



SIERRA LEONE PEOPLE'S PARTY



THE NEW DIRECTION: *CONSOLIDATING GAINS AND ACCELERATING TRANSFORMATION*

PEOPLE'S MANIFESTO 2023



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FREETOWN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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FOREWORD



Five years ago, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) under my leadership promised the People of Sierra Leone a "New Direction" in the People's Manifesto. That Manifesto represented a contract between the SLPP and the Sierra Leonean electorate. Our Vision of a united, peaceful and progressive Sierra Leone presented in that Manifesto won your approval and vote, and you elected me as President of the Republic of Sierra Leone. When I took the oath of office on my inauguration day, I Leoneans, regardless of political affiliation, religion, and tribe.

By the grace of God, five years on, I can say to the People of Sierra Leone that under my leadership and the New Direction Government I put together, we have made good on the most critical promises for transforming Sierra Leone. As we embarked on setting our country on a new path, the COVID-19 Pandemic broke out with far reaching consequences on the lives of millions in Sierra Leone and testing our resolve to transform the country. I am proud to say that we passed that test, with Sierra Leone seen as an exemplary case for effectively addressing the Pandemic when it inevitably reached our shores. We are currently in the midst of a global economic shock resulting from the Russia-Ukraine Conflict that has potential to upend gains we have made in my first term.

In the last five years, we took on big challenges and we succeeded in addressing them even under these unprecedented global challenges. We prioritised human capital development as the flagship programme. The results we have achieved are laudable even to our most stern critics. On almost every single indicator in education, from access, literacy and numeracy rate, gender parity in outcomes, transition rate, etc., Sierra Leone is better today than five years ago. It gives me great hope that our children are learning in schools again while removing the burden of school and exam fees from parents. On health, Sierra Leone has not only improved, but we perform better on most health outcome indicators than most of our regional neighbours. Far less women die during delivery and more infants grow up to see their 5th birthday, than five years ago. My Presidency has perhaps been most consequential for promoting rights for women and children. We have engrained in our laws that women should have the same opportunities as men in every facet of life, and we continue to empower them to do so. The "Hands off Our Girls" campaign led by the First Lady has considerably helped to keep our girls longer in schools and protect them from early pregnancy and marriage. With increased investments in tertiary education and technical vocational training, our youth are better trained than before. Our social protection programmes like the unconditional cash transfer by NaCSA continue to give dignity to the most vulnerable in our society.

We have also given a facelift to our infrastructure. We have paved additional township roads, linked more district headquarter towns and constructed bridges and feeder roads to ease access to market from our production centres. We have increased the proportion of households with electricity and built the capacity to double access while also reducing cost. Internet penetration has quadrupled in the last five years, and mobile connectivity has expanded to more remote locations. We have leveraged digitalization to bring efficiency in service delivery and to support innovation in the private sector. The banking sector now benefits from interoperability offered by the National Switch, with even more promise for wider financial inclusion.

Ensuring that people have trust in our democracy and government has been critical to me and the SLPP. My government has been the most aggressive at tackling corruption. Our effort in this regard has been noticed and rewarded by many reputable international organizations, including the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and Transparency International, that



consistently rank my administration among the most corrupt-free in the region. We have removed the death penalty, and repealed the seditious libel law, giving the press more freedom. I made it a personal interest to rebrand the image of Sierra Leone in the international community because this is important for attracting investors and buying us good will. Sierra Leone now holds several leadership roles on critical issues at the international stage.

The hardest challenge we have faced is rise in cost of living resulting from the multiple global shocks. My resolve has been to do all we can to shield our people from these economic shocks. We have ensured that essential commodities are available in the country even when others experienced prolonged shortages. We invested to boost local food production. We have increased the salaries of teachers, nurses, the police, and the military, and we have consistently paid salaries on time. We have raised the minimum wage and increased pension for retirees, and created jobs.

I am motivated by the gains we have made and the potential to do even more. Therefore, I humbled again to lead the SLPP into another election, and to ask the people of Sierra Leone to renew the contract I signed with them five years ago. We are presenting a new manifesto; **"The New Direction Agenda: Consolidating the Gains and Accelerating Transformation"** which gives account of our stewardship in the last five years and lays out the vision to continue transforming Sierra Leone.

This is an agenda that promises to consolidate the gains we have made, and to take advantage of new opportunities we have created, while addressing emerging challenges. Our vision remains to get Sierra Leone to a middle-income status by 2030. We believe we have put the right policies in place to support this agenda.

In the next five years we will prioritise the following five initiatives as anchors for faster and lasting transformation; **Feed Salone**, which entails an ambitious programme to boost staple food production to drastically minimize our reliance on food imports, increase our exports, create jobs, boost economic growth and reduce poverty, **Human Capital Development for Nurturing Skills for 21st Century Industry**, with a gender focus, a **Youth Employment Scheme (YES)** that aims to create jobs for through a focused initiative that I will lead, a **Tech and Infrastructure Programme** to serve as pathways for sustained economic growth, and **Revamping the Public Service Architecture**, for delivery efficiency and professionalism. I believe that making progress in these key areas will set Sierra Leone on a path of transformational change, poverty reduction and resilience in the face of external shocks.

The choice is stark for the June 24th elections. We have presented an account of our stewardship and the responsibility you bestowed on us five years ago. We have also presented a focused agenda for building on the progress we have made. Under normal circumstances the gains we have made will guarantee landslide electoral victory for the SLPP. But I urge every SLPP supporter and well-wisher to avoid complacency as the opponents will aim to exploit effects of the global economic shock for electoral advantage.

I again commend this Manifesto for your approval and ask that you vote for my re-election to protect investments we have made in your children and the future of Sierra Leone.

Brigadier (Rtd.) Dr. Julius Maada Bio

SLPP Candidate for 2023 Presidential Elections



Part I: WHO WE ARE



HISTORY, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND VISION

1.1 Our History

The Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) has its roots deeply embedded in the aspirations and struggles of the Sierra Leonean populace. The party emerged in 1951 as a response to the grievances and desire for self-governance among the people. It became a platform for Sierra Leoneans to unite against British colonial rule and advocate for political representation. The SLPP aimed to empower the local population and promote their interests, laying the foundation for a more inclusive and democratic Sierra Leone.

Under the SLPP's governance, Sierra Leone experienced relative stability and progress during the early post-independence years. Sir Milton Margai's administration focused on nation-building and economic development. The party implemented policies aimed at expanding education, healthcare, and infrastructure across the country. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah played a crucial role in bringing an end to the eleven-year civil conflict and the SLPP under his leadership implemented post-war reconstruction efforts and laid the foundation for the democratic norm we enjoy today.

The SLPP has had several key achievements over the years. One of the most significant was leading the country to independence in 1961. The party's emphasis on grassroots organising and mobilising ordinary Sierra Leoneans to participate in the political process has also been a key factor in promoting democratic governance in the country. The party's legacy remains intertwined with Sierra Leone's history, and its role in shaping the nation's trajectory is widely recognized. The SLPP has proven time and again, that we are party of big ideas and for big moments.

1.2 Political Ideology

The New Direction Manifesto of the People is based on the political ideology of Social Democracy and its fundamental commitment to peace, freedom, security, justice, equality, unity, and solidarity. The New Direction promotes and guarantees political, social, economic, and cultural rights of all Sierra Leoneans through entitlement and access to basic necessities of life. The New Direction Social Democracy political ideology aspires to create a more just and equal society in Sierra Leone as the only insurance to avoid another war and recurrent political instability. Though the New Direction is based on free market neo-liberal economic development principles, we will depart from the traditional principle whereby only the market economy determines individual performance and reward. The Social Democracy foundation of the New Direction is based on inclusive politics, inclusive development, and inclusive economic growth whereby the benefits of economic growth are re-distributed to all Sierra Leoneans through the provision of affordable housing, public health services and free education. The New Direction Social Democracy gives every Sierra Leonean a voice, ownership and a stake in the country and its future.

1.3 Vision Statement

The New Direction Vision Statement is 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 equal opportunity for all". We aspire to lay the solid Foundation to become a Middle-Income Country based on the Democratic Development State Model.



Part II: OUR TAKE OFF POINT



A Steep Climb from Eleven Years of Mismanagement

In 2018, H.E President Bio and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) were entrusted with the responsibility of leading Sierra Leone towards a new direction of stability, accountability, and prosperity. They recognised the enormity of the challenges caused by the eleven years of APC rule and the pressing need to tackle them head-on. At take-off in 2018, we were faced with:

- **A crumbling economy** characterised by state declared austerity, high rates of poverty and food insecurity, rise in cost of living, elevated national debt levels accumulated arrears to contractors, backlog payments to public workers like teacher nurses and high levels of unemployment among the youth.
- **Low human capital base:** With limited access to education for children, high rates of dropout and teenage pregnancy among our young girls, high maternal and mortality rate and unequal opportunities for women across all facets of government.
- **A huge infrastructure deficit:** With limited roads in townships and weak links to production centres limited access to electricity, with most district headquarter towns without power and a weak digital infrastructure.
- **A broken governance system:** with unchecked and high levels of corruptions and low accountability in governance, a weakened press, low trust in government.

The SLPP's People's Manifesto, The New Direction, presented a comprehensive plan and vision to tackle the challenges facing Sierra Leone. Prioritizing human capital development, we embarked on an ambitious social program to enhance education and healthcare systems, expand social protection, and provide adequate nutrition for children in rural areas. We also championed the protection of young girls and the promotion of gender equality across all sectors of society. Critics claimed it was too expensive and that we lacked the necessary resources to succeed, while others argued it was not politically prudent as the benefits of such investments extend beyond the president's term.

But SLPP is as convinced today, as then, that investing in women and children holds the best promise for inclusive prosperity today and in the future. We got to work and focused on raising resources so that we can deliver on our promises. For the last five years we have consistently allocated 22% of government budget to education and increased allocation to health to 11%. The returns from these investments have been encouraging; with more children enrolled in schools but without the burden of school and exam fees on their parents. We have higher transition rates than ever before, and we have closed gender parity in primary education attainment. Far less women now die from childbirth and more infants grow up to see their first birthday. Our public health and emergency response systems is rated among the best in the region. We passed a law to create equal opportunity for women in government and to protect our young girls.

We made cost effective investments to modernise our infrastructure with a focus on improving electricity and road network in our production centres and rural areas. Sierra Leone now boasts of a modern international airport at Lungi. We have improved governance and regained the people's trust in our democracy. Sierra Leone is today rated among the least corrupt, and most peaceful in the region. We repealed seditious libel law and ended the death penalty. Sound macroeconomic management has been the bedrock of what we have been able to do. We have put the economy on a growth trajectory, increased revenue generation, and reduced our exposure to external debt.



**PART III: OUR
ACHIEVEMENTS AND
2023 COMMITMENTS**



FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING
A GLOBAL CALL!!

A CALL FOR EVERY NATION
"EVERY CHILD DESERVES
DIGNITY AND OPPORTUNITY
THAT FOUNDATIONAL
LEARNING BRINGS"

**Human Capital
Development**



HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Sierra Leone's most precious resource is her people. The protracted civil war and years of inadequate investment in our people have slowly eroded the country's human capital base. In 2019, Sierra Leone's Human Capital Index was captured as 0.35, meaning, a child born in 2019 would be 35% percent as productive when she is 18 compared what she would be if she enjoyed complete education and full health. This implies a 65% percent loss in productivity of future workers of the Country. This bleak scenario compelled the New Direction Government to prioritise investments to boost human capital in the country. For President Bio, this was an urgent investment in the future of the country that needed to happen now.

And this is exactly what Government has done in the last five years. For the past five, human capital development has been the centerpiece of everything the Government has engaged in. His Excellency President Bio has invested heavily in education, our health systems, nutrition of children, as well as in supportive social services that boost education and health outcomes and has enacted policies and laws that empower our people, especially the women of Sierra Leone.

3.1 Improving Basic and Senior Secondary Education

The Context

The Free Quality School Education is the flagship programme of H.E President Bio's human capital development agenda. The objective of the programme is to significantly improve and increase access to quality basic and senior secondary education in both formal and non-formal settings, providing modern, free basic and secondary education services that are safe, inclusive, equitable, corruption free, and with relevance to impact productive economic activity.

The New Direction Government has made huge progress towards these goals. On virtually every measurable indicator, Sierra Leone now performance better compared to 2018.

Achievements

- i. Provided Universal Access for all learners**
 - Launched the Free Quality School Education as Flagship and spending 22% of government budget on education in the last four years
 - Paid school and exam fees for pupils in government and government assisted schools
 - Provided core textbooks, teaching, and learning materials for children in 12,000 schools
 - Provide school meals for over 600,000 learners nationwide
 - Provided buses to cities and district headquarter towns to facilitate movement of school pupils
 - Provided sanitary pads to teenage girls to enable them attend school with dignity

- ii. Invested in technology and innovation for cost effective service delivery**



- Introduced a USSD tool to help parents and pupils check their exam results for free, removing cost burden from parents and also increasing accessibility especially for students/parents in rural areas
- Invested in hybrid technology to support learning even during the COVID-19 pandemic school closures and remote learning
- Provided tablet for paramount chiefs to monitor education service delivery in their chiefdoms

iii. Improved condition of service for teachers and teacher quality

- Salary increases for teachers three times in five years- 10% in 2019, 30% in 2020, and another 45% planned for in 2023 -2025
- Completed over 12,000 new recruitments and 25,000 teachers trained
- Reassessed 4,000 teachers and placed on deserving pay grades

iv. Policies, Laws, and Regulations

- Passed the Basic and Senior Secondary Education Act 2023
- Passed radical inclusion policy to allow pregnant girls, the disabled, and learners in remote areas to access education
- Passed a new School Feeding Policy to improve feeding of children in schools
- Introduced the Annual National Teachers Award programme to motivate teachers
- Passed the new Education Act 2023
- Provided Grant-in Aid for sons and daughter of teachers who have served for at least 10 years
- The New Direction Government has reintroduced civics in the education curriculum

v. Improved all education outcome indicators and made Sierra Leone a leading example for government impact in the sector

- Expanded enrolment rate across board- over one million new learners getting education- a 37% jump between 2018 and 2022.
- Sierra Leone has highest rate of girls completing primary education than any country in West Africa
- Closed gender gap in primary school attainment
- More student taking public exams- 79% increase between 2018 and 2022.
- Increased pass rate in public exams (from 55% in 2018 to over 77% in 2022 in WASSCE, 81% in 2022 for NPSE, 87% in 2022 for BECE)
- Marked improvement in numeracy and literacy.
- Teenage pregnancy dropped by 33%, from 62,589 in 2019 to 41,943 in 2022.
- Our work in education has received remarkable international recognition including UN Secretary General requesting the President of Sierra Leone, H.E Julius Maada Bio to co-chair UN Education session, and the award given by World Government Summit to the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education as Best Minister in the World.

Commitments (2023- 2028)



Despite successes in the last five years, more still needs to be done at the basic education level. These improvements are from an extremely low baseline. Fortunately, with the passage of the Basic and Senior Secondary Education Act 2023, the Ministry of Basic and Secondary School Education (MBSSE) has set the sector on a path to continue to show even more remarkable improvements. The focus for the next five years includes the following commitments:

i. Education Governance

- Formalize the 1-6-3-3 system of reception/foundation, basic and senior secondary education with focus on foundational learning to include a minimum of one-year pre-primary education, six years primary education, three years junior secondary education and three years senior secondary education including technical/vocational education
- Strengthen education management and data use, governance and accountability through appropriate policy reforms, evidence-based planning, and rationalised delivery of service
- Strengthen school management and governance through capacity building and enhancement of School Management Committees, Board of Governors of Junior and Senior Secondary Schools and local government officials.
- Update and implement legal framework for Public Private Partnership in education sector including new financial models.
- Strengthen community ownership and local investment towards schools particularly those based in rural communities
- Strengthen supervision and accountability mechanisms for schools targeting Inspectorate Division and Teaching Service Commission

ii. Education Financing

- Rationalise resource allocation across the various levels of education with clear guidelines
- Government to maintain 22% of government budget to the sector using sustainable financing models
- Develop new innovative financing education models including Outcomes Fund, and debt swaps

iii. Improving Conditions of Service for Teachers

- Develop a special incentive scheme for specialized teachers including Science and French teachers
- Develop a special incentive scheme for teachers in remote / hard to reach areas and those in special needs institutions.
- Implement the terms in the Collective Bargaining Agreement signed with the Sierra Leone Teachers Union
- Increase teacher recruitment to service foundational learning

iv. Universal Access and Radical Inclusion Education

- Promote development of child-friendly schools that will be provided with recreational facilities, toilet facilities and safe places



- Construct additional student hostels for pupils attending different schools in every district headquarter town and support schools with boarding facilities
- Provide sanitary and menstrual hygiene kits to schools nationwide
- Provide unique learner ID to all pupils in school to track progress in school
- Make it mandatory in line with the Disability Act for public schools to be disability friendly by ensuring that they have ramps and other facilities that can enhance access of persons with disability
- Establish additional JSS schools at chiefdom level to reduce distance covered (3 kilometres being average target) by children living outside the school community to access the schools
- Whilst continuing to suppress teenage pregnancy, the SLPP government through the Radical Inclusion Policy will ensure that pregnant girls, teenage mothers, and other vulnerable groups will continue to access education as much as other children

v. Comprehensive Safety

- Provide safe, healthy, and conducive educational environment.
- Enhance emergency prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery for all educational institutions
- Ensure that all schools have case management system in place for child abuse/GBV including a well-defined referral pathway for victims' access to legal and recovery services
- Enforce the Policy on Radical inclusion, promote effective correction measures for discipline
- Develop Child Safeguarding Guidelines that schools can adapt
- Support schools to have in place Basic Life Support services like Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation services, First Aid Kits etc
- Make it mandatory for all schools to have Guidance Counselling services including a confidentiality system for children to report abuses freely
- Support schools to include discussions on child abuse, violence prevention and other safety topics in their extra curricula programmes including Assembly Talks, Debates, Quiz Competitions, Essay Competitions etc

vi. Quality Teaching and Learning

- Upgrade and strengthen in-service teacher training as well as introduce pre-service training at least additional 20,000 teachers in collaboration with partners
- Strengthen use of technology to support teaching and learning, innovation, and creativity. This can include establishment of teaching centres of excellence that provide computer training for teachers in every district
- Promote School connectivity nationwide through targeted interventions
- Implement Teacher registration and licensure
- Provide community libraries and science laboratories
- Provide pre-service and in-service training
- Provide classroom coaching for teachers to improve on their teaching competencies in collaboration with partners



vii. Expanding Career options or diversification at an early stage

- Standardise and formalise apprenticeship learning scheme for both in-school and out-of-school children
- Introduce a compulsory parallel skills training programmes through standardized apprenticeship schemes for students in formal schools
- Educate students at early stage to equally understand the importance of TVET/TECVO

3.2 Improving Technical and Higher Education

The Context

The Government has also made great strides improving technical and higher education. The focus has been on expanding access to higher education, by establishing new universities, prioritising women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture and Mathematics subjects, developing practical skills to build a capable workforce through TVET institutions.

Achievements

i. Governance, policy, and regulatory reforms

- De-politicization of the universities – University Act 2021 removed HE the President from Chancellor of universities and is now a visitor in all public universities

ii. Administrative systems strengthening

- Developed alongside partners, the Education Sector Plan 2022 - 2026 to coordinate the management, implementation, and monitoring of all education sector activities.
- Strengthened the Education Management Information System (EMIS) to support sector, including the development of the Technical Vocational Education and Training Management Information System (TVETMIS) platform, and Integrated Certification System (ICS) platform operationalized and now being piloted in 30 institutions

iii. Financing and student support

- Provided free tuitions for women studying STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture and Mathematics) subjects, with a total award of 4,753 students.
- Expanded grant-in-aid scheme with a total award of 11,454
- Introduced a new student loan scheme to make higher education more accessible to many more qualified students
- Increased staff wages by 75% of tertiary education institutions

iv. Improve access

- Established technical and vocational centres in all districts. This includes 10 Government Technical Institutions established, refurbished, equipped with basic equipment, and operationalized in Kono, Masingbi, Pujehun, Kenema, Bo, Moyamba, Kailahun, Koinadugu and Tonkolili. Pipeline construction for 6 more in Falaba, Karene, Port Loko, Makeni; Mattru Jong, Western Rural District.



