boost this sector remains inadequate. The Belgian Tourist Board has undertaken an exploratory mission to assess ways of investing in the sector. The fishing sector is being revitalised to play a pivotal role in revenue generation for government.

VII. Commitment 5: Enhancing the role of trade in development

28. The Government maintains a liberalised trading system to promote trade and diversify exports. A number of initiatives have also been taken to promote trade.

29. An Investment Code was enacted in 2004 and contains provision for an Investment Advisory Council which will provide increased visibility for Sierra Leone's progress in creating an environment conducive to investment and poverty reduction. The Government has embarked on an export promotion drive through the strengthening of the Sierra Leone Export Development and Investment Corporation (SLEDIC) which is serving as a "one-stop-shop" that simplifies business registration and minimises transactions cost. The Privatisation Commission is facilitating the transfer of ownership of public enterprises to the private sector and promoting the flow of foreign direct investment. A Private Sector Development Forum was held in 2004 to expose International Financial Institutions to the country's private sector with a view to sensitising the Sierra Leonean private sector on what financial resources were available in private sector windows of these Financial Institutions and how they could be accessed. The Ministry of Trade and Industry in collaboration with the World Bank has undertaken a study on Administrative Barriers, the recommendations of which are now being implemented. An Integrated Framework for trade related technical assistance study was undertaken in 2005. The result is being awaited for implementation. A Trade Policy Review was also undertaken with the support of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The investment climate has been substantially deregulated to boost investment and private sector development. Also a Private Sector Development Project and a Small and Medium Scale Programme for Industrial Development are currently being implemented.

30. Sierra Leone obtained the AGOA Visa for textiles and garments in April 2004 and is exploring export opportunities available through other initiatives such as those afforded by those afforded through the European Union-African Caribbean and Pacific (EU-ACP) cooperation, World Trade Organisation and the economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The Standards Bureau is implementing standards and quality control measures to make our products competitive. Trade issues were addressed in the PRSP. Within the framework of ECOWAS and the West African Second Monetary Zone (WAMZ), Government is restructuring its import tariffs consistent with the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET). Through the EU-ACP Economic Partnerships Agreement (EPA),

Government's capacity in trade negotiations is being enhanced through technical assistance to the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

VIII. Commitment 6: Reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment

31. A number of interventions have been implemented in the area of environmental protection. There are in place the National Environment Protection Act, the National Environmental Action Plan, the National Environmental Policy, and the National Environment Protection Board to minimize the adverse environmental impact of economic activities, especially that of large-scale and alluvial diamond mining where the major threat lies. Sierra Leone is a signatory to the three Rio Conventions. A National Capacity Self Assessment on the three conventions has been undertaken. The UNFCCC First National Communications report is being compiled and the Kyoto Protocol was ratified in 2005.. Sierra Leone has prepared a UNCCD country report. Enabling activities are being undertaken with financial and technical assistance from GEF and UNEP on the protection of the Ozone layer and Biodiversity. A Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation Project has been initiated. A project for sustainable land use management is being implemented. The country is in the process of developing a Biodiversity Framework for Cartaginal Protocol implementation. A National Action Plan for the implementation of the United National Convent to combat Land Degradation is being prepared. A research and information gathering on the substances that deplete the ozone layer is currently underway. A number of environmental NGOs are collaborating with Government in the area of environmental sensitisation, advocacy etc. Environmental concerns were also mainstreamed in the PRSP. A National Environmental Commission has been set up in 2005 to coordinate environment issues in the country.

32. The Office of National Security (ONS) was set up in 2002 for coordinating national security, intelligence gathering and analysis. The ONS is implementing the national Disaster Management Policy with the aim of setting up the institutions that will be responsible for enforcing disaster policy, promoting dialogue, sensitization and capacity building and consideration of possible responses to critical events declared as emergencies or disasters; including national security. A National Social Security and Insurance Trust has been established to provide social safety nets to the vulnerable. Special programmes have also been set up to address the problem of the vulnerable. These include the setting up of the National Commission for War Affected Children and special youth projects that include the disabled, special programme for the handicapped and jobs for the amputees. The National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) was established to strengthen social integration and protection of the vulnerable people after years of war and is implementing programmes that are helping poor village communities develop complimentary infrastructure and manage and implement their investments.

