

Women and Men in Partnership for Post-Conflict Reconstruction

Report of the Sierra Leone National Consultation
Freetown, Sierra Leone
21–24 May 2001



Commonwealth Secretariat

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Edited by Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen and Linda Etchart

*Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, Sierra Leone
in collaboration with*

*Commonwealth Secretariat
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
The British Council
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)*

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Abbreviations

ACDESS	African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies
AfDB/ADB	African Development Bank
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All People's Congress
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CCSL	Council of Churches in Sierra Leone
CDF	Civil Defence Force
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGG	Campaign for Good Governance
CGLF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
CHASL	Christian Health Association of Sierra Leone
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CMAG	Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group
CMRRD	Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRRP	Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme
CSM-SL	Civil Society Movement – Sierra Leone
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
EC	European Commission
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West Africa Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIB	European Investment Bank
EPCF	Emergency Post-Conflict Facility
ERRC	Economic Rehabilitation and Recovery Credit Programme
ERSF	Emergency Recovery Support Fund
FAWE	Forum of African Women Educationalists
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMC	Global Movement for Children
GOSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GPMG	General Purpose Machine Gun
GRADOC	Gender Research and Documentation Centre

Abbreviations

HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
IAAC	Integrated Approach to Aid Coordination
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IDF	Israeli Defence Forces
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMATT	International Military Training Advisory Team
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
I-PRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Project
LDC	Least Developed Country
LRC	Law Reform Commission
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MODEP	Ministry of Development and Economic Planning
MOHS	Ministry of Health and Sanitation
MRU	Mano River Union
MSWGCA	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
MTEF	Medium Term Economic Framework
NCDDR	National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
NCDHR	National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights
NCRRR	National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation
NDB	National Development Bank
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NEWMAP	Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLTPS	National Long-term Perspective Studies
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
NRRRP	National Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Recovery Programme
OUA	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PDP	Preventive Development Project
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
QUAP	Quick Impact Action Programme

RRRP	Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Programme
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SAC	Structural Adjustment Credit
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SAPA	Social Action and Poverty Alleviation Programme
SASP	Structural Adjustment Support Programme
SHARP	Sierra Leone HIV/AIDS Multi-Sector Project
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLANGO	Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
SLAUW	Sierra Leone Association of University Women
SLBA	Sierra Leone Bar Association
SLLC	Sierra Leone Labour Congress
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SPP	Strategic Planning Process
SWAASL	Society for Women and AIDS in Africa – Sierra Leone
TEP	Training and Employment Programme
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPA	United Nations Department of Political Affairs
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs



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Foreword



Shirley Gbujama, Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs at May National Consultation, Freetown

Shirley Gbujama

Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, Sierra Leone

I was delighted and privileged to host the very important National Consultation on 'Women and Men in Partnership for Post-Conflict Reconstruction'. The consultation exemplified the partnership between the Gender and Youth Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Gender Division of my Ministry. It also had the support of the United Nations Development Programme and was facilitated in various ways by other friends and partners like the British Council, UNICEF and others.

During 1999, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs developed the National Policy on Gender Mainstreaming that provides a framework for systematic integration of gender as a fundamental component for all policy and programme development processes within government, the private sector and civil society. In addition the Ministry developed the National Policy on the Advancement of Women in Sierra Leone, which highlights the particularly disadvantaged position of women and proposes how this is to be addressed. Both documents were adopted by Cabinet in August 2000. These two documents seek to meet Sierra Leone's national development objectives from a gender perspective.

Having successfully conducted sensitisation workshops to popularise the two policies and advocate for their acceptance nationwide, the next logical step for the Ministry as the National Gender Machinery was to develop our staff capacity to undertake a comprehensive national implementation programme that would indicate who will be doing what in national development activities, that truly reflects effective partnership. This consultation has been the vehicle for putting together such a programme.

The major objectives of the consultation were:

- ◆ To learn from the experiences of post-conflict reconstruction in other Commonwealth African countries in the aftermath of their own conflicts.
- ◆ To develop a National Plan of Action for follow-up, based on concrete initiatives to ensure that women and men participate and benefit equally in all post-conflict reconstruction activities including the political, legal, economic and social.

The timing of the consultation was is most appropriate. It came at a very important stage of our long road to peace. Only a few days before the consultation we learnt with some relief that disarmament was eagerly progressing, and we hope that this time the guns are really going to be silent. This means that peace is not just in sight but finally at hand and that the way has been paved for post-conflict reconstruction. In addition, the indications from our various sensitisation workshops have been that most participants now accept the fact that gender is about women and men working together for development; and sharing the benefits of such development. We expect that follow-up activities to this consultation will give everyone the opportunity to share this experience.