- Establishment of Technical Universities to train students with skills demanded in the fourth industrial revolution. This includes upgrades of Eastern Technical University, Milton Margai Technical University and the establishment of University of Science and Technology in Kono
- Provided free education to children of teachers with at least 10 years of services. So far 305 children of Teachers that have served for ten years and over have benefited from the Sierra Leone Government Grant-in Aid for the period 2019 -2022

Commitments (2023- 2028)

Over the next five years Government will continue to strengthen governance, promote quality, access to higher education and student financing. We make the following commitments:

i. Strengthen Quality Assurance Systems

- Establish a National Qualifications Framework as a harmonized quality assurance framework for tertiary education institutions
- Restructure the National Council for Technical Vocation and other Academic Awards (NCTVA) and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to strengthen the regulatory system for Tertiary education

ii. Support to Free Quality Education

- Review, standardize and harmonize curricula for teacher education institutions
- Facilitate implementation of TVET and Teaching Practice Policies
- Support implementation of Education Sector Plan 2022-2026
- Invest in capacity building to upgrade profile of staff of tertiary education institutions
- Introduce standardized apprenticeship schemes especially for TVET students as well as out of school youths
- Establish teacher training institutions in every district

iii. Establish new and upgrade existing Technical and Higher Educational Institutions

- Operationalize the Kono University of Science and Technology
- Establish and operationalize additional TVET institutions
- Provide modern teaching and learning materials to TVET and tertiary institutions
- Develop and operationalize the Centralized Admission System and a National Open University system
- Upgrade Government Technical Institutes to Community Colleges offering training in technology, teacher education, basic nursing, and computer science
- Established a Separate University for the Northwest

iv. Provide support to students locally and internationally

- Support resource mobilization for implementation of the student loan scheme
- Implement the new grant-in-aid policy





3.3 Improving Health Care

The Context

Improving health outcomes through access to quality and affordable healthcare is a core component of H.E Bio's Human Capital Development agenda. It is a prerequisite for achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and a catalyst for economic and physical growth. Like education, the Government has prioritised the sector and increased investment to improve outcomes.

Over the last decade, the country has been hit by two severe health crises, including the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) of 2014/15 and the Coronavirus pandemic that struck the country in 2020. Although these crises derailed progress in the sector, the investment and policies have supported a resilient health care system. For the last five years, almost every health care indicator has improved.

The EVD experience served as a learning curve for the exemplary management of the COVID pandemic, thereby positioning Sierra Leone as a global example. The country recorded one of the world's lowest COVID-19 deaths. Importantly, it was among the first four in Africa to have achieved the 70% COVID vaccine targets by December of 2022. The impact of the New Direction Government interventions on health outcomes have been remarkable.

Achievements

- i. Increased investment to improve access to basic health care service**
 - Increased budgetary allocation to healthcare from 6% to 11.6%
 - Increased the number of new/rehabilitated health facilities from 1,397 in 2018 to 1,569 by 2021
 - Introduced hospital on wheels servicing over 20,000 patients in 12 districts.
 - Trained and posted over 5,000 pin coded staff, 8,700 community Health Workers recruited (50% increase)
 - Supported 21 medical doctors to acquire specialised training

- ii. Expanded specialised healthcare facilities in the country**
 - Established four dialysis stations treating over 700 patients in the country
 - Increased health infrastructure facilities (80 bed King-Harman Road, Brookfields hospitals, 100 bed Rokupr hospital, 100 bed in the 34 military hospital
 - Cervical cancer screen operational in 8 facilities in the country
 - Established national blood transfusion unit, increasing availability and access to safe blood service
 - Established 220 solar refrigeration for vaccine storage

- iii. The New Direction Government has moved the dial on most health outcome indicators in Sierra Leone**



- Life expectancy for Sierra Leone has increased significantly from 53 in 2017 to 61 in 2023
- Maternal mortality per 100,000 live births decreased by 60% between 2018 and 2023.
- Stunting children under five is dropped to 30% in Sierra Leone, compared 34% in Africa
- Neonatal mortality per 10,00 live births dropped to 20 in Sierra Leone compared to 28 in West Africa
- Availability of essential drugs increased by 90%
- Vaccinated 183,000 girls with the HPV vaccine
- Achieved over 70% vaccination rate with the COVID-19 vaccines

Commitments (2023- 2028)

Building on existing successes and evidence-based awareness of prevalent challenges, the next phase of Government's investments aims to transform the health sector and expand access and improve the quality of health care with an additional focus on improving health outcomes for women, girls, children, and the indigent population through the following commitments:

i. Expanding access to and improving the quality of primary healthcare services

- Extend free healthcare to school-going children nationwide
- Redesign, develop and sustain a community-based Primary Health Care delivery model using the life stages approach and leaving no one behind.
- Implement the Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Healthcare Act to reduce Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) from 443 to less than 100 per 100,000 live births
- Scale up and sustain delivery of maternal and child immunisation programmes, ensuring 100% immunisation of all infants.
- Strengthen the Community Health Workers programme
- Scale-up interventions to address maternal and child malnutrition.
- Operationalise the Essential Health Service Package using the Life Stages Approach
- Expand the mobile clinic buses services (Hospitals on Wheels Initiative) from 4 to 17 buses to cover all 16 districts
- Introduce a National Tele-medicine Programme to deliver health care education and services to all districts

ii. Deepening health financing, including operationalizing Sierra Leone Social Health Insurance (SLeSHI)

- Review and implement the Sierra Leone Health Insurance Scheme to expand access to health care and reduce out-of-pocket expenditure, especially for the indigent population from 53% to 25% in 2028
- Implement the health financing strategy and develop innovative instruments for the health sector
- Establish a Health Trust Fund



- Increase budgetary allocation to health and sanitation from its current level of 11% to 15% as required by the Abuja Declaration
- Expand public private partnerships in the health service delivery

iii. Building the capacity of the health workforce

- Build and operationalise the cancer diagnostics and treatment centre
- Review and upgrade the training curriculum in existing health institutions for all levels of training to provide health care services for existing ailments
- Expand the community health care workers' programme
- Expand health capacity building partnerships locally and internationally
- Recruit additional 5,000 healthcare workers across all cadres to meet the workforce targets for Universal Health Coverage
- Strengthen health planning, management, and coordination capacity
- Provide trained tutors to the health training institutions

iv. Strengthening condition of service and health human resource management

- Empower the Health Service Commission to fully deliver its mandate
- Review and implement HRH Retention Policy
- Digitalise the HRH system to inform human resource planning, management and decision making
- Review the conditions of service for all health workers to attract and retain them, including a special incentive scheme for those working in remote areas
- Promote social dialogue with relevant stakeholders in the health sector, including but not limited to the Sierra Leone Health Service Workers Union, the Sierra Leone Medical and Dental Association and the Nurses and Midwives Association
- Promote cooperative schemes for low-cost housing for health workers in partnership or collaboration with the private sector particularly for the benefit of health workers in rural communities.

v. Expanding and upgrading health infrastructure

- Develop standard health sector blueprint designs for all types of health facilities in the public and private sectors
- Increase the number of health facilities to ensure that every citizen can access health facilities within a 3-mile radius
- Upgrade all 16 District Hospitals and ensure functional Accident and Emergency (A&E) units
- Establish blood transfusion units in all district hospitals and ensure a regular and adequate supply of blood in health facilities, particularly during childbirth.
- Construct and equip five (5) Regional Hospitals with Intensive Care Units (ICU) and Accident and Emergency (A&E) response facilities
- Construct and operationalise the cancer diagnostic and treatment centre
- Construct two Midwifery schools in the East and Northwest of Sierra Leone
- Facilitate the construction of low-cost housing for health workers in all regions
- Establish a Health Village in Kerry Town



- Develop Mental Health Treatment and Care Facilities in Freetown and build new facilities in the provinces.
- Establish modern Infectious and Tropical Disease Control Centres in Freetown and the regional capitals
- Establish centres of excellence for diagnostics and treatment at regional level
- Establish End of Life Care Facility/Service (Hospice)

vi. Strengthening health emergency services

- Support National Medical Emergency Services for optimal service provision sustainability
- Introduce a National Ambulance Service through public-private partnerships

vii. Enhancing health supply chains using innovative technologies

- Improve the procurement, storage and distribution of drugs and supplies through effective and efficient innovative technologies, mechanisms, and processes for essential health commodities, including safe blood products, ensuring drug availability in health facilities at all times.
- Support the pharmaceutical service governance and management structures for the rational use of medicines, medical supplies, and safe blood products
- Support pharmacovigilance and medicines regulatory mechanisms to ensure internationally accepted standards on efficiency, safety, quality and use for medicines and health technologies.

viii. Strengthening pandemic preparedness, disease prevention and control

- Establish and make functional the National Public Health Agency through effective public health education, awareness raising, security and response
- Scale-up interventions for the prevention and management of both communicable and non-communicable diseases
- Provide effective surveillance and response mechanisms for timely disease risk factor detection, prevention, control, and evaluation
- Empower the population by improving health literacy, social support systems and community security
- Strengthening health data systems through digitalization and leverage technology for clinical and administrative decision making
- Strengthening regulatory frameworks and health governance systems







3.4 Empowering Women, Youth, And People with Disabilities

The Context

Women make up slightly half of the population in Sierra Leone. Yet for years, our society has marginalised them. Furthermore, with more than a third of the population considered youth, many of whom are either unemployed or underemployed, the New Direction Government views these segments of the population as critical for socio-economic development in the country.

Deliberate and systematic efforts are necessary to appropriately equip and empower women and youth to attain and realize their full potential and in turn, drive the attainment of development objectives of the New Direction.

As part of the human capital development agenda the government has made huge strides to make women and youth productive and contributing members of our society, as well as caring people with disabilities. Government policies in these areas have aimed to empower, provide opportunities, and protect right and dignity for all people.

3.4.1 Empowering Women

The New Direction Government has consistently demonstrated that our society will do everything to create equal platforms for women as men. Policies and programmes from various sectors and MDAs all reflect this commitment, including in education, agriculture, and health.

Achievements

- Enactment of Gender Equity and Women's Empower law that provides minimum 30% quota for women's representation in political positions and public service
- Implemented the Free Healthcare for pregnant women and lactating mothers' nation wide
- Provided scholarships for women studying STEAM subjects
- Established and rolled out the 116-toll free line for reporting of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) cases
- Women now have right to own land as provided for by the new National Land Commission Act 2022
- Provision made to empower women in the Mines and Minerals Act
- Initiated the Hands of our Girls campaign to protect teenage girls from early sex and marriage
- Established the Business Incubator for Women Enterprise (BIAWE)
- Introduction of the Village Savings Loan Scheme (VSLA) to empower vulnerable women



Commitments (2023- 2028)

We consolidate our gains made in empowering and protecting women by making the following commitments:

i. Legal, Policy Reforms and Capacity Building

- Develop a robust plan for the Implementation of the GEWE Policy 2020 and Gender Empowerment Act 2022
- Create 'Women in Leadership Support Unit' within the Ministry
- Review of Matrimonial Causes Act 1960
- Recruitment and training of professional staff at the Ministry

ii. Women's participation in Politics

- Provide special support for women including female youth interested in politics including removing barriers that prevent women from participation in politics
- Review policy and procedures for election of youth into executive positions of national, regional, district and community Youth Councils, eliminate male dominance and achieve equal gender representation.

iii. Women's Empowerment (Economic and Livelihood Security)

- Scale up the Women's Economic Empowerment initiatives.
- Build capacity of women entrepreneurs and facilitate linkages to financial service institutions
- Provide business enablers like construct markets, and solar energy powered cold rooms and transportation

iv. Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

- Roll out GBVIMS+
- Scale up the National Male Involvement Strategy to prevent Sexual GBV
- Community and Media Engagement to raise awareness on prevention of SGBV.
- Strengthen the District GBV Steering Committee meetings (National, Regional and District)
- Strengthen referral pathway for GBV.

v. Commitments to International and Regional Instruments

- Meet reporting obligation on CEDAW, CRC, ACRWC, Maputo Protocol, AU Continental Results framework on Women, Peace, and Security
- Develop 3rd Generation National Action on UNSCR 1325 and 1820





3.4.2 Empowering the Youth

Achievements

- i. Provided assets to build economic and earning capability of the Youth**
 - Provided fishery equipment and gears for youth in 70 fishing communities and boosted their earning capacity
 - Constructed 28 carwash centres across the country that provide jobs and income for the youth
 - Established 190 Chiefdom Youth Farms that hired at least 20 youths per chiefdom
- ii. Expanded entrepreneurship and skills training for youth**
 - Trained over 2000 youth through the Youth Service Schemes and at least 25% have secured jobs
 - Have trained thousands of youth across the country with different skills and trade
 - Supported 411 young entrepreneurs whose businesses have been affected by Covid-19 with stimulus grant of two billion, four hundred and fifty thousand Leones.
 - Over 200 young people trained in tractor operations and basic maintenance. Currently these young people are having internship experience. Upon graduation, these youths will be ready for gainful employment.
- iii. Increased access to finance for the growth of youth entrepreneurs**
 - Provided youth with small business loans through MUNAFA and other agencies
 - Partnered with NGOs and other development partners to support youths in establishing several youth led including vibrant female youth led organisations that are now contributing to national development.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

The New Direction Government commits to creating 500,000 jobs for the youth in five years through a targeted Presidential Initiative on Job Creation for the Youth. The Government will be deliberate to create the right environment and seek out opportunities for the youth through both the public and private sector including in; public works, food production, agro-processing, the creative industry, digital and green jobs. Additional Commitments include:

- i. Involvement of youth in Agric, livestock, aquaculture, and value chain**
 - Increase youth access to finance, capital, and grant
 - Provide conducive trade and business environment for young people
 - Promote peer learning schemes-e.g., livestock management
 - Introduce training centres on short courses for needy skills- e.g operation of agricultural machinery and equipment, fertilizer introduction, pest control, farm management etc
 - Develop data base on youth with skills in agriculture



ii. Promoting Music and Performing Art

- Review and enforce copyright laws for music, and arts
- Review and enforce the copyright laws.
- Review policies and establish standards for promotion of music and performing arts.
- Establish institutions and introduce training at vocational and university level in music, film, and video production.
- Establish an Arts Gallery and Theatre for Performing Arts in all regional capitals.
- Promote Sierra Leonean music and musicians nationally and internationally and maintain good business ethics in the industry.
- Build youth skills in new industries that have high demands, e.g interior decoration, fashion, and design industry etc
- Support Arts and craft

iii. Finance and support creative economy through a tailored innovation challenge

- Provide training, loan facilities and seed capital for artists and local investors in creative industry
- Developing the Entertainment industry as part of job readiness
- Set up systems to support youth-led household enterprises by addressing constraints, including lack of adequate capital
- Provide training and counselling on business related activities among youth owned enterprises to be piloted in regional headquarters
- Establish an information technology platform to promote youth employment and empowerment to enable the collection and dissemination of information on jobs, training and livelihood programmes, policies, and opportunities for the youth

iv. Increase access to social protection programmes

- Introduce rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for drug/substance abusers
- Include unemployed youth in the existing safety net programmes

v. Youth participation in governance

- Increase youth representation and inclusion in every area of governance
- Review procedures and policies governing election of youths across youth councils (community, chiefdom, district and national) and ensure equal gender representation
- Train youth in leadership skills

vi. Inculcate a culture of civic nationalism, patriotism, and job through national youth service

- Review the legal framework for the National Youth Service Scheme to create opportunities for graduate youth to live and work in areas/district different from their origin
- Investment in entertainment, strategically positioning it for job creation for young people
- Expand youth service scheme to cater for graduates from TECVOC
- Supporting young people to tap into the digital and green economy opportunities.



3.4.3 Protecting Persons Living with Disability and the Aged

Just under 2% of our population living with various forms of disabilities, including blind, deaf, or physically challenged. The New Direction Government of President Bio promised to protect the rights and giving meaning and dignity to the lives of people living with disabilities and the aged. Policy actions and government interventions have been designed to fully consider this segment of our population.

Achievements

- Increased budget allocation to the Disability Commission to promote and coordinate implementation of the Disability Act in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare
- Provided social protection support to persons with disability and since 2019 to date, 37.5% of all cash transfers done by NaCSA went to persons with disability
- Provided specialised learning materials and buses for schools for the blind and hearing impaired (deaf)
- Conducted accessibility audit of public buildings to make them accessible for people living with disabilities and provided recommendation to make alternations accordingly.
- Provided revenue generation assets (kekes) to persons living with disabilities for direct economic empowerment
- Introduction of the VSLA scheme to empower vulnerable women
- Provided direct support to homes and institutions of the Aged

Commitments (2023- 2028)

We pledge the following to build on success from the 2018 Manifesto.

i. Policies and Regulations

- Formulate and roll out Policy for older persons to improve their well-being as well as extend support for financial security, health care, shelter, welfare, and other needs of older persons
- Undertake Disability Inclusion in SDG Monitoring using user friendly tools to ensure SDG monitoring platforms

ii. Capacity Building and Resourcing

- Provide budgetary resources to implement the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services.
- Strengthen the capacity and provide budgetary resources for Ministry of social Welfare to provide psychosocial support services to victims/survivors of Sexual Gender Based violence.

iii. Support Programmes



- Establish a Solidarity Fund financed by public and private sector contribution with clear and transparent governance structure for providing safety nets and livelihood support to persons living with disability
- Facilitate the roll out of the Socio-Economic Empowerment Programme for persons with disabilities.
- Support the roll out of Disability Assessment, Identification and Certification System; a more functional system for assessing and certifying the status of persons with disabilities drawing on good practices from other countries.
- Provide Hearing Aid facilities for students with hearing impaired (deaf)

3.4.4 Nurturing and Protecting our Children

Improving welfare of children and preparing them for the future has been the essence of President Bio's Human Capital Development agenda. Children's welfare is woven into the policies and programmes of the Ministries of Education, Health, Agriculture, Gender, and Social Welfare. In addition, the *Hands Off Our Girls* campaign of the First Lady has proven to be the most effective at promoting and protecting the welfare of children, especially girls. The First Lady has also been the voice and advocate for eliminating "period poverty" through her sanitary pads campaign.

With these targeted interventions, together with laws, policies and programmes rolled out by various MDAs, the New Direction Government have been most impactful on the issue of the welfare of children of Sierra Leone.