IX. Commitment 7: Mobilising financial resources

33. Sierra Leone completed its Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (IPRSP) in 2001 and with its approval by the joint Boards of the IMF and the World Bank in September of the same year, the IMF approved Sierra Leone's first three-year programme under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). The country also reached Decision Point under the enhanced heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative in March 2002 and began receiving HIPC relief in the same year. Interim debt relief of US\$13.1 million was delivered to Sierra Leone from March 2002 to October 2005. HIPC resources have led to substantial increases in social and economic expenditure for poverty reduction related activities. This has allowed more allocations in health, education, agriculture, rural water supply, feeder roads; and government's domestic development expenditure has increased significantly. Sierra Leone is expected to reach HIPC completion point in mid 2006 after the first year of implementation of the SL-PRS.

34. The World Bank, The African Development bank, the European Union, the Islamic Development Bank, DFID, the United Kingdom and other multilateral and bilateral development partners have agreed programmes in support of strategic sectors including health, education, governance, security, agriculture, capacity building and public financial management. A €50 million Poverty Reduction Budget Support to Sierra Leone approved by the European Union became effective in November 2005. The Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy and other national programmes including the Youth Development Programme were presented to development partners at a Consultative Group Meeting held in London, United Kingdom from 29-30 November 2005. Pledges to the tune of US\$800 million were made.

35. The joint Development Partnership Committee (DEPAC) which was established following the Consultative Group Meeting in Paris in November 2002, has had the responsibility of monitoring the agreed Consultative Group benchmarks, which included completion of the full PRSP. Since 2003 DEPAC has been meeting bi-monthly and guided the preparation of the PRSP. It provided an excellent opportunity for the donor community, government and several other development stakeholders (including Civil Society partners) to exchange views on the country's development efforts and to respond to challenges while charting the way forward. DEPAC has led to significant improvements in the quality and focus of post-conflict policies, including aid coordination and effectiveness. The 2005 CG renewed DEPAC as the framework for partner consultations and will review progress in implementing the PRS through the activity matrix and results framework on a quarterly basis. A Multi-Donor Budget Support programme was adopted by the EU, DFID and the World Bank at the 2005 CG to harmonise their budget processes so as to increase impact, reduce transaction costs and promote the predictability of resources flows. A PRS Trust Fund which offers new donors a low transaction cost vehicle

for contributing to the resources towards the objective of the SL-PRS was also endorsed.

36. Government is encouraging public private-partnerships and is improving its financial systems through the establishment of Community Banks and the establishment of commercial bank branches in the rural areas. A National Micro-Finance Policy is being implemented and seeks to harness the vast potentials for resource mobilisation in the informal financial sector for development. Sensitisation on the policy has commenced nationwide.

X. Challenges, Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

37. Despite significant gains already made, the current interventions are far from adequate. There is a need for increased investment in the social sector as well as in the environment.

38. The infrastructure particularly that of roads and electricity remains inadequate and there is need for more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to fill these gaps if Sierra Leone is to take advantage of the benefits of globalisation.

39. The Expansion of the private sector remains a challenge.

40. Local capacity to implement pro-poor programmes remains weak.

41. Most of our development programmes are largely donor funded. Unless this is sustained, there could be a reversal of the gains already recorded.

42. Statistical capacity to monitor international goals and targets including those contained in the BPoA and the MDGs though improving remain weak.

44. The pace of implementation of some programmes is dictated by donors who fund such programmes. This affects the timely implementation of these programmes and thus their impact. National ownership of programmes is therefore essential for any meaningful impact to be achieved.

45. Effective involvement of the UN agencies especially the UNDP is critical to the successful implementation of the BPoA in the remaining five years. The BPoA has not been given the recognition and the visibility it deserves among the UN agencies in country. Lack of resources for consultation hinders the timely preparation and submission of the annual reports. This exerts lot of pressure on the National focal point to submit timely reports.

XI. The Way Forward

46. The UN agencies to be more involved in the follow-up and implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action and make the BPoA more visible in their various programmes.

47. Resources for consultations and advocacy on the BPoA should be made available.

48. The involvement of sub-regional groupings such as ECOWAS could prove useful to the success of the Programme of Action for the LDCs.

49. Improving the statistical capacity to generate data that will be used in effectively tracking the goals and targets of the BPoA.