Achievements

- i. Strong Executive Action and Mindset Change Campaign**
 - The President of the Republic of Sierra Leone declared Rape as a State of Emergency issue, which increased public attention and response to sexual violence in 2019
 - First Lady's Office launched a very successful "Hands of our Girls" campaign to protect girls from sexual violence.
- ii. Innovative Interventions and Programmes**
 - Established One Stop Centres in 7 districts to provide free and comprehensive response to survivors of sexual gender-based violence including medical, psychosocial, and legal services in partnership with UNFPA.
 - Reviewed and updated the National Referral Protocol on Gender Based Violence (GBV), there by strengthening referral pathway for survivors of GBV



iii. Policies, Laws, and Regulations

- Amended the 2012 Sexual Offences Act in 2019, introducing tougher penalties for perpetrators as well as criminalizing the practice of compromise and out of court settlement of cases of sexual violence particularly against minors
- Enacted the new Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Act 2022, thereby repealing the 2005 Anti-Human Trafficking Act
- Reviewed the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and adopted a new strategy (National Strategy for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy and Child Marriage) that included strategies to address both teenage pregnancy and child and forced marriage.
- Enactment of Cyber Security Act to criminalise and prosecute cybercrimes include cyber bullying and online sexual abuse against children
- Reviewed the 2007 Child Rights Act and drafted a new Child Rights Bill that is more comprehensive and covers new emerging issues and other issues like prohibition of child FGM, procedures for the treatment of children in the criminal justice system, diversion, and standardizing age of consent for marriage.
- Established a Sexual Model Court in Freetown to exclusively adjudicate cases of sexual violence,

iv. Capacity of institutions that address cases involving children

- Recruited and deployed more State Counsels and Judges across the country in order to improve on access to justice for survivors of sexual violence and other cases as well.
- Conducted in service training for over State Counsels and Prosecutors, 30 judges through the Judicial and Legal Training Centre in collaboration with partners like Defence for Children International, Equality Now, WAVES and UNODC on the newly passed Acts such the Amended Sexual Offences Act 2019, the Anti Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Act 2022 and on Victims Care and Protection.
- Trained border security officials, community-based actors at the borders and other groups on child trafficking in collaboration with partners like Defence for Children International, World Hope International and IOM

v. Other forms of direct support and programmes

- Repatriated from other countries within and outside Africa, and resettled including providing resettlement package for several victims of trafficking and stranded Sierra Leonean migrants in partnership with IOM
- Government through NaCSA provided cash transfers to many vulnerable and poor families across the Sierra Leone that benefited many children in need of care and protection.
- With the support of UNICEF and partners, the government developed Strategy on Good Parenting and piloted successful Good Parenting programmes in several communities and have documented lessons learnt for expansion to other communities.
- Partnered with NGOs to implement several girl's empowerment programmes and life skills programmes for boys and girls across the country.
- Developed Strategy to tackle the Worst Forms of Child Labour

vi. Impact of New Direction Government's Efforts are as follows:



- Teenage pregnancy rate dropped by 33%, from 62,583 in 2019 to 41,943 in 2022.
- Increased public awareness on sexual violence and referral procedures which has led to rate of reporting of cases of sexual violence against minors.
- Increased rate of prosecution of cases of sexual violence
- Increased prosecution rate of cases of human trafficking, from which the US State Department has moved Sierra Leone from Tier 2 Watch List to Tier 2
- Successful retention and progression of pregnant girls in school and schools now have experience in keeping pregnant girls in school.
- Many victims of sexual violence, child marriage, trafficking, child labour and other forms of child abuse have gone through recovery programmes and reintegrated and now accessing the Free Quality Education
- The Free Quality Education programme of the MBSSE and the Social Protection programmes of NaCSA have greatly helped in providing safety net for vulnerable children.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

We will build on our progress through the following commitments:

- i. Prevention of child abuse/violence (sexual violence, teenage pregnancy, child marriage, trafficking child labour, juvenile delinquency)**
 - Expand campaign to promote good parenting skills at community level.
 - Teach civic education in schools and on public media, involving children as peer educators.
 - Sustain robust campaigns to raise awareness, tailored to specific issues such as the Hands of Our Girls Campaign targeting sexual violence.
 - Carryout more public education on the dangers of all forms of violence against children including sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, FGM, child labour and others.
 - Conduct evaluation study on the implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy and Child Marriage Strategy and develop plan of action for the implementation of recommendations.
 - Conduct public education particularly targeting children in schools about online sexual abuse and the Cyber Act 2021.
 - Develop Regulations or guidelines for child fostering and kingship care (Man-Pikin Syndrome) through Local Councils and community leaders.
- ii. Access to rehabilitation Services for Survivors/Victims**
 - Strengthen case management systems on child abuse and child delinquency
 - Strengthen One Stop Centres and collaborate with Rainbow Centres to enhance a more coordinated responsive to victims/survivors of sexual and other forms of abuse against children
 - Scale up interventions for the rehabilitation, and reintegration of victims/survivors of any kind of child abuse including providing access to standardised recovery services and community-based care services involving Local Councils, Community Leaders, and NGOs/CBOs



- Ensure that all public health care services including hospitals and PHUs have sufficient supply of contraceptives accessible to girls and boys as well
- Ensure that victims/survivors benefit from cash transfer programmes to aid their reintegration
- Mandate the National Commission for Children to receive and Investigate Communications on child rights violations

iii. Access to Justice

- Increase efforts to arrest, prosecute and convict child abusers including sexual offenders, traffickers, child exploiters etc.
- Address procedural delays and judicial corruption and ensure victims/survivors protection and safety for easy access to justice
- Train more police officers particularly TOCU and FSU, Immigration Officials, Social Workers, Interpol, Prosecutors, and judges to provide justice for child victims
- Provide more trainings for all professionals and personnel dealing with children in conflict with the law, including police, social workers, probation officers, magistrates, and judges
- Implement diversion and mediation programmes parallel to the criminal justice system, ensuring that minor offences committed by children/juveniles are referred to the diversion and mediation mechanisms that facilitate out of court settlement, reconciliation, and community-based rehabilitation for the juvenile
- Strengthen border security system to be able to detect and arrest traffickers and intercept victims

iv. Policies, Laws, and Regulations

- Pass the Child Rights Bill and develop regulations for the implementation and enforcement of the bill
- Develop child safeguarding policy framework that public institutions having direct contact with children can adapt to develop their child safeguarding policies.
- Implement the Street Children's policy through the MGCA and local councils
- Strengthen the capacities of the MGCA and city and district councils to fully implement the Alternative Care Policy and Street Children's Policy
- Provide adequate resources for the Trafficking in Person Directorate to coordinate and foster the implementation of the Trafficking in Person and Migrant Smuggling Act 2022
- Implement Diversion Policy for children in conflict with the law
- Update laws and policies on child adoption to be consistent with international standards and ensure that adoptions are done as measure of last resort and through standard procedures
- Pass a legislation that set minimum age of consent (18) for FGM and develop a strategy to prevent child FGM at community level.

v. Ratifications and reporting

- Ratify the Third Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on Communication (OP3)



- Ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime (2000)
- Comply with all reporting deadlines on international and regional treaties that concern children

vi. Child Participation and Leadership

- Create framework, procedures, and platform for the participation of children (equal boys and girls) and young people in governance and decision-making processes
- Promote young leaders' programmes including targeted female leadership campaigns like She Leads, Girl Power, and gender equality campaigns
- Provide leadership training for young leaders
- Establish and support Children's parliament
- Support child led groups to implement their initiatives geared towards promoting child rights

vii. Data management

- Set up and operationalise effective data collection and management systems for all cases and issues concerning children.

3.4.5 Protecting and Empowering Workers

The Context

The New Direction Government recognised the workforce as the most valuable asset of any nation, and that a nation needs a workforce that is well motivated for the transformation of its natural resources to wealth. Yet, when H.E President Bio assumed office in 2018, employment laws and regulations were obsolete and weak, and their implementation undermined. The Pension Scheme, the National Social Security, and Insurance Trust (NASSIT) was facing serious threats. The misuse of the Trust's funds, wrong investment decisions, non-reporting of dividends (if any) from investments of the pension fund, non-payment of statutory contributions by both the previous Government and many private employers including the politicization and poor leadership became the norm.

In the last four years, the Bio-led administration has reviewed the obsolete labour laws and transformed them to progressive legislations, ratified and domesticated core International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions and improved on the minimum wage. For H.E President Bio, the Human Capital Development agenda of the government terminates with decent and productive Job creation for the citizens.

Achievements



- i. Motivation of workers and improving conditions of service**
 - Increased minimum wage from 600 to 800 new leones
 - Introduced NASSIT Court to protect workers' rights
 - Regularisation of salaries for large number of essential workers who have not been on payroll for over four years especially teachers and nurses (pin codes)
 - Increased minimum pension rate from 15 to 250 New Leone

- ii. Ratified the many international labour conventions that brings Sierra Leone on par with others in the region and made it easier to protect workers including:**
 - Convention 97-Migration for Employment Convention (Revised),1949
 - Convention 143, Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) 1975
 - Convention 155-Occupational Safety and Health, 1981
 - Convention 187-Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation, 2006

- iii. Reviewed and replaced several obsolete labour and enacted the following bills:**
 - Employment Bill, 2022
 - Work Permit Bill, 2022
 - Overseas Employment and Migrant Bill, 2022

Commitments (2023- 2028)

The Government through the Ministry of Labour and Social Security will position itself towards supporting and enhancing both public and private sector initiatives towards employment creation and makes the following commitments to that end.

- i. Capacity Building**
 - Capacitate the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to enable it to effectively monitor and enforce the new Labour and Employment Laws, Policies and Regulations.
 - Collaborate effectively with the Sierra Leone Labour Congress and relevant Trade Union Organisations within the Congress and the Sierra Leone Employer's Federation and its affiliated bodies and other Civil Society Organisations to promote social dialogue to ensure industrial peace and maintain harmonious industrial relations in the country.
 - Establish the Sierra Leone Labour Market Information System to adequately inform Government, International Organisations including the International Labour Organisation and other United Nations Bodies, Development Partners in the country; the number of jobs created by government, private sector etc.

- ii. Employment Promotion**
 - Implement the new Employment Act, 2023 and other revised labour laws to address issues of child labour, persons with disability, welfare of the aged, employment of women and youth



- Strengthen the Work Permit regime by implementing the provisions in the Work Permit Act, 2023; implement the Local Content Agency Act, 2016 (Part VIII- Employment and Training of citizens)
- Include in all Agreements with foreign firms (health, mining, industrial, manufacturing, transportation, petroleum, hotel & tourism, energy, maritime, aviation, public works, agriculture, and infrastructural sectors) the requirements for job creation and number of jobs and to fund critical skills development of our nationals

iii. Safe Legal Migration

- Implement the Overseas Employment and Migrant Workers Act, 2023 to promote safe, legal, and orderly migration
- Enter into Bilateral Labour Agreements and or Memoranda of Understanding with other countries to promote overseas employment
- Strengthen the Transfer2 Transform Labour Migration programme of Government of Sierra Leone

iv. International Obligations

- Continue to honour Sierra Leone's obligations to International Organisations such the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the African Regional Labour Administration Centre (ARLAC).

v. On Social Protection

- Review and continue to implement the social protection policy and strategy
- Enact, popularize the National Social Protection Bill, 2022 and ensure its implementation.

vi. NASSIT

- Government will implement the Comprehensive Systems Audit that entailed financial procurement, technical and management Audit.
- Pursue the establishment and implementation of an appropriate scheme for the informal sector workforce.
- Continue to expand social protection scheme using the principle of social insurance to the formal sector and progressively extend it to the informal sector
- Government will continue to meet its obligations to NASSIT by paying, regularly its contributions and honour payment plan of arrears owed by the previous Administration (APC Government)
- Review the NASSIT Act of 2001 and restructure the institution to make it more efficient and effective for achieving its objectives
- Strengthen the Industrial and Social Security Court to promote compliance and speedy trial of all labour related disputes
- Implement recommendations of the Financial Investment Analysis report of all NASSIT investments.





3.4.6 Sports

The New Direction government under H.E President Bio promised to revitalise sports in the country.

Achievements

- Ensured Sierra Leone's participation in major international competitions, including the AFCON Tournament in Cameroon 2021, the WAFU under 20 Boys and Girls in Senegal 2021.
- Reactivated national Premier League on Football and introduced the Female Premier League in 2022.
- Developed the administrative, technical, and support services for sports
- Undertaken successful institutional rearrangement of sport and football governance institution thereby enhancing stability within the institutions.
- Government, after decades entirely financed and supported University athletes and officials in both the Africa and the West Africa University Games in Ethiopia and in Nigeria respectively.
- Government increased budgetary support to sporting activities, particularly football, athletics, cricket, volleyball, and basketball.
- Reactivated school and community sporting activities, with a view to identifying and developing talent for national and international competitions.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

To continue to revive sports in Sierra Leone, we commit the following:

i. Policies, Laws, and Regulations

- Government will review all existing Sport policy documents and regulations for Sports development and promotion in the country.
- Government will reactivate Physical Education into Schools as a core subject into the School Curriculum and the practical aspect of Sports activities with the view of identifying Sports talents and the development of those identified talents for national and international competitions.

ii. Capacity Building Funding Support

- Allocate sports funding to National Sports Association by merit, through the policy regulatory framework document of "Sports Ranking and Funding of Associations".
- Introduce a national skill and innovation exhibition programmes
- Establish sports academies in each region of the country for identified Sports talents from schools and communities for Sports development and promotion around the country.
- Expand capacity building of Sports administrative, technical and support services staff in all Sports governing bodies, National Sports Associations and Sports Development Organizations.



iii. Sports Infrastructure

- Construct new standard stadiums and sports playing grounds or facilities in all regions and the rehabilitation of the existing ones in those areas to promote Sports participation and performances in the Country.
- Partner with private sector for management and maintenance of sport facilities

iv. Inclusion and Expanding Access

- Establish the Court of Arbitrations for Sports in the Country with reference to International Sports regulations, Laws, and Standards.
- Promote mainstream equality in Sports including encouraging gender parity and disable equality in participation across a range of Sports.
- In partnership with the private sector, we will introduce the National Sports Festival as an annual event to boost Sports talent programme.





**Modernising Our
Infrastructure**



DEVELOPING INFRASTRUCTURE

An efficient infrastructure is a key enabler and an outcome in any economic development process. Improving the state of infrastructure in Sierra Leone is important for the stimulation of economic growth and boosting human capital development. A good infrastructure attracts foreign direct investment as it makes it easier to operate businesses, and hence lead to expansion of economic activities, which support further investments in infrastructure.

The New Direction Government promised to give Sierra Leone's infrastructure a facelift in order to enhance our economic competitiveness and socio-economic development. This agenda incorporates the provision of a stable and affordable energy supply, transportation, water infrastructural systems, waste management, and ICT, while also promoting private sector growth and manufacturing.

3.5.1 Energy

The Context

His Excellency President Bio promised to clean up the energy sector, bring efficiency and expand accessibility. The New Direction Government promised to make electricity available in all District HQ towns, expand rural electrification with a viewing of supporting key economic production centres in the country. The Government has since made investment to boost our energy generation capacity, transmissions, and distribution. The Government has done so with sustainability in mind by increasing the capacity of renewable sources (solar and hydro).

Achievements

- The New Direction Government has increased installed generation capacity from 105 MW in 2018 to 160 MW in 2023
- The Government also increased renewable energy generation capacity to 35% from 10% in 2018
- The Bio-led Government is making good on his promise to provide electricity in all District HQ towns, with 9 out of 16 district capitals connected and others in the pipeline.
- The Government has also increased the proportion of households with access to electricity to 31%
- Electricity generation per capita now stands at 55 KWH
- The Government has expanded transmission line to 740 km
- The Government has also reduced cost of operations, with EDSA deficit reduced to 60%
- Aggregate Technical, Commercial and Collection Losses reduced to 40%

Commitments (2023- 2028)

We will expand our energy infrastructure with the following commitments:

i. Power Goals

- Increase installed energy generation capacity from 160 MW to 180 MW
- Increase renewable energy generation from 35% to 80%
- Complete district capital electrification in all 16 locations
- Expand access to electricity to households from 31% to 80%



- Increase electricity generation per capita from 55 Kwh to 250Kwh
- Increase the length of electricity transmission lines from 740 km to 2000km
- Reduce EDSA deficit from 60% to 0%
- Reduce Aggregate Technical, Commercial and Collection Losses (ATC&C) from 40% to 15%

ii. **Institutional Goals**

- Expand private sector intervention in EDSA to reduce cost of Government
- Transform EGTC, including increasing the role of private sector to focus on Transmission and Dispatch Management.
- Provide standby security power to the Freetown Network.
- Establish a Full Collection Account to increase accountability and transparency in the sector.
- Establish a Rural Energy Directorate to oversee access expansion in all provincial HQ. towns and rural areas.
- Set Up Renewable Energy Fund as an instrument for private, Donor Partner and government funds to be used for project development grants and tariff support

iii. **Power Generation Aims**

- Complete the Bekonghor Hydro Project, a 160MW Hydropower Electrical Plant (HEPP).
- Undertake a large-scale solar installation of 150 MW to complement RESPITE
- Complete the Western Area Generation Project IPP - 128 MW
- Expand Bumbuna to add 50MW by adding two turbines
- Upgrade Goma Hydro Dam to increase generation from 6 MW to 9MW
- Complete Betmai Hydro to produce 27MW
- Expand the existing 5MW installation to 20MW in Baoma

iv. **Transmission and Distribution**

- Increase power import from Cote D'Ivoire and add 50 MW, and increase stability of in the transmission network
- Commence Power Import from CLSG via Guinea to add another 120MW
- Complete the Northern Transmission Line Project that links Bumbuna to Waterloo
- Complete the Southern Transmission Line Project that links Mamamah – Songo – Rotifunk - Bauya - Moyamba – Rutilé – Pujehun
- Construct a National Grid Control Centre

v. **Rural and Renewable Energy**

- Established 350 Mini grids to reach 88,000 households
- Connect over 200 communities to renewable energy sources (solar and hydro mini grids)

3.5.2 **Transportation**

The Context



The vision of His Excellency President Bio in the area of transportation is to create an integrated and safe transportation network that incorporates all modes of transportation, including roads, water and air that reflect regional priorities, provide a strong foundation for economic growth, and promote quality and effective transport networks nationwide.

3.5.2.1 Road and Land Transport

Roads are the major means of transportation of people and goods within the country and to the neighboring countries of Guinea and Liberia. Roads account for approximately 90% of the means of movement of people and goods. With a road stock of about 11,300 km and only 19% in good to excellent condition and roads being the bedrock for socio-economic development, attention need to be paid to the sector.

Most of the major road projects inherited from the previous Government had not been fully paid for. As a responsible Government, H.E President Bio has had to ensure that the on-going projects were safely delivered consistent with time, cost and quality as best practice would demand.

Achievements

- Rehabilitation of 46 Km of paved trunk road and paved with Asphalt 250 Km of trunk roads
- Constructed several major bridges including Sewa Bridge (Gondama), Waanje Bridge (Bandajuma Sowa), Mos Bridge (Bandasuma), Mabele Bridge, Mabang Bridge, Kpangbama Bridge, Savage Street Bridge
- Work on the way to complete the regravelling of 1,760km of roads to connect all major towns and villages (chiefdom HQ Towns),
- The Government through the Integrated Resilience and Urban Mobility Project (IRUMP) is undertaking road improvement on the West corridor to the Central Business District with signalization at selected intersections at Lumley, Congo Cross, and Ferry Junction. Construction of Eight Pedestrian overpasses in and around the Freetown area.
- Expedited the construction of roads linking district headquarter towns including Kenema Kailahun (completed), Bandajuma to Pujehun (80% complete); Bo-Mattru Road (25%)
- Construction of township roads in Bonthe Municipal, Bo, Kenema, Makeni, Kailahun including the No.2 Lumley-Tokeh road and the Hillside bye pass road
- The maintenance of Feeder Roads has been devolved to Local Councils with funding from the Road Maintenance Fund Administration.
- Under the Integrated and Resilient Urban Mobility project, Government is constructing 4 pedestrian overpasses at Lumley, Wilberforce, Shell and Jui near completion; modern market and transport terminal at Lumley near completion; construction of transit terminal at Wilberforce for public transport operators is near completion; developed a Traffic Management Plan that encompasses regulations and policies on traffic management including directional traffic flow structure; completed traffic studies for the installation of traffic lights at 7 critical intersections in Freetown.



3.5.2.2 Air Transportation

- Constructed a new modern First-Class International Airport

3.5.2.3 Sea Transportation

Ferries Services

- Completed the construction of the Targrin Ferry terminal waiting hall to meet customer's need.
- The SLPA completed the erection of a new multi-purpose berth (275 metres long and 13 metres in draft), thereby accommodating more and larger vessels, cargo throughout and reducing turnaround time

Maritime Industry

- Secured five Zodiac Search and Rescue Boats to serve the Sierra Leone Maritime Administration.
- Enhanced the search and rescue operations with a modernised state of the art radio communication system that covers the entire country's terminal stations, including coverage on the search and rescue boats
- The government has established a first ever search and rescue centre and regional headquarter in Bonthe.

Construction of Berths

- Rehabilitated of Berths 4 and 5 to increase vessel traffic and to accommodate larger vessels at the Port has been completed.
- Reconstructed and rehabilitated the Tagrin Ferry Terminal. This is over 90% complete.
- Constructed of a Multi-purpose Berth of 14 meters depth at the QEII to attract trade from South America and to increase productivity.

Policies and Regulations

- Drafted the Ports and Harbours Bill and currently with Parliament for ratification.

Clearing Services

- Improved services on doing businesses at the Port by reducing the turn-around time of vessels from 3 to 7 days
- In collaboration with other partners (such as MoF, NCP, SLPA and NRA, SLNSC) streamlined clearing processes to reduce lead time from 14 to 3 days
- SLNSC has also formed partnerships with Chartering companies to charter vessels for mining companies.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

For transport infrastructure, we make the following commitments:

- Governance of the Transport and Aviation Sector**



- The New Direction Government will review and restructure the Ministry of Transport & Aviation (MOTA), which may include creating new Directorates to enable the Ministry to effectively achieve its mandate.
- Review the mandate and positioning of the **Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA)** to ensure it meets international best practice.

ii. Road Improvement

The New Direction has prioritised roads based on need and placed into five major categories as follows:

- **Regional Roads** – continuing improvement to major border crossing town and MRU regional trade facilitation.
- **Urban Roads** - continue improvement to the Freetown and other urban roads
- **Inter-District (Major Connectivity) Roads** - targeting major connecting roads linking district capitals.
- **Tourism Enhancement Roads** - focusing on roads leading or going through tourist attraction areas.
- **Agriculture and Fishery Enhancement Roads** - targeting roads leading to potentially viable agricultural areas and major fishing communities.
- **Major Bridges** – targeting major bridges without which economically viable route will be redundant.

iii. Urban mobility

- Expand the Integrated and Resilient Urban Mobility Project at the Ministry of Transport & Aviation to other corridors in Freetown and to other provincial headquarter towns.
- Install traffic signals/lights at critical intersections in Freetown and other parts of the country.
- Consolidate and integrate other modes of transportation into the Urban transport network including river transportation.
- Improve non-Motorized Transport facilities – continuous footpath on both sides of roads, prioritised crossing, overhead pedestrian walkways, and missing links in Freetown.
- Develop an urban transport master plan that will establish the framework for urban transportation improvement.
- Modernised urban transit system with safe, modern, and physically challenged friendly bus systems.
- Develop human capital with the requisite technical skills to manage public transport operation for efficient and effective service delivery.
- Introduce intelligent traffic enforcement systems, such as red light running and other traffic enforcement street cameras.
- Establish a Traffic Control and Management Centre (TCMC) that will be focused on real-time traffic congestion monitoring and improving traffic efficiency.
- Establish a Traffic Engineering and Management Agency (TEMA) to operate and maintain all traffic related infrastructure nationwide effectively and sustainably.

iv. Road Safety

- Fully implement a robust Ministry of Transport (MoT) fitness regime to ensure that trucks and heavy-duty vehicles are road worthy.



v. Rail Transportation

- Explore the possibility of reintroducing the national railway
- Conduct Feasibility Study of construction of railway line along Conakry- Freetown – Monrovia corridor

vi. Air Transportation

- Develop the Hastings airport and encourage internal air transportation
- Establish a national carrier for regional and domestic operations through private sector participation.

vii. Marine Transport

- Explore other modes of transport within Freetown and the Western Area such as the construction of jetties and ferry terminals at strategic locations for commercial ferry and boat transport” with private sector participation.
- Develop Port Facility Security Plan as mandated by International Maritime Organization (IMO).
- Alongside the private sector, explore the possibility of a home based or locally owned shipping company actively engaged in both imports and exports.
- With private sector partnership, explore the possibility of a second seaport in Sierra Leone
- Create Maritime jobs through increasing the number of Sierra Leoneans at sea in all vessels flying the Country’s flag.







3.5.3 Increasing Access to Water Supply and Improved Sanitation

The Context

His Excellency President Bio is a firm goalkeeper of SDG goal six, which promises to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation. The New Direction Government believes that making clean water available in the homes of people is a basic right.

By July 2022, the access to water supply and sanitation had increased by 13% in the country with most of this coming from increases in the proportion of the rural population with access to adequate supply of drinking water. The SLPP Government is committed to the sustainability and will focus on the provision of safe drinking water sources to hard-to-reach communities, improve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene, and improve access to WASH in schools and during emergencies.

Achievements

i. Policies, ACTs, Regulations and Standards

- Developed Water Code for Sierra Leone in 2021.
- Developed Quarterly Monitoring reporting template and implemented since 2019
- Completed several regulations including for *Dam Safety, Water and catchment Protection, Water Pollution, Groundwater Protection, Licensing Rules, Tariff Guidelines, Complaint Handling and Water Consumer Service*

ii. Urban Water Supply

- Completed the Feasibility and Design of Koidu New Sembehun and Environs Water Supply Project
- Completed the three-town water supply facility including the treatment facilities and transmission pipelines in Bo, Kenema and Makeni
- Commence the restoration of water supply facilities in 7-towns

iii. Rural Water Supply

- Provided boreholes and gravity-fed water supply the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in 6 districts (Koinadugu, Falaba, Kambia, Kono, Pujehun and Bonthe) – Gravity fed
- Constructed 100 solar powered boreholes in 13 districts
- Provided gravity-fed Water Supply System completed in Tombo

iv. Water Resources

- Conducted the Sierra Leone hydrogeological mapping of groundwater resources
- Constructed 10 Hydrological Monitoring Network and 25 Groundwater monitoring stations.
- Procured and installed bulk flow water meters.
- Established Western Area peninsular Water Fund

v. Water Quality



- Constructed Water Quality Laboratories in Western Area Rural District, Falaba District, Karene District
- Equipped and operationalised all the water quality labs across the country to enable the labs to be used to conduct water quality tests.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

We make the following commitments for the 2023 Manifesto:

i. Policies and Reforms

- Undertake institutional and regulatory reforms of the sector to improve efficiency, revenue generation and sustainability
- Rehabilitate and expand the existing water distribution network in Freetown and other cities.

ii. Urban Water Supply

- Complete the construction of pipe-borne water supply facilities in all district capitals and Freetown.
- Develop 2 dam water supply systems in Western Area Peninsular.
- Develop water supply systems in six towns in the provinces (Njala-Taiama, Matru Jong, Daru, Mongor, Koidu and Lungi)

iii. Rural Water Supply

- Implement the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation project.
- Construct 300 solar powered boreholes in rural communities
- Conduct nationwide skill training for local area mechanics and provision of toolkits on motorized systems, handpumps and conventional systems O&M

iv. Governance and Capacity Building

- Improve coordination, collaboration, planning, and implementation among actors, making ways for effective implementation strategy and creating the platform to mobilise and attract private sector investment in the water sector.
- Conduct research and innovation in the water sector to develop alternative technologies in harvesting rainwater, robust network systems, groundwater extraction, surface water utilization etc.
- Construct Water Quality Laboratories in Western Area Rural District, Falaba District, Karene District.
- Equip and operationalise all the water quality labs across the country to enable the labs to be used to conduct water quality tests.



ECOWAS IDENT
REPUBLIQUE DES SERRES
CARTE D'IDENTITE CEDEAO / BILHETE



Surname
BIO
First Name
JULIUS
Nationality
SLE
Date of Birth
12.05.1964
Date of Issuance
28.01.2023
Date of Expiry
27.01.2024
ID Number
1234567890
Signature





3.5.4 Improving Communication Technology

The Context

The vision of the New Direction administration in the current 4IR context is to develop digital transformation programmes that will create a digitally inclusive and smart society empowered by a digital economy with the 'Leave No One Behind' vision of the United Nations (UN) as espoused in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 'Africa we want' principle of the African Union (AU) adopted in its 2063 Vision.

In the last five years H.E President Bio has demonstrated his commitment to place Sierra Leone firmly on a path to harness the benefits from this new age of 4IR. The New Direction government has made investments so that technology and innovation are at the heart of public service delivery in the country. These investments will result in a diversified economy, an opening of new market channels for small and medium businesses, promote inclusive trade and ultimately drive democratic and economic development.

Achievements

We document our key gains over the last five years.

i. Governance

- Established the Director of Science Technology and Innovation to provide the highest political support for digitalisation in the country.

ii. Policies, Laws, and Infrastructure

- The New Direction Government enacted the cybercrime act of 2021,
- The Government has developed national digital development policy
- The Government also enacted a new communications act 2022.

iii. Digital Infrastructure

- The New Direction Government has extended the National Fibre backbone to five more district and constructing the district metro rings for last mile government services

iv. Access

- Increased the number of internet users from 307,000 people in 2017 to about 2.67 million users as of June 2022

v. E-Governance

- Rolled out time/attendance management system to 24 MDAs which will be scaled up in the next JMB administration
- Introduced e-Cabinet during COVID
- Developed and rolled out e-passes during lockdowns



Commitments (2023- 2028)

We make the following commitments for the 2023 Manifesto:

i. Leadership, governance, coordination, and partnerships

- Support the development and implementation of harmonized digital transformation policies and strategies
- Foster transparent, predictable, pro-investment and pro-innovation legal and regulatory frameworks and enhance its implementation.
- Review the existing Institutional framework for the ICT/Telecom sectors to reflect emerging trends.
- Develop a robust coordination mechanism with an appropriate M&E framework that involves all key stakeholders to effectively implement the National Digital Transformation Roadmap.
- develop a clear Institutional Framework and proper digital Governance, Implementation, and collaboration plans.
- Support the development and implementation of digital transformation policies and strategies to create demand and enable scaling up of digital initiatives.

ii. Digital skills and Human Capital Development

- Ensure an enabling infrastructure for digital learning at all levels of education.
- Foster digital skills development in the education sector
- Develop national ICT curriculum and content across education levels to promote inclusive digital learning
- Leverage ICT channels to improve access to and quality of education at all levels.
- Promote technology-supported learning, including creating and scaling-up eLearning platforms, which offer instant access, and use open educational resources.
- Support the establishment and scale-up of online higher-level education institutions, with curricula that combine STEAM with transversal skills.
- Mainstream digital skills and responsible online behaviour among all citizens to enable them to be active and successful participants in the digital society and raise awareness of risks in terms of digital rights, online safety, and security

iii. Digital Infrastructure and Platforms

- Improve the universal access to digital services focusing on areas unserved and underserved by digital services
- Promote measures that increase affordability to connectivity, devices, and services
- Reduce the environmental impact of digital development
- Establish a national Data Centre and cloud computing Infrastructure for Government data and content hosting.
- Facilitate the landing of a second submarine fibre optic cable to create redundancy
- Facilitate the coordination efforts to migrate to digital terrestrial broadcasting and harmonized use of the digital dividend
- Develop and implement a national digital infrastructure master plan considering convergence of technologies
- Foster transparent, predictable, pro-investment and pro-innovation regulatory frameworks to promote measures that increase affordability of broadband and technology devices and services
- Facilitate postal services access to promote digital access to public services
- Develop a smart city and rural connectivity project





iv. Digital Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and emerging technologies

- Develop and implement policies for digital innovation and entrepreneurship
- Create a conducive environment to empower people to innovate and facilitate access to finance and funding mechanisms for digital enterprises and start-ups and young innovator
- Establish and strengthen partnerships among national and regional actors, to harmonise efforts related to digital entrepreneurship at the national and regional level
- Build Research & Development (R&D) centres to spur innovation
- Promote Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Incubators/Start-ups for the digital economy
- Promote policies and regulations that address emerging technologies with regard to how best to protect citizens, ensure fair markets and enforce regulations while allowing new technologies and business to thrive

v. Digital Government (for enhanced public service delivery)

- To establish a legal and regulatory framework as well as the enabling institutional framework for the coordination and implementation of the digital government.
- To design and implement a Government Wide connectivity infrastructure (GWAN and LAN) for digital government service interoperability
- Promote the digitalisation of the three arms of government (e-Cabinet, e-Parliament, and e-Justice) to promote access to services
- To establish shared services and integrate systems through system interoperability layers that can be leveraged by private sector players.
- To establish a legal framework for the use of the Country Code Top Level Domains (ccTLDs).
- To develop regulatory frameworks for the utilisation of the public postal network as Hubs for delivery of government services.
- Develop and implemented harmonised national digital government policy and strategy in accordance with regional and global best practices
- Standardize the government digital infrastructure by defining a high-level Enterprise Information Service Architecture (EISA) and national e-Government Inter-operability Technical Framework (ITF) policies and specifications, reference models
- Implement digital government services across all sectors for accountability, efficiency, and improved service delivery.
- Plan the development of a robust G2P digital payments channel for government payments to citizens
- Promote the digitalisation of critical sectors of the economy (Finance, Tourism, e-health, e-agriculture, Education etc.)



vi. **Data Governance and Cybersecurity**

- Further develop legal and regulatory frameworks on cybersecurity and data protection in accordance with international frameworks
- Support institutional leadership and coordination for Data Governance cybersecurity response and strengthen cooperation at national, regional, and international levels
- Build human capacity, awareness, and sensitization in data governance and cybersecurity
- Support the N-CSIRT and development of sectoral CERT
- Protect vulnerable assets with response readiness and risk assessment to prevent cyberattacks and data breaches
- Protect personal data in digital transactions and communications through Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) (Certificate Authority) to promote trust in online transactions
- Enhance the openness and exploitation of data

vii. **Digital Financial Services and e-Commerce**

- Streamline the enabling legal and regulatory environment for Digital Financial Services
- Ensure an interoperable and secure digital financial infrastructure
- Encourage DFS competition, user protection, and adoption through technology-forward National financial inclusion strategies
- Create the building blocks for the development of e-commerce
- To expand and strengthen the role of postal network in the digital economy as a Hub for e-Government services.
- Develop a national digital addressing system to promote e-commerce

3.5.5 **Improving Lands, Housing and Country Planning**

The Context

The New Direction Government inherited a land sector fraught with a wide range of challenges stemming from weak, obsolete, or non-existent regulatory systems, ill-capacitated workforce, and ineffective land administration. This sector had been the centre of corrupt practices and a myriad of crises and public disenchantment amidst rising demand for land, especially in expanding urban settlements where multiple claimants filed thousands of lawsuits, most of which remained unresolved for decades.

The Bio-led Government was determined to clean up the Lands and Housing sector to make it possible for more Sierra Leoneans to own land or find housing. The New Direction Government also aimed to protect public lands and land in protected areas, while also making suitable lands available for investments to support economic growth.



Achievements

- The Government established a Land Complaints and Conflict Resolution Committee whose work and recommendations generated impetus for the various reforms in the lands sector.
- The New Direction Government of passed into law the Customary Land Rights Act and National Lands Commission Act concurrently, making way for the operation of the of the National Lands Commission.
- Established the National Lands Commission and Customary Land Rights Regulations, National Building Code to and National Housing policy.
- National capacity for digital land administration is being upgraded, with the introduction of a Land Cadastral Administration System, training of personnel in geospatial land administration technologies and a comprehensive needs assessment to guide systems strengthening interventions.
- The MLHCP embarked on the recovery of state lands availability of land to support economic development, including public infrastructure, housing, and investment. A total of about 40,000 of state lands were recovered across the country and secured as land banks, some of which have been made available to members of the public on lease or as grant, using raffle draws to promote equitable access and ownership of state lands.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

The Government will pursue the following programmes to address outstanding challenges in funding, coordination and policy alignment and capacity for effective delivery by the Ministry of Lands Housing and Country Planning (MLHCP):

i. Policies, Laws, and Regulations

- Legislate the Land Commission and Customary Lands Regulations
- Finalize and support implementation of National Housing Policy and National Building Code
- Continue to strength the legal and regulatory framework of the land sector to consolidate our gains in efficient land administration over the past five years and further enhance investors' confidence to make the long-term investments required for the expansion of the agri-food, mining, fishing, tourism, and petroleum industries

ii. Addressing Urban Housing Needs

- Facilitate urbanisation by creating new cities and additional urban settlements based on principles of sustainable land use planning, management, and administration
- Collaborate with other sectors and explore opportunities to attract investments in housing, micro cities, tourism destinations, industrial parks, and other urban infrastructure



- In a PPP model, create 5000 affordable housing units to be constructed under various arrangements for new micro-cities and social housing schemes: in addition, hospital complexes, public office spaces and the new Lungi Administrative City.

iii. Improve Land Administration and Conservation

- Establish a modern GIS workstation to support land administration
- Support protection of wildlife reserves/sanctuaries, forest reserves and national protected areas
- Provide incentives to support small businesses in the housing construction industry
- Support the allocation, planning and of dedication of land for industrialisation and economic expansion (including all Special Economic Zones projects)

3.5.6 Protecting Our Environment

The Context

In November 2019, the New Direction Government established a standalone Ministry of the Environment and in November 2022, the portfolio of Climate Change was added to the Ministry of the Environment. This has improved the coordination and collaboration of most sectors with a mandate over Environment issues.

In addition, with support of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, and Parliament, the Ministry has amended all the Acts of the Agencies previously supervised by other Ministries. This has enhanced the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to deliver on its mandate effectively.

Remarkably, Sierra Leone has climbed up the Environmental Performance Index in 2022 (climbing from 163 to 140 out of 180 countries in 2022) indicating phenomenal progress since the present government took over the administration of the country in 2018. In addition, due to the Government's determined effort to build climate resilience and address vulnerabilities, Sierra Leone is now ranked as the 19th vulnerable country to climate change according to the ND-GAIN Matrix as against the previous ranking that placed Sierra Leone 3rd.

Achievements

- The New Direction Government established a standalone Ministry of the Environment and in November 2022, the portfolio of Climate Change was added to the Ministry of the Environment.
- Reviewed and updated the National Environment Policy.
- Reviewed and amended 6 obsolete Legislations and Acts to enhance compliance (National Protected Area Authority / Wildlife Act / Fiscal and Administrative Policy / Meteorology / Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection / EPA / Forestry).
- Developed and rolled out a Plastic and Plastic Waste and Sand mining Policies
- Passed into law the National Development-Induced Resettlement Policy
- Develop a flood risk management strategy as part of a more ambitious, robust, and adaptive environment and natural resources management policy and strategic plan



- Developed action plans for and fully implement all Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)
- Established a National Environment Fund to help with resource mobilization

Commitments (2023- 2028)

We make the following commitments for the 2023 Manifesto:

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i. Sustainable Management of Forest Resources

- Develop a Forest and Mangrove Inventory
- Develop a Carbon Market Framework
- Develop a National Tree Planting Programme for the regeneration and shared management of forest cover and related products
- Strengthen public-private partnerships for forest conservation, especially the establishment of woodlots and commodification of Non-Timber Forest Products
- Develop the capacity of the Forestry Division of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change for planning, programme design and monitoring
- Adequately enforce laws and policies to protect forests and designate new areas for conservation and ecological tourism
- Promote research on forest ecosystems and biodiversity to quantify, document and disseminate the contribution of the forestry sub-sector to the national economy and enhance the sub-sector's position within national economic and sustainable development priorities
- Facilitate transboundary cooperation to transboundary forest resources management and policy harmonization.
- Support the establishment of World Heritage Sites

ii. Ecosystem Conservation

- Adequately protect biodiversity hotspots and fragile ecosystems
- Ensure that all major mining companies and industrial establishments carry out Environmental Social Health Impact Assessments and take mitigating measures for damage caused by their operations as required by law and corporate social responsibility
- Ensure that all major mining companies and industrial establishments carry out SEAs and ESHIAs to make sure appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures are taken before, during and after relevant processes
- Ensure that environmental matters are given priority in decision making on the allocation of lands for various purposes. The issue of alternative land use, taking environmental damage into consideration, will be included in such decision-making processes

iii. Environmental Education

- Intensify education and information campaigns to reduce practices harmful to the environment



- Develop curricula on environmental issues and climate change for schools, colleges, and universities.



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**Improving
Governance**



IMPROVING GOVERNANCE

Improving governance requires the creation and functioning of accountable institutions through credible processes and transparent practices. In the past five years, the New Direction Government of His Excellency, President Bio prioritised the building of strong governance systems that promotes justice and rule of law, public service delivery, peace and national cohesion, consolidation of peace, accountability, security, equal opportunities for all, and empowerment of women and girls.

In the next 5 years we intend to consolidate and build upon on the concrete achievements through inclusive and participatory governance.

3.6.1 Strengthening Democratic Governance

The Context

The foundational principle of the SLPP was anchored on building effective democratic institutions for good governance, economic growth, and social cohesion. In keeping with that tradition, the New Direction Government under His Excellency, President Bio created new institutions and has continued to support existing ones to deepen accountable governance. This has created the enabling environment and helped regain the trust of the people in our democratic governance.

Achievements

- The New Direction Government has established new institutions to deepen our democracy and enhanced efficient public service delivery. They include: the creation of the Office of the Chief Minister (OCM); the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (**MGCA**); Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (**MECC**); Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion (**ICPNC**); National Council for Civic Education (**NaCCED**); National Disaster Management Agency (**NDMA**); National Investment Board (**NIB**); Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation (**DSTI**); Office of the Presidential Infrastructure Initiative (OPII) and the National Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate (**NaMED**).
- Widening space for dialogue and providing capacity building support to Civil Society Organisations including the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ).
- Government has set aside funding to support vital electoral processes. This means Sierra Leone no longer relies on external funding to conduct its elections.
- Government has continued to provide capacity building support for democratic institutions. These include the National Commission for Democracy (NCD); Political Parties Registration and Regulation Commission (PPRRC) and the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL).



Commitments (2023- 2028)

We make the following commitments for the 2023 Manifesto:

- Government will continue to provide budgetary support and subvention to national democratic institutions.
- Incorporation of democratic institutions in the Constitution of Sierra Leone to protect their mandates and guarantee their independence.
- Continue to provide ample democratic space for CSOs to interface with government and governance processes.
- Strengthening performance management oversight for MDAs.

3.6.2 Fighting Corruption and Illicit Financial Flow

The Context

In the New Direction Manifesto Direction of 2018, His Excellency, the President characterised corruption as a national security threat, over and above a failure of governance. With committed political will, a comprehensive National Anti-corruption strategy, policy and legislative reforms, every reputable international indicator over the last five consecutive years has scored Sierra Leone as outstanding in its efforts at controlling corruption. We have sustained progression in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), from 130 in 2018 to 110 in 2022 – a twenty place move in four years.

There have been record convictions and billions of Leones in non-conviction asset-based recoveries. Peer nations have studied and adopted our successful model for preventing and fighting corruption. As a result of this notable success, we have been rewarded with eligibility for Compact worth hundreds of millions of US dollars from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) of the United States Government.

Achievements

- Tens of Billions of Leones recovered by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) from corrupt public officials and paid back into the CRF. At the same time the ACC seized several expensive assets from corrupt public officials and placed them under the State.
- The SLPP Government amended the Anti-Corruption Act (No. 12) of 2008 and expanded the Mandate of the ACC in 2019 bringing into effect The Anti-Corruption (Amendment) Act (No. 9) of 2019 which expanded the scope and Mandate of the ACC.
- In 2022, the MCC awarded SL 79% in 2022, up from 49% under the previous APC Government.
- The Berlin based organisation Transparency International (TI) and the Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law – Sierra Leone (CARL-SL), a national CSO have recorded significant improvement in corruption perception under the SLPP Government.
- In 2022, the Afro Barometer, a Pan-African independent African Research Network that measures and publishes broad perceptions of economics, political and social dynamics in Africa, relating to corruption perception in Sierra Leone. They showed that public perception of corruption in Sierra Leone declined to 40 percent from an astonishing 70 percent only a few years ago.

Commitments (2023- 2028)



We make the following commitments to consolidate our gains:

- Vigorously implement the 2023-2028 National Anti-Corruption Strategy with emphasis on the preventative approach to curb corruption in Sierra Leone.
- ACC will upgrade its operations through digitization of its processes and activities to ensure proper record keeping, transparency and inter-agency collaboration.
- Increase prevention of corruption in MDAs through the monitoring of the implementation of recommendations arising from systems review engagements and the Sierra Leone Audit Service Reports.
- Increase efforts and commitment to recover stolen public funds and assets.
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) to serve as a transparency and accountability instrument

3.6.3 Peace and National Cohesion

The Context

The SLPP was built on the spirit of national unity and the philosophy of “One country, One People.” This remains the guiding principle of the SLPP. Now more than ever, national unity and cohesion are of the first importance for the maintenance of our hard-won peace, stability, and democracy.

In order to enhance national cohesion, the New Direction Government in 2018, held a national consultation on developing an inclusive architecture for peace and national cohesion. This culminated into the enactment of Independent Peace and National Cohesion (ICPNC) Act (Act No. 5) of 2020. The Act established the ICPNC with the Mandate to take measures to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts and to build, promote and maintain sustainable peace in Sierra Leone.

Achievements

- The ICPNC is now functional with the full complement of Commissioners and staff.
- The ICPNC has set up a situation room to receive and refer electoral complaints.
- The Sydney (Australia) based Institute for Economies and Peace has consistently ranked Sierra Leone as among the top five peaceful countries in West Africa.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

We make the following commitments to consolidate our gains:

- Launch a Presidential Peacebuilding and National Cohesion Basket Fund.
- Review the National Youth Service Scheme to make it involuntary for beneficiaries of Government’s grant and creating opportunities for people in other district instead of their home districts.
- Giving a national character in political appointments and in civil service.
- Review the ICPNC Act and develop capacity to make it more efficient.



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CRIDA-3 PROJECT OF FORDIA WARMA ACADEMY BUILDING BY WIRMA LEONE



3.6.4 Improving Security Governance

In the last couple of years, Sierra Leone has witnessed a few instances of lawlessness resulting to direct attacks on security forces and state assets. These include the Makeni Riot of 17th July 2020, the Yoni-Mamelah (Mile 91) Riot and most dramatically the August 10th insurrection which led to the killing of six police officers and a number of civilians. This is a new threat to the security of the state which makes it imperative for the security sector to develop a more robust posture in order to respond appropriately to the current threat.

Under the New Direction Government, the National Security Sector meaningfully contributed to the enhancement of peace, security, good governance, and national development. The sector's approach to security service delivery has been collective, collaborative, and cooperative leading to some significant achievements including:

Achievements

i. Coordination in the sector

- Improved on the coordination capacity of the security sector through better conditions of service and clarity of roles.
- Strengthened collaboration with the justice sector resulting in professional and measured responses to serious security threats and incidents.
- Provided credible intelligence, identifying suspicious patterns and activities leading to the seizures of narcotics and apprehension of drug traffickers.
- Effectively used the instrument of Military Aid to Civil Authority to respond to national emergencies, such as during the COVID 19 outbreak.
- Improved interface between the security sector and the general public through enhanced community policing and Family Support Unit.

ii. Military Infrastructure

- Developed the infrastructure of the military including construction of 5 Forward Patrol Bases, Construction of young officers Mess at the Wilberforce Barracks with 104 self-contained rooms, fully furnished for young and single officers, a 350-seater conference hall, a kitchen with a 90-seater dining hall, a classical gym, and an elevator.
- Constructed a 100 bed hospital for the Military and Sierra Leone Police.
- Developed the capacity of the Engineering regiment of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces by providing them new construction equipment and engaging them in road works.

iii. Disaster Response

- Provided support to Disaster Management Agency for disaster prevention through drainage cleaning and response to disaster across the country.
- Improved services at prisons and correction services centre through penal reforms.



Commitments (2023- 2028)

We make the following commitments for the next five years:

- Improved the welfare and terms and conditions of service for career serving personnel.
- Improved on the capacity of the security sector to continue to serve the nation and participate in international peace keeping operations.
- Provided adequate logistics for increased capability for effective security service delivery.
- Increased response capacity to address new and emerging threats.
- Strengthened interface among the security sector, the populace, MDAs, and the government to ensure inclusive security, which is necessary for peace, security, and national development.
- Review existing legislations governing the security sector with a view to bring them in line with best practice.

3.6.5 Strengthening the Public Service

The Context

Since assuming office in 2018, the New Direction government has developed a Civil Service Training Policy to provide the general framework for comprehensive capacity building in the public sector and the running of the Civil Service Training College. The New Direction Government committed to reforming the civil service to focus on outcomes, efficiency, performance, and a leaner workforce for quality delivery. In addition, Government focused on replenishing the workforce, building performance management and delivery systems across all MDAs, and introduced merit system in recruitment processes.

Achievements

- The New Direction Government has reviewed the 1982 Public Service Regulations.
- Recruited 6,113 qualified Sierra Leoneans into the Civil Service since 2018.
- A new civil service training policy framework developed for the public sector and for the running of the civil service training college.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

We make the following commitments for the next five years:

- Review the policy and legal framework for public service to make it more professional and attractive to Sierra Leonean professionals who would like to work for Government.
- Establish a centre of Government delivering unit in the Presidency with a coherent connection to smaller delivery units in line ministries.
- Improve incentives to support productivity and merit-based system in recruitment and progression of the workforce.
- Strengthen the Performance Management of MDAs by reviewing the existing frameworks and developing Performance Management Policy.
- Develop an Electronic Personnel Management System to keep track of professionals recruited into the Civil Service.
- Operationalise the Wages and Compensation Commission Act 2023 to harmonise salaries across Government



3.6.6 Advancing Rule of Law, Promoting Justice and Human Rights

The Context

In the past five years the New Direction Government demonstrated steadfast commitment to the rule of law in keeping with the tradition of the SLPP. The operational independence of the judiciary has been fully respected including during trial of a prominent political party opponent charged with a treasonable offence against the state. There has also been an improved access to justice including an increase in the number of Magistrate and High Courts and full financial support to Legal Aid Board across the country.

Achievements

- Increased access to justice by establishing magistrate and high courts in all districts.
- Established a Special Court to try perpetrators of Gender Based Violence.
- Completed a Commission of Inquiry of public officials, issued a White Paper and gave opportunity for Appeal.
- Completed the Constitutional Review process and drafted a White Paper.
- Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone has been graded "A" status for the third consecutive time by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights through its accredited body, Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)
- Reviewed the Criminal Procedures ACT 1965

Commitments (2023- 2028)

We make the following commitments for the next five years:

- Improve upon courts infrastructure and build more court rooms to enhance access to justice.
- Digitise case management with the view to tracking progress of all matters before courts.
- Maintaining its grade 'A' status - the Commission will work towards implementing the recommendations of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) and strengthen its relationship with the government and other local and international partner and networks.
- Enact the Criminal Procedures Act 2023

3.6.7 Deepening Decentralisation and Strengthening Local Chieftaincy Reform

The Context

The New Direction Government committed to strengthen local councils and facilitate strong, coordination mechanisms within local governance systems as a way of advancing the devolution process.



Achievements

- Revised Decentralization Policy 2020 and Enacted the Local Government Act 2022.
- Improved working conditions of Local Councils through the introduction of monthly salaries for Chairpersons/Mayors and their deputies and making them eligible to end of term gratuities and pensions; as well as increased by four-fold, allowances of Councillors and harmonising salaries of professional staff of Local Council with that of their counterparts in the central Government.
- Operationalized the Local Councils Development Operational Guidelines in all 22 Local Councils.
- We have transferred 77 percent of the 79 planned devolved functions to Local Councils.
- Established District Development Coordination Committees (DDCCs) and made them fully functional in 12 of 16 districts of Sierra Leone, which ensures effective monitoring, supervision, and reporting on development progress at the community level.
- The New Direction Government in partnership with CSOs rolled out the “People’s Planning Process” or “Wan Fambul Framework” initiative to support village/chiefdom level development planning.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

We make the following commitments for the next five years:

- We commit to fully implement the Local Government Act and build capacity to implement devolved Functions.
- The New Direction Government will review the Fiscal Decentralization policy to ease the fiscal tension at the sub national level.
- Revisit boundaries for district and city councils to make to place district councils away from city council locations to enhance service delivery and greater citizens participation and inclusion.
- Widen and deepen Decentralization in the Western Region.
- Facilitate the capacity of chiefdom administrations, especially the newly de-amalgated by improving their physical infrastructure.
- Will explore the ease and cost of relocating some head offices of MDAs in regional headquarters.

3.6.8 Constitutional Reform

The Context

The review of the Sierra Leone Constitution is a commitment in Lome Peace Agreement and in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The previous Government started the Constitutional Review process but failed to complete it. In furtherance to that process the New Direction Government in 2022 published a White Paper on the review that had been done. The New Direction is determined to enact a new constitution in fulfilment of the Lome Peace Agreement. Furthermore, a number of critical policy issues such as Gender Equality Empowerment Act; Abolition of the death penalty, repeal of the seditious libel law and a review of the Political Party Registration Commission (PPRC) Act will all now be incorporated into the New Constitution when enacted.



Achievements

- The New Direction Government has published a White Paper on the review that has been done.
- A number of major policy issues which may be part of the Constitution have already been enacted into law.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

We make the following commitments for the next five years:

- Enact a new constitution through a referendum

3.6.9 Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy

The Context

The fundamental goals of our foreign policy are to promote and defend the core interests of Sierra Leone: her sovereignty and international image; the well-being of our citizens at home and abroad, and the integrity of our national institutions. As a matter of principle, the New Direction Government over the past five years have projected abroad, our core commitment to providing access to universal education, to the values of religious tolerance, gender equality and protection of children, respect for human rights and ethnic diversity, an acute awareness of the imperatives of climate change, and our commitment to subregional and regional integration.

As a result, Sierra Leone is now highly respected on the global stage. Our achievements in the areas of education and protection of girls and women have been widely recognised, and our leadership of important international organisations globally praised. For the first time in 50 years, Sierra Leone is poised to take a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council, the most influential international organ.

Achievements

- Built and commissioned an ultra-modern Foreign Service Academy and developed a soft infrastructure for the academy.
- Sierra Leone contributed to the growth of the ECOWAS Parliament through the nomination and support for the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament who is a Sierra Leonean.
- Opened additional Embassies in Strategic locations such as Morocco, Egypt, Turkey, UAE.
- Secured Visa Free Travel for holders of Diplomats and Service Passport Holders to Russia, Turkey, Morocco, and UAE.
- Conducted a functional Management Review to make the Ministry fit for purpose.
- Sierra Leone co-sponsored sponsorship of a UN Resolution on Child Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Violence by First Lady, H.E. Fatima Bio.
- Sierra Leone endorsed by ECOWAS and the AU for a seat in the non-permanent category in the UN Security Council.
- Our work in education has received remarkable international recognition including UN Secretary General requesting the President of Sierra Leone, H.E Julius Maada Bio to co-chair UN Education session, and awarding Minister of Education as Best Minister in the World.



Commitments (2023- 2028)

We make the following commitments for the next five years:

- We will continue to facilitate the **70** and appointment of Sierra Leoneans to positions in various international organisations. In pursuance of this, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations will create Candidatures Unit to pursue vigorously, vacancies that may occur in various international organisations and recommend, as well as support suitable Sierra Leoneans to apply.
- We continue to provide strategic coordination role of the African Union Committee of Ten (C-10) Common African Position for reform of the United Nations Security Council.
- Work with African Union sister countries on initiatives to build an Africa we want through Agenda 2063.
- Enact a new Foreign Service Act that will define a new architecture for the foreign service and detach it from the civil service.





3.6.10 Promoting Press Freedom and Strengthening Civil Society Organisations

The Context

The New Direction Government's commitment to a free and open society has been expressed in very practical and concrete terms over the past five years. We recognise that freedom of expression is a positive attribute, and we have removed barriers to its full enjoyment by all citizens, particularly journalists and CSOs. We have also sought to provide incentives to make this freedom meaningful, providing funding support to the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists - the main organisation of media practitioners - to undertake training and other enabling programs for its members. In our five years of Government, we held no journalist in gaol. The New Direction Government has worked closely and openly with CSOs, fostering dialogue and transparency in public affairs, including making the electoral calendar far more predictable than previously. Gender participation in the public space has been actively encouraged and promoted.

Achievements

- In keeping with our 2018 manifesto commitment, the New Direction Government repealed the seditious libel law from the Public Order 1965.
- We enacted a new Independent Media Commission Act.
- Revised the Media Code of Practice, and the Election Reporting Guidelines for Media Practitioners.
- Organised the first Investment Conference to attract Private Sector Investment in the media.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

We make the following commitments for the next five years:

- The New Direction commits to advancing the values of a free and open society
- Provide support to all citizens to fully enjoy the freedoms enshrined in our constitution and inherent in the best democratic practice.
- Sustain support for Sierra Leone Association of Journalist (SLAJ)
- Develop Capacity and support to Community Radio Stations

3.6.11 Diaspora Affairs

The Diaspora provides a resource pool for highly qualified Sierra Leonean living abroad that may be desirous of contributing to different aspects of national development national development.

Achievements

Over the years, little has been done to optimise benefits from resourceful Diaspora resident. This could be partly because we do not have appropriate policy and legal framework to guide Government.



Commitments (2023- 2028)

We make the following commitments for the next five years:

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The next Bio administration is poised to address this. Specifically, the next Government will

- Develop a Diaspora Policy and possibly law.
- Relocate the Diaspora Office to the Presidency and restructure it with the mandates to
 - register and maintain a database of Sierra Leonean born professionals working abroad.
 - mobilize skilled Sierra Leoneans willing to volunteer their services.
 - mobilize Diaspora business communities and provide special incentives for Sierra Leonean Diaspora Business communities.
 - integrate diaspora affairs with consular operations.
 - Develop and deploy digital facilities to remotely access specialized skills from Diaspora
 - Issue Diaspora Bond to mobilise resources for development





**Transforming the
Economy**



TRANSFORMING THE ECONOMY

3.7.1 Improving the Macro-Economy

The Context

His Excellency President Bio inherited an economy that was on a downward spiral. Real GDP growth had fallen to 3.5% in 2018 from 6.7% in 2016. The key driver of economic growth, the mining sector, was contracting with the closure of two iron ore mining companies creating job losses and increased poverty. Inflation was on an upward trajectory, with year-on-year inflation increasing to double digits at 18% at the end of the first quarter of 2018. The fiscal situation was tight, with domestic revenue barely sufficient to fund not more 50% of the annual budget. Consequent upon the poor economic management, IMF withheld funding under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) Programme. Subsequently, all other partners ceased providing budgetary support. With low revenue, the Koroma administration was forced to announce series of austerity measures. Compounded by burgeoning expenditure, largely because of inflated infrastructure costs, Government resorted to excessive bank borrowing and arrears accumulation. In April 2018, domestic debt was over US\$650 million, arrears on good and services was more than US\$350 million and external debt rose to US\$1.751 billion in 2017 from US\$633.8 in 2008

Persistent global shocks have only exposed the depth and scale of these challenges. Lockdowns at home and abroad halted most economic activities. At peak of the crisis, the Sierra Leone economy experienced a negative growth rate of -2%. Furthermore, as a net-importer of most essential commodities, disruptions in global supply chains and inflation for essential commodities such as food and fuel have been transmitted as rising costs of living for millions. Instead, of long-term investments to boost the economy, government used its limited resources on health emergencies and keeping businesses afloat during the Pandemic. The Russian-Ukraine war only worsened the situation. Global fuel and food prices rose astronomically, disruptions in supply chains continued creating huge freight cost and accompanying hike in essential imports.

Furthermore, policy response from the West, including the appreciation of the US dollar has elevated our debt burdens, increased our import bill and general price levels. Payment of principals and interest on external public debts accumulated by the previous government now averages over 30% of domestic revenue, which continues to squeeze the fiscal space.

Determined to deliver for the people of Sierra Leone, the New Direction Government embarked on a series economic reform to correct fiscal mismanagement and restore macroeconomic stability. After the first year of reform, real GDP had already rose to 5.6% in 2019, domestic revenue GDP ratio surged to 15.7% in 2021 from 12.3% in 2017. Overall budget deficit-GDP ratio fell to 3.1% in 2019 from 7.8% in 2017 and inflation was gradually reduced to 9.5% by the end of March 2021. Confidence from the international partners in the economic management got Sierra Leone back in the International Monetary Fund's Extended Credit Facility (ECF) Programme by end 2018, merely 8 months of the administration.

In the midst of all of this, H.E Bio still needed to make good on his promise to boost human capital in Sierra Leone, focusing on education, health, agriculture sectors and other social programmes. At the same time, the country continued to face huge infrastructure deficits and needed to complete the series of abandoned projects, mostly township roads and initiate new investment in rural roads, energy, water supply and communications to support growth. The Government committed and consistently spent about 22% of Government budget on



education, and increased allocation to the health sector from 6% to 11.6% in 2021. In response to the huge infrastructure gap, in 2019, the Bio-Government initiated critical infrastructure projects. The restoration of electricity in 7 district capitals, improvement of supply in other towns and installation of solar-mini grids in rural communities were a few. To improve on rural connectivity, Government also started the re-gravelling and spot improvement of 2,000 Km of rural trunk roads and the completion of abandoned township and a few trunk roads. Government also commenced the restoration of water supply in 8 district towns. Additionally, Government took a bold move to commence support to Small Medium Enterprise (SMEs) through the MUNAFA Fund and farmers through mechanisation, input supply and processing. Additionally, Government largely financed the mid-term census and the 2023 Public Elections.

Achievements

MACROECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

i. Domestic Revenue Mobilisation

- Established the Treasury Single Account (TSA) compelling Government agencies to deposit all revenues into the Consolidated Revenue Fund.
- Developed a policy to rationalise duty and tax exemptions, enacted the duty and tax exemption law and established digital processing of Duty and Tax exemptions.
- Enacted a new **National Revenue Act** that better clarifies line relationships among relevant institutions, the **Extractive Industry Revenue Act** harmonising taxes for industries in the extractive sector and optimising revenues from these sectors, **Transfer Pricing Regulations** to minimise transfer mispricing and revenue loss from related party transactions, consistent with international best practice.
- Approved the Medium-Term Revenue Strategy (MTRS) that sets the country on the sustainable revenue path and transparent governance structure with the participation of civil society organisations, private sector, and development partners.
- Expanded ASYCUDA World to the Lungi International Airport, Kissy Port Terminal, SALPOST, and Gbalamuya post at the Guinea border and adopted the International Tax Administration System (ITAS)
- Passed into law the Electronic Cash Register Regulations and commenced the rolling out of the Electronic Cash Registers (ECR) for GST
- Passed a law that allows exercise stamp implementation and electronic tracking of transit cargos and containers
- Passed into law excise tax regulation that provides transparent guidance for the implementation of excise stamp with clear roles and responsibilities of all entities
- Parliament enacted a PPP arrangement for generating alternative data on communications with the view optimising revenue from telecommunications companies
- Domestic revenue GDP ratio stood at 15.7% in 2021 compared to 12.3% in 2017

ii. Public Expenditure Management



- Developed Arrears Clearance Strategy to pay the huge arrears estimated at about us\$350 million inherited in 2018.
- Passed into Law the Wages and Compensation Act aimed at rationalising and harmonising wages and compensation of public sector workers.
- Upgraded and increased the roll out Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) and transitioned to web based to 58 MDAs from 22 in 2018. Additional 24 MDAs will be added before June 2023.
- Instituted a biometric verification process through the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) for all civil service employees and others paid from the Consolidated Fund and cleaned the payroll.
- Instituted payroll reforms that have reduced dual employment and 'ghost' workers on the payroll - No new employee comes into the payroll without a valid BBAN, NASSIT, NIN, and Date of Birth (DOB), continuing biometric verification with NCRA.
- Integrated the salaries of tertiary institutions into the national payroll system.

iii. Other Reforms

- Separated the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development from that of Ministry of Finance thereby enabling the former for more effective coordination of donors and NGOs at policy and field levels.
- Established National Monitoring Agency Bill and approved the legal framework to guide it in the Office of the President which is improving the management of capital projects.
- Approved the National Public Investment Management Policy which addresses the challenges to effective planning and efficient execution of Public Investment Programme (PIP)
- Strengthened public procurement system by developing price norms and making function the Independent Procurement Review Panel charged with the responsibility.
- Strengthened the oversight of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) by creating a risk department in the Ministry of Finance and developed the State-Ownership and Governance Policy and making profitable, improve service delivery and reduce liabilities on central government.

iv. Public Debt Management

Total debt stock currently stands at \$ 2.75 of which US\$1.9 is external and \$ 0.85 is domestic. Overall, Debt-GDP ratio 0.934. Debt servicing has increased largely as a result of interest payments and principal due on debts contracted by the previous administration. Between 2007 and 2018, the following were achieved in the area of debt management:

- With over US\$1 billion external resources mobilised between 2018 and 2022, not more than 20% were concessional loans and at least 80% were grant.
- Updated the Medium-Term Debt Management Strategy.
- Developed Arrears Clearance Strategy to guide the payment of arrears.
- Strengthened debt management and improved debt reporting and transparency through the regular publication of publicly guaranteed debt.
- A new Domestic Debt Management fund was established at the Bank of Sierra Leone



v. Monetary Policy

- Launched the Switch which will allow interoperability across banks and will lead a cashless economy.
- The New Direction Government introduced currency redenomination which reduces the risks associated with carrying cash and currency circulation.
- The Bank of Sierra Leone implement monetary policy based on monetary targeting framework using indirect instruments to achieve its goals of price stability.
- The Bank monitor inflationary trends and adjust Monitoring Policy Rate accordingly to contain inflation.

vi. Exchange Rate Policy

- Government has maintained a flexible exchange rate regime aimed
- Government intervened in the foreign exchange market to smoothen exchange rate volatility.

vii. Crises Response Measures

Government economic response was guided by the Quick Action Economic Response (QUAERP) which was designed alongside the health response. The first component was aimed at ensuring adequate commodity supply at affordable prices. To this end, Government instituted the following measures:

- Maintained zero import duty and GST on imported rice.
- Deferred taxes on the importation of essential commodities during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Reduced taxes on certain essential commodities. For example, import duty on cement was reduced from 20 percent to 10 percent and iron rods from 10 percent to 5 percent.
- Established several facilities through the Bank of Sierra Leone (BSL), including (i) Special Credit Facility with two tranches of US\$50.0 million each during COVID-19 to support the importation of essential commodities.
- Established another Food Facility of US\$50.0 million during the ongoing Ukraine crisis to support the importation of rice, flour, and sugar.
- Launched US\$10.0 million Agricultural Credit Facility to facilitate the importation of agricultural inputs: and
- Provided a US\$36.0 million Reserve Fuel Facility (RFF) for the importation of fuel. From January to October 2022, the BSL has provided US\$115.0 million to Oil Marketing Companies through commercial banks for the importation of fuel. Cumulatively, a total amount of \$261.0 million has been provided out of the Bank of Sierra Leone reserves to support the importation of essential items.
- Provided subsidies on fuel even at the current level of fuel pump prices. Total fuel subsidies provided amounted to over Le 700 million by end 2022.
- Provided subsidies to EDSA amounting to over Le500 billion to reduce the burden of high tariff
- Provided agricultural inputs (seed rice, fertilisers, and other inputs) and mechanisation services to farmers through the e-voucher system for the domestic production of food,



especially our staple food, rice. Government has spent NLe76.0 million on the e-voucher system in 2022.

- Secured US\$1.8 million from the African Development Bank under the African Emergency Food Production Facility to support farmers with agricultural inputs, to boost local food production.
- Supported Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through the revolving MUNAFA Fund, which has benefitted 6,075 people, of which 77 percent so far are women.
- Provided cash transfers to 2,368 workers in hospitality sector and 29,000 informal sector traders and provided food support to 11,000 disabled during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Provided cash transfers to 35,000 extremely poor and vulnerable households under the Social Safety Nets Project implemented by the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA).

Commitments (2023- 2028)

On the macroeconomy, the imperative for the next five years is to continue to build a robust and resilient economy that will set Sierra Leone on a path to becoming a middle-income country by 2030. The next Bio-led Government will continue to bolster macroeconomic stability through prudent fiscal policies, pro-active monetary and active debt management policies; increase the pace of inclusive economic growth, boost food production to feed Sierra Leone, create jobs and reduce the cost of living for Sierra Leoneans.

The overall objective of macroeconomic policy in the next five years is to restore macroeconomic stability and safeguard financial stability through the implementation of prudent fiscal policies, pro-active monetary policy and active debt management policies:

i. Domestic Revenue Mobilisation

Between 2023 and 2028, the next Bio administration will increase revenue collection to 20% of GDP by continue to reduce leakages and increasing revenue through the implementation of approved policies and enacted laws and improving tax administration.

Reducing leakages and increasing revenue through the implementation of policies and laws including the following and new legislations:

- The Duty Waiver Policy and Law.
- Extractive Industry Revenue Act that harmonises laws from extractive sector and prevent overgenerous fiscal terms outside the general tax law.
- Medium-Term Revenue Strategy.
- New legislative framework to leverage climate finance, including carbon credits, REDD+ payments and grants for forest conservation or reforestation.
- a full pass-through of the petroleum pricing formula; and
- develop policies and legal framework for Municipal and Diaspora bonds.

Improving tax administration through the following



- Rationalise and simplify the clearing and forwarding processes and at the port
- Establish a single window that provides a One-Stop Shop for clearing
- Expand the roll out the Integrated Tax Administration System (ITAS) to include management modules such as data management, audit, tax exemption and taxpayer management.
- Integrate NRA systems, especially ITAS with other information management systems at Bank of Sierra Leone, Accountant-General Department, National Civil Registration and National Social Security and Insurance Trust
- Digitise payments of non-tax revenues such as fines, fees and levies and integrate the platforms with ITAS and ASYCUDA
- Develop NRA's capacity, particularly in compliance risk management, data analytics and risk analysis using Artificial Intelligence technology.
- Implement the PPP arrangements for the implementation of excise stamp with clear roles and responsibilities of all entities
- Implement the PPP arrangements for generating alternative data on communications with the view optimising revenue from telecommunications companies

ii. Expenditure Management

Between 2023 and 2028, Government's expenditure management shall cover improving budget preparation including capital budget, improving cash management, improving wage bill management, and reducing contingent liabilities on Government

Improving Budget Preparation

- Implement the National Public Investment Management Policy and particularly ensure that all Public Investment Projects go through the Public Investment Management Cycle
- Establish of a special Technical Investment Committee to screen projects and recommend or otherwise to a Ministerial Committee before inclusion in the Public Investment Programme
- Introduce of gender responsive budgeting to ensure gender equality in budget planning and execution.

Improving Cash management

- Adopt the use of appropriate Cash Forecasting Tool to support the regular updating of cash forecasts to inform budget execution.
- Release of quarterly allocations linked to cash flow forecasts and budget execution before the beginning of a quarter to discourage MDAs from entering commitments outside the IFMIS which leads to arrears accumulation and extra-budgetary spending.
- Base all approval of expenditure commitments on budget allocations and the availability of cash.



- Sustain the implementation of Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) system which ensures that payment requests are released to the central bank only when funds are available to eradicate build-up of unpaid cheques with the Bank.

Improving Wage Bill Management

- Implement the Wages and Compensation Act 2023 aimed at rationalising and harmonising salaries and conditions of service of public sector workers.
- Develop of the Medium-Term Wage Bill Management Strategy that would introduce additional reforms to strengthen payroll controls and management.

Reducing contingent liabilities on Government

- Develop of robust frameworks for negotiating large scale investments and monitoring concessions granted under Public-Private-Partnerships and Built-Operate and Transfers
- Enact the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) Bill to replace the National Commission for Privatisation Act to improve on the efficiency and profitability of SOEs. reduce risks on Government budget and increase presidential oversight over the SOEs

Reducing waste and leakages in procurement processes.

- Digitise procurement processes for efficiency and transparency

iii. Debt Management

At present, over a third of domestic revenue is used to service debts with far reaching implications for investment in human capital and infrastructure. Thus, ensuring public debt sustainability and improving transparency remains a cornerstone for economic stability. To this end, between 2023-2028, the Bio administration will:

- Continue to seek grant financing or borrow concessional loans to finance investments.
- Continue to explore non-debt financing model such as Public-Private-Partnerships and Design-Built-Operate and Transfer (DBOT) after careful analysis of potential fiscal risks.
- Review, update, and Implement Arrears Clearance Strategy
- Limit domestic borrowing within a sustainable fiscal anchor and introduce medium to long-term bonds for financing infrastructure.
- Continue to strengthen debt management and improve debt reporting and transparency through the regular publication of publicly guaranteed debt.

iv. Monetary Policy

The Bank of Sierra Leone will continue to implement monetary policy based on monetary targeting framework using indirect instruments to achieve its goals of price stability.

Specifically, in order to control inflation, the central Bank will

- Monitor inflationary trends and adjust Monitoring Policy Rate accordingly.



- Support through special schemes to boost exports and facilitates essential imports.
- Expand volume of cashless transactions in the economy by expanding the Switch to
- Introduce interoperability across points of payments systems.

v. Exchange Rate Policy

The Bio-administration will continue to maintain a flexible exchange rate regime aimed at stabilising the value of the Leone including intervening in 12 the foreign exchange market to smoothen exchange rate volatility. To support this effort, Government will:

- Design special scheme to provide incentives to export-oriented and import-substituting businesses to generate foreign exchange and stabilise the exchange rate.
- lift the ban on mining exploration to attract foreign direct investment inflows and generate foreign exchange.
- Harmonise mineral export tax policies with neighbouring countries and revisit license fees to minimise smuggling.
- Strengthen the enforcement of the provision in the Finance Act that stipulates that at least 30 percent of export proceeds must be repatriated through the banking system and impose penalties for non-compliance.
- Set up effective monitoring systems for reviewing import invoices to ensure that forex provided for importation match the value of imports that arrive in the country; and
- Permit all donor-funded contracts awarded through international competitive bidding to make direct payments in the currency of the contract.



**24 hours
ATM SERVICE**





3.7.2 Developing the Private Sector

The Context

The Sierra Leone private sector continues to be largely informal and mostly restricted to mining, hotel and tourism, construction, banking, and a few agriculture activities. Overall, the Sierra Leonean private sector is characterised by foreign dominance, high cost and risk of doing business, limited access to finance, poor infrastructure, and weak legal and regulatory frameworks as well as macro-economic shocks and its accompanying implications and global supply chain disruptions.

The private sector was the hardest hit by the multiple crises of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the ensuing global economic downturn. The Sierra Leone economy was deprived of capital, critical inputs to boost production, and we could not sell our products to the world efficiently. This was a big blow to the Bio-led Government who saw the private sector growth as the most critical path for economic transformation in the country. The New Direction government saw effective participation of the private sector as vital for spurring economic growth, creating job opportunities, and building economic resilience.

The resolve of H.E President Bio for a private sector-led growth have helped pull Sierra Leone back from the brink. Despite the disruptions of the multiple crises including the COVID-19 Pandemic and the global economic downturn, reforms, policies, trade agreements, and investments by the Bio-led administration has laid the foundation for the private sector to take off in many fronts, and in way that will support broad based economic transformation.

In the last five year there is a marked improvement in the level of private sector participation in the economy. As a result, job creation under the Bio-led administration picked up across many sectors including agro-processing, mining, tourism, and entertainment.

Achievements

- Formulated the National Agribusiness Policy and Strategy, National Trade Strategy, National Cooperative Policy and Industrial Development and Special Economic Zone Policy and enacted the Consumer Protection Act 2020,
- Established the National Investment Board as a one-stop-shop to coordinate, facilitate and promote private investment in Sierra Leone
- Negotiated several bi-lateral and international trade agreement that will facilitate export promotion for Sierra Leone, including with the US's African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA), ECOWAS and African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).
- Signed and ratified agreements for 24 light manufacturing with the potential to create at least 15,000 direct jobs.
- Launch the Koya Industrial Zone with the potential for at least 10 factories
- Provided credit facility amounting to Le40 billion to over 7,000 beneficiaries through the MUNAFA Fund
- Provided capacity building and cash support to over 200 private sector players in the agro-processing space through the World-Bank funded Smallholder Commercialisation and Agric-Business Development Project (SCADEP), Sierra Leone Agro-Processing Competitiveness Project and the Economic Diversification Project.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

The role of the private sector in the economic transformation of Sierra Leone will continue to grow in the next five years under the leadership of H.E President Bio. Private sector will be a critical stakeholder for raising capital and implementing growth inducing projects and



programmes across the real sector of the economy. The Bio-led will deepen reforms, continue to develop critical infrastructure to make Sierra Leone attractive for investment and take advantage of existing trade agreements to boost productivity, create jobs and increase private sector wages. Going forward the Bio-led government will commit to the following:

- Increasing Access to Finance MSMEs through various schemes like the MUNAFA, credit guarantees,
- Re-establish National Investment Bank to provide equity capital finance Sierra Leonean businesses.
- Build systems to provide environment for private sector to attract credit including, Sierra Leone Collateral Registry System and the Credit Reference Bureau.
- Reducing the Cost and Risk of Doing Business by developing regulations, policies and one stop shops for starting and operation business in Sierra Leone.
- Review and enforce provisions in the Local Content Act to give preference to Sierra Leoneans in the award of contracts and employment.
- Develop the Infrastructure for Industrial Development

3.7.3 Developing the Financial Sector and Deepening Financial Inclusion

The Context

Like the private sector, growth of the financial sector in Sierra Leone has been badly hit by the multitude of crises. The global economic slowdown and its wide-reaching effects on the private sectors means the financial sector, and especially the formal banking system has remained largely unchanged despite the efforts of government policies and reforms. The financial sector the Bio-led New Direction Government inherited was among the thinnest in the region.

The country had 14 registered commercial banking institutions, most of which are foreign owned and mostly serve the urban population. The country also had 17 community banks, 50 microfinance institutions (MFIs), three Mobile Money Operators, and 59 Financial Services Associations (FSA), yet only 12.4% of adult population has a bank account.

Although we have seen some improvement under the Bio-led administration, the sector struggles to effectively contribute to private sector development. Credit to the private sector has only marginally increased but remains in the single digits.

The overall objectives of the New Direction agenda were to develop a strong, sound, and effective banking system that will increase access to both short-term and long-term capital for investment purposes. In the last five years, the focus was placed on; Capacitating Bank of Sierra Leone to effectively regulate the sector; Strengthening Commercial Banks, especially state-owned banks; Developing Micro-Finance Institutions; Re-establish Development Bank and link it with Community Banking; and Strengthening Non-Bank Financial Institutions.

Achievements

i. Policies, Laws, and Regulations

- Reviewed and revised the Banking ACT.



- Enacted the Deposit Protection Bill to ensure that small depositors are insured against losses arising from market failures.
- Developed framework and regulations for digital financial inclusion.
- Regulation of the system have reduced risk exposure of banks, with most commercial banks with more than enough Capital Adequacy Ratio, and declining non-performing loans.

ii. Technology to Promote efficiency in the sector

- Digital and ICT platformed build to improve transaction in the sector
- Developed the Switch to enhance interoperability among banks and to form the basis to deepen financial digitisation
- Build infrastructure to support the digitalisation of transactions in the economy.
- Conducted an institutional review of NASSIT and have improved management and investment decisions.
- Drafted Medium Term Debt Strategy that spells out policies for banks' lending to government.
- Upgraded Sierra Leone Collateral Registry which enables the registration of immovable and movable assets to facilitate access to credit for SMEs.

iii. Impact on the Sector and Financial Inclusion

- Increased number of adult populations with bank account from 12.4 % to 15%
- Although the number commercial banks have remained the same, the number of accounts and deposits have increased.
- The population with access to and use digital financial service have increased immensely from about 1.2 million people in 2018 to 2.2 million in 2023.
- Profitability for most of the commercial banks have increased.
- The two state owned banks, Rokel Commercial Bank, and the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank are now stable, with one of them making profit and contributing to the consolidated fund
- Although not a long-term strategy the commercial banks have been a reliable source of funding in these tight fiscal times.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

In the next five year, the Bio-led government will invest heavily to expand digital financial services. Digitisation of the financial sector, especially with emphasis to bring onboard the large share of the informal private sector is seen as a game changer to boost growth, create jobs, and poverty reduction. The focus for the next five years will be to build the infrastructure and the capacity of the Bank of Sierra Leone to expand digital financial service.

The commitments for the next five years include:

i. Capacitating Bank of Sierra Leone



- Strengthen regulation and supervisory role of the Central Bank in terms of staff competency, system, and technology.
- Improve and sustain risk-based supervision of commercial banks.
- Develop a framework for using remittances for development purposes.
- Operationalise the Switch to allow for interoperability across banks in the formal sector.
- Link digital financial services to the Switch, including mobile money and payment systems.
- Reduce the dependence of cash in the economy by half in the next three years.
- Develop a manpower development plan based on skill gaps analysis and strengthen capacity of the bank, particularly in areas of research, banking supervision, Management Information System, and internal audit.
- Develop policy and regulation to allow commercial banks to lend in foreign currency.

ii. Strengthening Commercial Banking

- Review policies and laws relating to commercial banking supervision to make them competitive and in line with international best practices.
- Provide support to government-owned commercial banks to make them competitive
- Strengthen Association of Commercial Banks.

iii. Expanding Micro-Finance Opportunities to Potential Entrepreneurs

- Review policies and laws relating to micro-finance operations in Sierra Leone.
- Scale up micro-credit facilities under MUNAFA Fund to all chiefdoms.
- Design and implement a credit guarantee scheme that will not impose a burden on government or the commercial banks for lending to SMEs and agriculture.

iv. Set up the National Investment Bank

- Complete the establishment of the National Investment Bank to provide long-term capital for investment.
- Restructure Community Banks and Farmers Services Associations and link to National Investment Bank.

v. Strengthen Non-Bank Financial Institutions

- Conduct a comprehensive institutional review of NASSIT
- Ratify the amendments to the NASSIT ACT
- Strengthen the Investment arm of NASSIT
- Review the Insurance Act 2000
- Strengthen the Sierra Leone Insurance Commission (SLICOM) and Sierra Leone Insurance Association (SLIA)
- Improve on insurance supervision and regulations
- Strengthen the capital market, notably the stock exchange and discount houses
- Develop policies and procedures for issuing long-term government debt







3.7.4 Transforming Agriculture and Boosting Food Security

The Context

Agriculture remains the single largest contributing sector to Sierra Leone's GDP at 60% and employs well over 65% of the population. The country is endowed with the right conditions to support irrigated and mechanised large-scale food production, enough to meet local demands and for exports. Yet, for years the country has been unable to transform this potential into wealth for its people.

The sector is characterised by small holder production systems, low levels of mechanisation, limited used of improved technologies and practices. Consequently, growth in the sector has hovered around an annual average of 4% for the past decade. Export performance remains low, below 10% of total export value, and constitutes mostly cocoa.

Agriculture has been instrumental for driving H.E Bio's Human Capital Development agenda. A primary objective of the sector under the New Direction government has been to boost local food production to "*nourish the body*". The government inherited a country with rising levels of hunger and malnutrition, a situation that has been protracted by the multiple global crises.

The Bio-led government's National Agricultural Transformation programme (NAT 2023) prioritized the production of our staple's foods, rice, and cassava as a strategy to reduce hunger and malnutrition. However, unlike previous governments, the Bio-led government demanded efficiency in service delivery in the sector. The government's shift in policy to a private sector-led service delivery of key agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and mechanization services introduced dynamism in the sector. The government supported this shift by making finance available to the private sector, invested to build rural roads and bridges, and expanded mechanization across the country. The result of this effort set the country a path for an even bigger transformative agenda for agriculture.

Achievements

i. Rice Production

- Increased rice yield from a national average of 1.1 ton/ha to 1.78 tons /ha.
- Consistently increased rice production in the last three years, with a 900,000 MT produced in the 2022 season which is 22% jump from previous.
- There has been steady increase towards rice self-sufficiency now at 75% compared 46% in 2019.

ii. Efficacy in Service Delivery in the Sector

- The e-voucher system contributed to a 35% reduction in waste and slippages in input provision to farmer.
- Developed and launched an interactive voice response system that have expanded the scale of reach of agriculture advisory services to farmers at lower costs.

iii. Job Creation for Youth in Rural Areas



- Youth farms contributed to total of 3800 seasonal jobs (20 per chiefdom) across chiefdoms in the country.

iv. Government Interventions

- Established 190 chiefdom youth farms across the country
- Procured and provided 410 tractors and power tiller to establish 15 machine Rings in a Public Private Partnership model
- Provided \$10 million Agriculture Credit Facility at single digit interest rate to private sector
- Supported over 36,000 farmers with inputs (seed, fertilizer, machines)
- Developed an e-voucher system to provide input to farmers through the private sector.
- Built 169 km of feeder roads- extending access to market for farmers.

v. Policies, Laws, and Regulation

- Enacted the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLAARI).
- Enacted policies and regulations to support a private sector-led agriculture service delivery, including policy for Seeds, Fertiliser, livestock, and Mechanisation.
- Established the Sierra Leone Seeds Certification Agency (SLeSCA) and National Fertiliser Regulatory Agency (NaFRA).
- Conducted the first comprehensive national soil survey since the 1970s.
- Drafted an Irrigation Masterplan.

vi. Resource Mobilisation

- The government policies and programmes have mobilized more \$200 million of partners funds for the sector.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

As a net importer of food and fuel, the country remains vulnerable to disruptions in global supply chains and increases in commodity prices. Global commodity inflation, coupled with rapid currency depreciation has made the macroeconomic and fiscal burden of food import even more acute.

In these uncertain global economic times, agriculture holds the most promise for Sierra Leone to accelerate inclusive economic growth, create jobs, reduce hunger and poverty. Therefore, agriculture shall be the flagship project in the second term. In the next five years, the Bio-led government will expand the objectives of the agriculture sector, with goals directly linked to the fundamental of the economy. The government will invest resources, build an even stronger coalition of international partners and the private sector to deliver on these goals.

Our efforts in agriculture will be on food, livestock and cash crop production, agro-business development, financing, infrastructure, research, and governance.

i. Increasing Food Production



- Establish at least five Farmer Service and Agri-business Centres across the country in the next three years to serve as source of services to farmers.
- Strengthening both the Seed Certification and Fertiliser Regulatory Agencies.
- Triple the number of tractors, harvesters, and rice mills available to farmers in the next three years to boost mechanisation across the country.
- Cultivate at least 100,000 ha of rice each year in the low land areas for the next five years.
- Increase production of other staples and essential foods such as cassava, poultry products, and onions to reduce importations of food items.
- Hire and train extension workers at the block level in every chiefdom.
- Provide duty free support, concessions to local industries engaged in the fabrication of farm tools and supply for other farm inputs.
- Include key agricultural inputs such as fertiliser on the list of essential items

ii. Increasing Cash Crop Production

- Support the rehabilitation of existing cash crop plantations (cocoa, cashew, and oil palm) and the establishment new plantation nationwide
- Provide simple technologies to boost productivity of our cash crops, including cocoa, coffee, oil palm and cashew with view of doubling our exporting earning from agriculture in the next two years.
- Facilitate the establishment of cash crop cooperatives and provide training in processing of cash crop to become competitive for export
- Upgrade the capacity of Standard Bureau to effectively monitor quality of cash crops.
- Provide support for rehabilitation of existing plantations and establishment of new ones.

iii. Increasing Livestock Production

- Revive livestock research stations, notably the Teko Livestock Research Centre and the Musaia Livestock Station
- Support Njala University and proven poultry farmers to establish and expand on hatcheries that will ensure the supply of adequate day-old chicks to meet the growing demand in the country
- Promote the production of maize to provide basic feed inputs.
- Establish pilot intensive cattle production areas in appropriate agro ecologies in the country to ensure amicable coexistence between cattle rearers and farmers.
- Provide training at tertiary level in animal health
- Establish livestock clinics in all districts and build capacity of middle level manpower in providing health care to animals

iv. Agro Processing

- Establish at least three Agri-Processing Zones and clusters in the country
- Scale up and replicate agro-processing support funded under different interventions.



- Establish and support agri-business incubation platforms to train and support local entrepreneurs in the sector.

v. Developing Agricultural Infrastructure

- Develop a 30,000 ha irrigation schemes in the main rice cultivation regions of the country.
- Construct roads leading to Agri-Processing Zones and Clusters
- Constructkm of feeder roads and bridges linking key food producing areas to market.
- Rehabilitate and construct storage facilities including Agricultural Business centres (ABCs)

vi. Increasing Investment in Agriculture

- Increase budgetary allocation to the agriculture sector to 10% in line with the Maputo Accord.
- Promote domestic financing of schemes that would encourage political appointees to invest in agriculture.
- Work with all mining firms to invest into agriculture, particularly, in support of landowners in their new locations as part of their resettlement plans.
- Establish special credit and guarantee schemes to provide credit facility for agricultural development.
- Encourage local banks through various incentives to lend to the private sector for agricultural purposes.

vii. Improving Governance and Research in the Agricultural Sector

- Review existing policy frameworks and action plan to guide the planning and development of the sector.
- Enhance capacity of agricultural stakeholders through the development and implementation of comprehensive Human Resource Development Plan targeting farmers, agricultural workers and agricultural instructors and teachers and establishing links in the education system from formal teaching to professional training.
- Implement the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLAARI) Act 2023
- Strengthen capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture at all levels, farm associations and relevant institutions linked to agriculture.
- Improve policies, regulations, laws, and processes for agricultural land acquisition with a view to making the processes transparent and free of social tensions.
- Re-introduction of co-operatives to improve value addition and marketing of food crops, cash crops and livestock products from the rural communities to national level.
- Invest in innovation and agriculture technologies for efficacy in service delivery.
- Implement climate-smart agricultural practices and technique to boost resilience and sustainability in the agriculture system.

viii. Improving Water Management

- Develop productive In-land Valley Swamps (IVS) and water ways to increase productivity through the invigoration of Land and Water



- Development Division (LWDD) of the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)
- Increase, develop and rationalize the water resources and agro climatological activities in relation to agricultural development and the agro ecological areas of the country.
- Develop a national soil conservation and management programme geared towards controlling land degradation.
- Develop a national irrigation and drainage programme geared towards reducing dependence on rain-fed agriculture and rationally develop and use agricultural water to take advantage of agro-climatic conditions.

3.7.5 Improving The Management of Mineral Resources

The Context

The mining sector in Sierra Leone is primarily driven by the large-scale production of iron ore, diamonds, rutile, and bauxite. Sierra Leone is also home to small-scale and artisanal mining of gold and diamonds. The mining sector has consistently played an important role in the country's economy, accounting for close to 70% of export, 6% of the GDP and a little over 3% of employment. However, the mining sector the Bo-led Government inherited was in decline, with major companies closing, little transparency and ultimately did not bring the sectors full benefit to the country.

The New Direction government has lived up to its promise to reform the mining sector for the benefit of all. Under the New Direction's governance, we have seen a re-birth of the mining sector with tremendous improvement in mineral governance, and the country is finally beginning to enjoy the benefits of the sector.

As a primarily export oriented sectors, the COVID-19 crisis and global economic downturn impacted the pace of growth in the sector. Drop in the price of these commodity and global supply chain disruption impacted export volumes and value. However, reforms put in place by the New Direction government positioned the sector to rebound faster, and we are already seen the impact in the growth in the sector.

Achievements

- Introduced the Sierra Leone Mineral Policy, Geo-data Management Policy, and Artisanal Mining Policy.
- Reviewed the 2009 Mines and Minerals Act and enacted into law the Mines and Mineral Development Act of 2022, which seeks to improve provisions for the socio-economic benefit of the country.
- Ensured that at least 20% royalty for a district mining development fund to be allocated to the affected districts through the District Councils.
- Ensured payment of three percent (3%) export levy on the value of artisanal diamonds goes into the Diamond Area Community Development Fund (DACDF) to promote rural development and improve the primary livelihood of diamond-mined communities.



- Created the Mining Cadastre Administration System (MCAS) and the Web-based GoSL Online Repository, which have improved financial transparency and accountability.
- Complied with the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) standards.
- Expanded large-scale mining companies by 83% (from six in 2018 to eleven in 2023) and increased small scale mining companies by 86% (from seven in 2018 to thirteen in 2023).
- The total number of mining sector jobs increased by 73% (from 8,552 in 2018 to 14,768 in 2023).
- Supported over 200 Engineering and Geology graduates with advanced training.
- Legislated a Beneficial Ownership declaration of 5% and above equity bearers in mining investments – consistent with EITI standards.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

In the next five years, the new direction shall continue to improve the management of the mining sector consistent with our mining policies, the Ecowas Mining Protocol, and the Africa Mining Vision by expanding on what has been built over the past five years by increasing revenue generation, developing initiatives to protect the environment, increasing women's participation in the mining sector, creating more employment for our youths, providing continued support for artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), and investing in innovative and sustainable mining practices (Green Mining) consistent with global standards.

The Bio-led government will focus on the following eight strategic goals in the next five years.

- Increase revenue generation in both the short and long term.
- Protect the local communities' economic and social rights affected by mining.
- Provide support for artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) in Sierra Leone.
- Carry out a comprehensive review of key legislative instruments as part of institutional reform of the mines and minerals sector.
- Introduce enterprise geoscientific management information system (eGIMS) as a viable geoscientific data repository and information management system for Sierra Leone's minerals sector.
- Reduce illegal and illicit mining in Sierra Leone by using advanced technology-based solutions.
- Introduce green mining operations for the sector.
- Increase women's participation in the mining sector.

3.7.6 Improving the Management of Oil and Gas Exploration

The Context

Sierra Leone is strategically placed on the African continental shelf, signaling excellent potential for the exploration of oil and gas in the country. The recent success in Guyana, which is along the conjugate margin to Sierra Leone has piqued further interest in the sector in Sierra Leone. The New Direct government under H.E President Bio has cleaned up the sector



and set it to take full advantage of emerging opportunities. The revised fiscal regime and investment in acquiring critical data has allowed the country to be in a better position to start gaining revenue from the sector again.

Achievements

- The primary achievement was attracting the Nigerian Independent Exploration & Production Company (E&P), Innoson Oil and Gas SL Ltd. into Sierra Leone in 2021, marking them as the first E&P company to enter Sierra Leone's exploration space since 2014.
- In 2022 Innoson Oil and Gas SL Ltd.'s (IOG) announced a significant commercial prospect in their license area. The plan is to drill this prospect in the third quarter of 2023. This will be the first well drilled in Sierra Leone since 2013.
- Under the New Direction, Petroleum Directorate of the Republic of Sierra Leone (PDSL) successfully launched Sierra Leone's Fifth Offshore Licensing Round in May 2022 and will close in September 2023.
- The NEW Direction Government has signed a multilateral agreement worth US\$ 25billion over five years. This agreement serves to build a 5,660-kilometre gas pipeline from Nigeria to Morocco and then to Europe, passing through Sierra Leone.
- In 2022, for the first time since 2016, PDSL successfully generated revenue and contributed millions of US dollars into the GoSL's consolidated revenue fund.
- PDSL successfully rebranded its image to international standards, and this rebrand helped the institution gain global recognition for its work.
- In the past five years PDSL under the New Direction Government has formed strategic partnerships with strategic oil producing countries and companies to support the countries drive to be an oil producing nation, including with The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).
- PDSL successfully recalibrated its offshore blocks into smaller graticules, which has increased investor confidence and attracted an increased interest from IOCs to take up more acreage in Sierra Leone.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

Under the astute leadership of H.E President Bio, the next 5 years will attract more exploration and production companies into Sierra Leone, drill more exploration wells and unearth Sierra Leone's world-class oil and gas potential, enabling the country to become an oil and gas producing nation. The Focus will be on the following areas, **oil and gas governance**, **petroleum fiscal regime** and **capacity building**.

- Continue to improve on our appropriate petroleum policy taking account of the national context in the expectation of achieving rapid results and better practice, allowing incremental improvements to governance. The policy will include bringing onshore exploration to the fore, with companies already interested in exploring hydrogen as well as hydrocarbon onshore Sierra Leone.



- The Government will also continue to invest in acquiring geological and geophysical (G&G) data and strengthen pre-qualification criteria and ensure transparency to attract the best oil and gas companies.
- The New Direction government will continue to simplify both negotiations and tax structures to mitigate knowledge asymmetries with oil companies in order to reap early revenues and maximize long-term national benefits.
- Enact policies that will extend to ensure promotion, attraction and facilitation of foreign oil and gas investments through a competent and independent Petroleum Directorate.
- Continue to expedite investment approval processes and acquisition of all necessary licenses, permits and authorization within acceptable timeframes.
- Continue to re-evaluate oil block data and dimensions to enable the best companies to have the most prospective blocks, guarantee a supportive and favourable legal framework that promises effective facilitation, protection and guaranteed foreign investments rights.
- Continue to strengthen regional ties with best-in-class oil and gas producing nations so that Sierra Leone can take its rightful seat as a world-class oil and gas producer and exporter with world-class Sierra Leoneans driving the sector forward.
- Continue to recruit the best-in-class, trained and qualified Sierra Leoneans without reference to their ethnic or regional origin.
- The government will work with companies to train and employ Sierra Leonean women to make up at least 30% of the diverse pool of specialties in the sector.

3.7.7 Improving Management of Marine Resources

The Context

Sierra Leone has a comparative advantage in West Africa, hosting high fisheries biomass, over 400,000 MT. The sector employs over 500,000 people. It comprises of Shrimps, Demersal Finfish, Pelagic and Tuna Fishery. Over 200 species have been recorded. The fisheries comprise of the Industrial, artisanal, demersal, Aquaculture and inland fisheries sub-sectors. A large portion of the Sierra Leone fisheries remains an underutilized renewable resource, comprising mainly of the offshore pelagic and lobster resources. Total annual fish production has been around 300,000 MT only.

The sector contributes an average of 12 per cent to GDP. It provided huge revenue to the state from export and other levies. The sector contributes the second highest export earnings after mining. Like most sectors that are externally exposed, the COVID-19 pandemic and the global economic downturn affected the fisheries sectors. Revenue from fisheries increased from US\$ 8.4 million in 2018 to US\$ 11.2 million in 2019, dropping to 8.9 million in 2020 as the COVID-19 peaked.

However, policies and reforms under the New Direction government of H.E President Bio, has set the sector up for rebound and growth beyond pre-Pandemic level. The following are some of the key successes of the sector under the New Direction Government.



Achievements

i. Sector's Impact on the Economy is Growing

- Contribution of the sector to GDP increased from 8% in 2018 to 12% in 2023.
- Revenue generated on an upward trend after initially rising to \$11.2 million and falling to \$8.9 million because of COVID-19 Pandemic.

ii. Policies, Sector Governance and Management

- Enacted the Fisheries and Regulations Act 2021 and developed the Aquaculture and Inland Fisheries and Regulatory Framework.
- The sector has witnessed improved monitoring and surveillance of the country's waters with a state-of-the-art Vessel Monitoring System, which helped reduce illicit marine operations.
- Improved the Fisheries licence scheme
- Conducted the first comprehensive fish stock assessment to guide sustainability measures in the sector.
- Conducted a transboundary fisheries survey for Demersal and Pelagic Fisheries Resources and Ecosystems in the Western Gulf of Guinea.

iii. Supportive Infrastructure

- Five cold rooms were constructed in Sulima in Pujehun District, Buedu and Todola in Kailahun, and Moyamba to reduce post-harvest fish losses and improve the quality of fishery products to meet the required accepted standards for export to the international market.
- The New Direction Government have also developed six commercial fish farms across the country.
- The Government of H.E President Bio constructed solar powered cold room facilities in key fishing communities, Tombo, Shenge, and Goderich.

iv. Resource Mobilisation

- Secured a \$ 55 million grant from the Chinese Government to construct a fish harbour and ancillary structure in the Black Johnson, Western Area Peninsular.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

Fisheries and the blue economy will be linked **99** for boosting economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction. Valued well over \$750 million (renewable), the sector will be a key



part of the economic diversification strategy of President Bio's development plan in the next five years. The reforms in the sector and planned investment leaves the sector poised to contribute even more to economic growth. The subsector has the potential of generating over US\$ 38 million, when a fish harbor is built. Investment in this sector is capital intensive, requiring onshore fish processing facility, fish trawlers and gears and experienced fishing crew. In the next five years the focus of the sector will include:

i. Supportive Infrastructure to Attract Investment

- Construct the fish harbour and associated ancillary structures in Black Johnson
- Develop fiscal regimes and the right incentives to attract further investment in the fish harbour community
- Develop bankable projects and investment ideas for the country to take full advantage of the fish harbour. This includes in areas of cold storage, fish canning, fibre glass boat manufacturing etc.

ii. Policies and Standards

- Develop programmes, policies, and license regime to protect, regulate and support artisanal fishery.
- Meet international standards so that Sierra Leone fish can reach all markets.
- Build capacity of staff and invest in technology to reduce illicit fishing.

iii. Sector Governance

- Raise fines for illegal fishing vessels.
- Develop regulatory framework for sustainable aquaculture
- Construct pilot hatchery stations to produce fingerlings in pre-determined locations
- Develop a comprehensive plan and strategy for Sierra Leone to benefit from the blue economy resources.
- Establish the Sierra Leone Fishing Operations Agency to coordinate sustainable fishing and support growth of the Blue Economy.

3.7.8 Developing the Tourism Sector

The Context



The country possesses tremendous tourism potential in terms of pristine natural areas, beautiful landscapes, white sandy beaches, exotic islands, important rivers, lakes, and mountains. Its role and history in the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade and as home to returnees and freed slaves renders the capital city of Freetown with a rich cultural heritage. The country boasts diverse national parks and reserves such as the Gola Rain Forest, the Outama Kilimi National Park, and Tiwai Island Sanctuary, hosting some of the world's rare and interesting wildlife including bush elephants, leopards, western chimpanzees, pygmy hippos, monkeys, and a wide variety of bird species.

The Tourism Sector in Sierra Leone has received significant attention and priority from the New Direction government of H.E President Bio. The Bio-led government instituted very important reforms to address the longstanding challenges facing the sector while positioning it as a competitive and attractive tourist destination. Among others, access to the destination and the relatively high cost of flight tickets were among its key longstanding challenges serving as barriers to tourism development.

Despite the huge disruptions of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the global economic downturn, the government made enormous strides in achieving the commitment made in the SLPP manifesto covering the period 2018 – 2023.



Achievements



- Passed the National Heritage Bill, which will establish a commission that will strengthen the participation of artists and musicians in the mainstream economy of Sierra Leone while protecting, preserving, and restoring the rich cultural heritage sites and historic buildings and relics in the country.
- Drafted a New Tourism and Wildlife Policy to maximize the benefits of its unique and interesting wildlife for tourism promotion.
- Rebranded the image of Sierra Leone which attracted more African Americans to retrace their roots to Sierra Leone and increased number of tourist arrivals to 50,000.
- Succeeded in hosting the largest Budapest Bamako Freetown Finish, attracting over 2000 tourists by 2022.
- Established a tourism information office in Freetown,
- Constructed a jetty on Bunce Island.
- Parliament has ratified an agreement to establish a major tourist destination in the Western Area.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

The potential for tourism is enormous in Sierra Leone. It is perfect as an off the beaten path destination. H.E president Bio sees tourism as a major contributor to economic growth and job creation in the country. The following will be the focus of the sector in the next five years:

- Map out and undertake the restoration of heritage sites for the protection, preservation, and management of cultural heritage assets in Sierra Leone.
- Develop tourism infrastructure, especially around historical sites, and tourist destination in the country.
- Support establishment of a major tourist destination in the Western Area.
- Continue to rebrand and market Sierra Leone in international circles. This may include getting sponsors and important events and developing digital and promotional material to distribute at Sierra Leon embassies.
- Build capacity for tourism through targeted hospitality industry training for youths in tourist destination across the country.
- Position Sierra Leone for eco-tourism, roots tourism, etc.
- Fast track the domestication and popularization of all the six ratified UNESCO conventions related to culture and heritage.

3.7.9 Developing the Manufacturing Sector

The Context

Manufacturing in Sierra Leone is largely dependent on agriculture, and the part that is non-agriculture based depends heavily on imported raw material. Consequently, the contribution of manufacturing has ranged between 2 and 3 percent for the last twenty-five years. Policies and strategies of the New Direction government have been put in place to position the manufacturing sector on an upward trajectory. The New Direction government investments in infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and energy, have supported a marginal boost in the sector.

Achievements



- Sierra Leone is a now net exporter of vegetable oil.
- Support to private sector investment through incentives for the establishment of 24 major factories creating over 5,000 jobs.
- Developed the National Agribusiness Policy.
- Revised National Industry Policy.
- Cabinet has approved the Special Economic Zone Policy.
- Enacted the Consumer Protection Legislation 2020.
- The Government have facilitated MSMEs into agro-processing and value chain addition through govt and world bank financing – increasing export and commodity prices leading to improved income for businesses.
- Supported capacity building for women entrepreneurs and provided incentives for entry small and medium businesses.
- Promoted Local Content Policies across various sectors.

Commitments (2023- 2028)

For Sierra Leone to realize its ambition of becoming a middle-income country in the next decade, the country's must develop its manufacturing sector. Although the sector faces structural challenges both internal and external, the policies and investment of the New Direction agenda has placed the sector on a path for fast growth. With the establishment of the National Investment Board (NIB) and with the emphasis placed on industrializing the agriculture sector in the next five-year, manufacturing has opportunities for growth and will be intricate to moving the economy forward. In the next five year the Bio-led administration will focus on the following:

- Strengthen capacity of the Sierra Leone Standards Bureau (SLSB) to enforce quality and standards
- Strengthen the National Quality Infrastructure to improve standards, measurements, and conformity assessment to facilitate domestic and international
- Revise the SLSB Ordinance of 1996 and gain accreditation for its Food, Microbiology and Metrology labs
- Provide support through special incentives to industries that use locally sourced raw materials to produce most of the goods that we import
- Recapitalize the National Cooperative Bank to provide financial support to local industries
- Promote agro-industrialisation by facilitating the establishment of Agro-industrial and Business Parks in all five regions of Sierra Leone
- Attract FDI to establish manufacturing based special economic zones.
- Develop and implement an agro-industrialization strategy



**PART IV: LEADING
THROUGH EXTERNAL
SHOCKS**



EXTERNAL SHOCKS, THEIR EFFECTS, LESSONS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 Effects of Shocks

In 2018, H.E President Bio took over power with a clear mission to fix the mess left by the previous administration and deliver on our commitments to the people of Sierra Leone. However, we faced unexpected challenges in the form of multiple global shocks that have had an unprecedented impact both globally and locally. These shocks exposed the depth and scale of the challenges we inherited, and made our task even more difficult.

Less than two years after the transition of power, the COVID-19 Pandemic struck disrupting every aspect of public and private life, and provided the biggest test to the new SLPP administration. While the country experienced perhaps the fewest direct fatalities from the disease than any other in the region, the toll on the economy and the livelihood of millions of people was most devastating.

Lockdowns, curfews and travel restrictions collapsed businesses, made people jobless and obstructed the flow and distribution of essential items such as food across the country. International border closures meant our tourism sector and associated industries came to a halt. We had laid the perfect foundation to welcome investors, with several impactful projects lined up, but all of these fizzled out and delayed for another two years. In essence, the Pandemic brought our economy to its knees and wiped out the hard-won gains in stabilising the economy.

At the peak of the crisis, the Sierra Leone economy experienced a negative growth rate of -2%. Furthermore, as a net-importer of most essential commodities, disruptions in global supply chains and inflation for essential commodities in the world market have increased cost of living for millions here at home. At the same time, Government lost revenue that was badly needed to implement our social programmes.

As an empathetic leader, H.E President Bio did everything possible to shield the people of Sierra Leone from the full brunt of the effects of these external shocks. The New Direction Government devised the Quick Action Economic Response Programme (QAERP) to bolster the economy and protect livelihoods.

The Government extended up to \$100 million in credit facilities to importers to ensure essential items such a food and fuel were available throughout the country. As a result of this effort Sierra Leone did not experience shortages as we saw in other places.

The government also expanded mechanisation to quickly boost local food production and provided another \$10 million in credit facility for importers of agriculture inputs such as seeds and fertiliser. We provided jobs through cash-for-work programmes and encouraged the youth to farm through youth operated farms in every chiefdom in Sierra Leone.

The Government maintained zero import duty and GST on rice importation. It deferred tax payments for industries most affected by the crisis and expanded social safety net programs to worker affected by layoffs and the most vulnerable. To encourage businesses to invest and grow again, the Government supported Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through the revolving MUNAFA Fund.



The economy responded to these interventions and real GDP growth was on an upward trajectory when the Russia-Ukraine conflict broke. The effect of this conflict on the global economy and geopolitics has landed the biggest blow yet to our recovery efforts. As a small open economy that relies heavily on the import of essential commodities, global commodity price hikes and extended disruptions in the global supply chain for critical inputs such as fertiliser and fuel have resulted in even further prices increase here at home and increased cost of production, stalling economic growth.

Policy responses from the West, including the appreciation of the US dollar has led to a decline in value of our currency, that translates into increases in our debt burdens, import bill and a further squeeze to the limited fiscal space available for Government. Furthermore, unlike the Ebola crisis when the world poured resources into Sierra Leone, the existing crises have also squeezed fiscal space from our traditional partners, and we have had to move our key programmes largely from our own resources.

4.2 Lessons from Shocks

The achievements the SLPP have recorded in these past five years have happened largely in this backdrop of these crises. The crises exposed glaring vulnerabilities in our economy, and there are critical lessons we have learned that informs the bold and targeted agenda we are proposing for the next five years.

In governing in this crisis period, we have learned the following:

- Our dependence on food import has been a drag on the economy and a lost opportunity to create market for Sierra Leonean farmers.
- Building resilience from the ground up requires creating job opportunities for our people, especially the youth.
- Our economy can only sustain growth and withstand shocks if growth sectors are diverse and have possibilities for value addition.
- Sound economic management is the bedrock for driving an economic and social agenda.
- While external borrowing can be useful to fund capital projects, overexposure can lead debt stress in these uncertain times.
- Sierra Leone needs multiple financing models and options, including from domestic and international, public, private as well development partners to undertake financially sound capital-intensive projects.
- Our investment infrastructure must be cost effective and linked to growth activities.
- Our immediate neighbours and regional markets provide an opportunity for mutual benefits in trade.

4.3 Emerging Opportunities

In addition to these lessons, the crises and our good governance have also presented new opportunities that will guide our agenda for the next five years. Some of the most promising opportunities include:

- Sierra Leone is in advanced stages of developing an MCC compact that will support a rapid expansion in energy for growth.



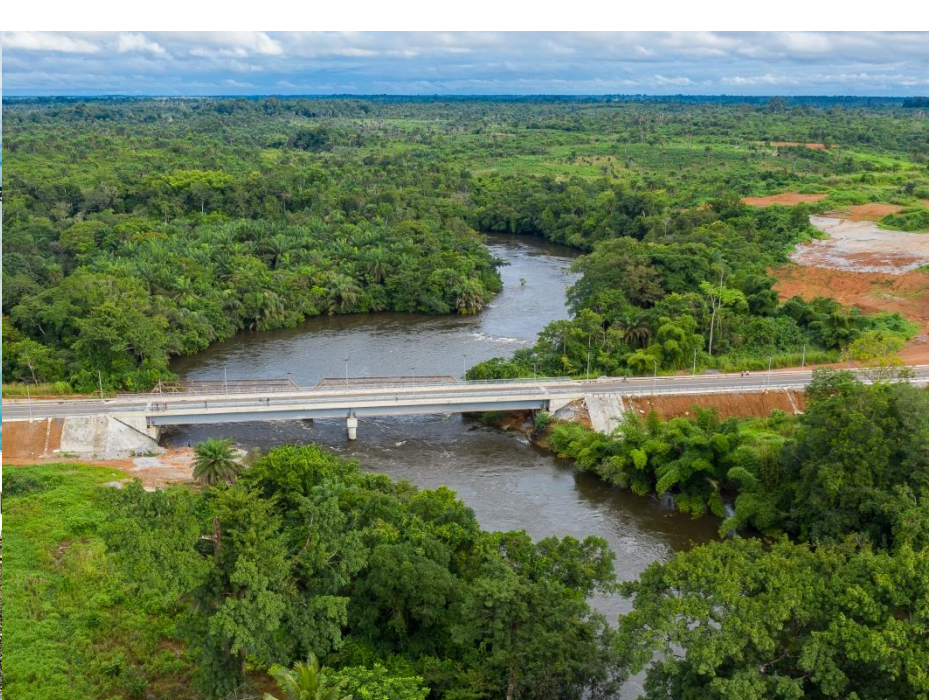
- The Government of Sierra Leone's Agriculture Delivery Compact was positively received by the Africa Development Banks and will receive support to attract funding from the private sector for implementation.
- Increases in price for commodities such as oil palm and wheat flour provide an opportunity for Sierra Leone develop export value chains around these or their substitutes.
- By creating the Ministry of Environment (MOE) and the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) we are building the capability to sustainably use and protect our environment, as well as help access climate finance opportunities.
- We have developed and launched the National Switch which now enables interoperability between banks and holds great promise for enabling a cashless community and financial inclusion.
- Our investments and successes in Basic and Senior Secondary Education has attracted further funding for the country to do more in Foundational Learning and in Technical and Vocational Learning.
- The legislative gains in extending rights for women will boost their participation in the public and private sector, and hence boost growth.
- Our partnership with the SUMA Group to build a modern International Airport in Lungi is likely to attract other investment to undertake other capital projects in adjacent sectors, such as hotels and hospitals in Lungi.
- The SLPP government has just launched a \$50 million World Bank funded project to improve the digital ecosystem that will clear the way for further investments in technology and digital innovation.
- The SLPP Government launched the digital National Identification Number systems that will support multiple service delivery use cases.

4.4 Prioritising the Flagship Agenda

In the last five years, significant progress has been made in achieving the goals set in the 2018 Manifesto. Now, the focus for the next five years is to consolidate these achievements and institutionalize them to ensure sustainability and prevent any potential setbacks. Ongoing programs under the New Direction agenda will be completed during this period. Moreover, the efforts made in the previous years, combined with the evolving global dynamics, have created new opportunities that can accelerate the transformation of Sierra Leone.

To drive this transformation and address the most pressing challenges, the government will prioritize five strategic initiatives as part of the President's flagship agenda for the next five years. These initiatives will serve as the foundation for bringing about change and will directly tackle key issues. They are seen as game changers that will stimulate economic growth, reduce hunger and poverty, enhance the efficiency of the public service, generate employment opportunities, and promote resilience in the face of challenges.

By focusing on these strategic initiatives and leveraging the lessons learned, the government aims to build upon the progress achieved so far and propel Sierra Leone further towards sustainable development and prosperity. The goal is to create a solid framework that will ensure the continued advancement of the country and capitalise on the potential for growth and positive change in the years to come.



The Big Five: Game Changers for Building an Inclusive and Prosperous Sierra Leone





1. Feed Salone: An Initiative to Boost Agriculture Productivity to Ensure Food Security and Inclusive

The topmost priority for H.E President Bio in his second term is to ensure Sierra Leone is food self-sufficient within the next five years. Our dependence on food import makes us vulnerable and weakens our sovereignty. The next SLPP Government will boost agriculture productivity to fuel inclusive growth, boost food production, reduce hunger, boost export earnings, create jobs, and build resilience.

To achieve these objectives the SLPP makes the following pledges:

- Increase Government budget allocation to agriculture to at least 10%
- Develop policies to make local production of rice competitive
- Invest in research to boost the yields of priority crops like rice, cassava, cocoa, coffee and cashew, as well as livestock productivity
- Expand area under rice cultivation through mechanisation and irrigation in the rice bowl of the country
- Provide financing options to de-risk private sector investment in processing and value addition
- Include key agricultural inputs, such as fertiliser on the list of essential items
- Develop financing and insurance schemes to encourage production from small holder farmers in horticulture
- Establish a homegrown institutional (school, military, hospitals) feeding programme to induce food production from farmers
- Facilitate the establishment of cash crop cooperatives and commodity exchanges to support food processing and aggregation
- Provide training and incentives to attract youth in agriculture
- Establish at least five Farmer Service and Agri-business Centres across the country in the next three years to support knowledge transfer and provide critical service to farmers



2. Human Capital Development: Nurturing Skills for 21st Century Industry

Building our human capital base continues to be a priority for the SLPP. In the past five years we made tremendous gains with our Free Quality Secondary Education flagship, with the country experiencing one of the largest pass rates in the university entrance examination in recent times. We are poised to achieve even bigger gains with the policy and legislative foundation we have laid. We have learned in the process that investing in Foundational Learning will make our job easier at the primary and secondary levels. At the Higher and Technical we have made gains by expanding access especially in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture and Mathematics (STEAM) courses. We have established technical and vocational centres in almost every chiefdom in the country.

Our investment in health systems will continue to be a key driver for building a productive society ready to add value in the modern era. We will build skills for the health sector by focusing on specialized skills, and mass public health and emergency systems to meet the rising demand for healthcare in the country.

Creating equal opportunity for women across all facets of life is a core goal of the human capital development agenda. The Government will build on the Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) ACT 2022 to support women's active and productive participation in government and in the private sector.

In the next five years the SLPP will focus on translating these gains into developing a highly skilled labour force that is ready for the 21st century industry. We will focus on reducing the missing middle in our labour force. At the same time, we will develop talents for professional jobs in the private sector and the civil service. The SLPP pledges the following:

- Sustain government budget allocation education
- Continue to expand access in primary and secondary education
- Invest in Foundational Learning
- Provide free sanitary pads to girls in schools
- Continue to invest to attract women in STEAM courses
- Provide funding from Technical and Vocational Training in universities and other formal Government sponsored training institutions
- Implement the Sierra Leone Health Insurance Scheme to expand access to health care and reduce out-of-pocket expenditure.
- Extend free healthcare services to all school-going children nationwide
- Digitalise the HRH system to inform human resource planning, management and decision making
- Develop a robust plan for the Implementation of the GEWE Policy 2020 and Gender Empowerment Act 2022
- Mainstream gender empowerment in policy and programming across the board
- Build the capacity of the Ministry of Labour to provide certification for trainings in Technical Vocational Skills and a Labour Management Information System (LMIS)
- Establish a wage support scheme for people that get certification and get hired in technical and vocational jobs



3. Youth Employment Scheme (YES!): A Presidential Initiative to create 500,000 jobs for the youth in five years

Persistent youth unemployment poses a big threat to sustaining economic growth and stability. Youth, those between the ages of 15-35 make up more than a third of the population in Sierra Leone. Of this population, those that are not in school, university or engaged in formal training are largely unemployed in urban centres. In the rural areas too, youth have found little incentive to engage in productive work. Our graduates from the universities are largely underemployed. These unemployed youths especially in the urban centres often fall prey to opportunists that use them in violent protests and thuggery.

The SLPP harness the energy of the youth to create an inclusive and lasting prosperity in Sierra Leone. In the process we build patriotism, national pride, and resilience among our youth. The next SLPP Government will establish a Presidential initiative for job creation for the youth that will aim to create 500,000 jobs in the next five years. These jobs will include skilled and unskilled, long term, as well as seasonal jobs across all sectors.

The SLPP pledges the following to achieve this goal:

- Provide targeted incentives (tax and non-tax incentives) for the private sector to hire youths
- Set aside a special fund to reimburse costs of hiring, training and upskilling youth incurred by private sector
- Adopt a Government policy that encourages the inclusion of youth in public work and infrastructure projects
- Establish a Youth Opportunity Centre in every district headquarter town to support youth in their quest to get employment
- Provide access to capital for youth that wishes to start their own venture
- Establish a database to track employment of youth in both public and private sector
- Provide special incentives for youths in the ICT and creative industry
- Design a special programme to create job opportunities for out of school young girls



4. Revamping the Public Service Architecture: Delivery, Efficiency and Professionalism

The Public Service is the backbone for driving transformation in Sierra Leone. Since assuming office in 2018, the New Direction government has developed a Civil Service Training Policy to provide the general framework for comprehensive capacity building in the public sector and the running of the Civil Service Training College. While these efforts have increased the capacity on the margins, the Public Service architecture in Sierra Leone still requires strategic changes to be fit for purpose for the Governance agenda of H.E President Bio. The SLPP is committed to reforming the public service to that focuses on delivery, fosters a culture of professionalism, meritocracy, and continuous improvement to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency in serving the people of Sierra Leone. Our goal is to build a Public Service that attracts and keep our brightest talents to be at the forefront of tackling our hardest challenges. With ongoing constitutional review process provides an opportunity for a lasting transformation in of the Sierra Leone Public Service. The SLPP Pledges the following:

- Review the policy and legal framework for public service to make it more professional and attractive to Sierra Leonean professionals who would like to work for Government
- Establish a centre of Government delivering unit in the Presidency with a coherent connection to smaller delivery units in line ministries
- Improve incentives to support productivity and merit-based system in recruitment and progression of the workforce
- Introduce standardise exams for recruitment in the Public Service
- Strengthen the Performance Management of MDAs by review the existing frameworks and developing Performance Management Policy
- Develop an Electronic Personnel Management System to keep track of professionals recruited into the Civil Service
- Operationalise the Wages and Compensation Commission Act 2023 to will spearhead the welfare of the Public Service



5. Tech and Infrastructure: Pathways for Sustained Economic Growth (TIPEG)

Targeted investments in infrastructure tied to economic growth activities is indispensable to the transformation agenda of the SLPP. High cost of energy and poor road network linking production centres to markets has been a key bottle for private sector growth in Sierra Leone. With the MCC Compact development well on the way, the next SLPP Government is poised to rapidly expand energy in key production zones of the country, relying on both renewable and non-renewable sources. Similarly, the Government has several roads and bridge construction projects in the pipeline, most of which are planned for the production areas.

In addition, the SLPP Government understands that technology and digital innovation is a vital enabler and presents the greatest opportunity to accelerate transformational change in Sierra Leone. In the last five years, the SLPP Government established Directorate of Science Technology and Innovation (DSTI), and together with the Ministry of Information and Communication (MIC) have laid the foundation for Sierra Leone to benefit from the power of technology and innovation to deliver services and grow our economy. We have extended the national fibre network, increased internet, and mobile access, mobile money agents are in almost every chiefdom, by making needed improvement in the ecosystem. In the next five years, infrastructure and technology and innovation will be critical enablers for boosting and sustaining high economic growth. We aim to make most transaction in the economy cashless and increase financial inclusion. Will expand energy production for productive use, and build roads linking production centres to markets. The SLPP pledge the following:

- Expand the Switch to include all commercial banks and other financial institutions.
- Build the infrastructure to support and operate digital payment options.
- Establish a national Data Centre and cloud computing Infrastructure for Government data and content hosting
- Develop a national digital addressing system to promote e-commerce
- Protect personal data in digital transactions and communications through Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) (Certificate Authority) to promote trust in online transactions
- Use the post office infrastructure across the country as service centres for digital financial inclusion
- Complete the Southern and Nothren Transmission Line Project that links Mamamah – Songo – Rotifunk - Bauya - Moyamba – Rutile – Pujehun
- Commence Power Import from CLSG via Guinea to add another 120MW
- Complete district capital electrification in all 16 locations
- Increase investment in road construction in key agriculture production and fish processing zones in the country
- Identify and construct economically strategic bridges across the country
- Establish a Rural Energy Directorate to oversee access expansion in all provincial HQ towns and rural areas
- Increase investment in tourism enhancement roads - focusing on roads leading or going through tourist attraction areas in the country



**PART VII: CALL TO
ACTION**



Stay the Cause and Seize the Moment

As a country, Sierra Leone has come a long way. We have made a lot of progress in our quest to be free, united, and prosperous. As a people, we have also been tested along the way, but we have prevailed because of our courage and collective love for Mama Salone. We are again being tested by the painful effects of a multitude of global crises. At times like these it is easy to lose hope and lose sight of our collective strength in service of Sierra Leone.

But we must rise to the occasion. This is a pivotal moment that demands visionary leadership, bold action, and the courage to enact transformational change. The challenges presented by the global crises require solutions that last, not only through the current crisis, but for future shocks. We must build resilience in our economy, institutions, and our people.

Under the leadership of His Excellency President Bio and the SLPP, we have made strides in shielding our people from the worst effects of the crises while laying the foundation for accelerated transformation. With a clear focus on investing in our people, particularly our children, we are well-positioned to build a capable and resilient society. By prioritizing human capital development, we have built the necessary foundation for lasting change that will prepare us for future shocks. Furthermore, we have installed critical growth promoting infrastructure and have a pipeline to do more. We have built trusted partnership across the globe with states and with the private sectors. We passed laws and made reforms that inspire confidence from our people and investors, enabling our economy to continue on an upward trajectory despite the challenging global economic conditions.

As we look towards the future, we are filled with hope and determination. The plans we have laid out for the next five years promise to tackle our most pressing challenges head on. We are committed to boosting agriculture productivity, tackling food insecurity once and for all, and reducing our dependence on food importation. Our goal is to bring electricity to more homes, build more roads to link our production centres to market, and create job opportunities, especially for the youth. With these initiatives, we are setting our country on a path towards middle income status by 2030.

The June 24th election is a critical moment in our country's history. Voters have the solemn responsibility to elect the leader and the political party that are best suited to steer our country through the current challenges, and towards lasting transformation. His Excellency President Bio and the SLPP are the best suited to continue the progress we have made and build on it for a better Sierra Leone. Steady and emphatic leadership under the SLPP has brought us this far, and we have what it takes to take us even further. A vote for President Bio and the SLPP is a vote for continued transformational change that leaves no one behind. On the other hand, a vote for the opposition would mean taking a step back towards the mess that we have been trying to overcome.

We invite all Sierra Leoneans to join us in our efforts to secure a brighter future for Sierra Leone. It is crucial that we all show up and vote on June 24th to ensure our country is on the right path towards transformational change. Together, we can continue the hard work that is necessary to build a better Sierra Leone, with a clear vision of progress and prosperity. We urge all well-meaning Sierra Leoneans to vote for the SLPP and help us transform our beloved country into a beacon of hope and opportunity for all.