Focusing on post-conflict reconstruction from a gender perspective entails examining post-conflict reconstruction against differing gender roles and impacts and deriving best practices for fostering gender-balanced sustainable development, on platforms that mobilise both men and women to play their parts. The full participation of both sexes is important to sustainable peace and to the efficient use of all human resources for rebuilding a war-torn society. Despite the tragedy, trauma and destructiveness of conflict, out of the waste and debris and broken lives can emerge a positive opportunity to reconstruct a more functional, flexible and inclusive society with enhanced political, economic and social roles, values and structures changed for the better by bitter experience.

In post-conflict reconstruction women and men face daunting challenges within the parameters of available resources and opportunities to meet their basic needs and concerns. Women's coping mechanisms during and after conflicts have been found to be resourceful and innovative—with necessity, not tradition, being the mother of invention. Their contribution is both different and complementary to the efforts of men. Thus reconstruction can change and influence the value of gender roles and the positioning of the sexes in society.

One can say that Women in Sierra Leone have not been passive sufferers but have been strong cornerstone forces that have anchored society. In groups and individually, formally and informally, they have contributed more than government or international agencies to reconciliation, reviving local economies and rebuilding social networks.

They have been forced by necessity to carry out previously male-dominated activities, and in the process have acquired skills and experiences that can be applied in post-conflict society. Skills training must provide women with the tools necessary to play their part in reconstruction; women on their part can use their positioning for new opportunities to challenge gender stereotyping of appropriate work for women which often turn out to be unrewarding and low status with little chance of advancement.

Bringing women into a largely male-dominated post-conflict reconstruction process means maximising Sierra Leone's use of its human resources in pursuing reconciliation, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. The framework for a successful post-conflict reconstruction is one that can bring combatant sides and other stakeholders together, build common ground and gradually heal the massive breaches and wounds in the society. Only then is it possible to form a new future in equality and justice. Gender roles and equality in the way forward is a crosscutting issue in all sectors of development and in policies and institutions of good governance.

This period offers government, civil society and the private sector a chance to institutionalise a gender-responsive policy that can actively tap the contribution of both women and men. Such a policy would lead to the mainstreaming of gender-based analysis and planning that cannot avoid special programmes to enhance women's involvement. This implies institutionalisation of a larger role for women in various sectors of reconstruction and development.

Gender roles are not immutable and must never be confused with biological roles. In a post-conflict situation such as ours, divisions of labour need to be functional and flexible —not rigid and ritualistic, but realistic.

For women and men in Sierra Leone today, partnership for post-conflict reconstruction should be our watchword. True partnership strengthens; it facilitates planning and consensus building around shared goals.



President Kabbah, Professor Ade Adefuye and Nancy Spence, May 2001

Preface

Nancy Spence

*Director, Gender and Youth Affairs Division
Commonwealth Secretariat*

As always, the Commonwealth Secretariat has a number of people and organisations to thank in the work that has gone into this activity and subsequent publication. The Sierra Leone National Consultation on ‘Women and Men in Partnership for Post-Conflict Reconstruction’ and this published report have been the collective effort of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs and the Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with a number of organisations and individuals.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs hosted the consultation, led by the Minister, Shirley Gbujama, and assisted by Ministry staff, E. Coomba, Hamiratu Bangura, Samuel Braima and consultant, Fama Joka-Bangura. We are grateful to barrister J.B. Jenkins-Johnston for opening and chairing the consultation.

The Commonwealth Secretariat team involved in planning and facilitating the consultation and preparing the report included Nancy Spence, Ade Adefuye, Valencia Mogegeh, Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, Chuks Ihekaibeya, Alison Girdwood, Florence Harding and Linda Etchart. The Commonwealth’s Technical Expert to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs, Judith May-Parker, played a key role in coordinating the planning and organisation of the consultation.

Particular thanks are due to the collaborating organisations which contributed funding and in-kind support to the consultation: the Sierra Leone country programmes of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the British Council and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Special mention needs to be made of the support given by K.O. Amaning and Gladys Carroll of UNDP, Rajiv Bendre and Gloria Thomas of the British Council, and Joanna van Gerpen and Ola Williams of UNICEF.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs set up a National Planning Committee, which met weekly to plan and organise the consultation. We are very grateful to the representatives of government ministries, non-governmental organisations and international agencies. Ministries included Development and Economic Planning; Education, Youth and Sports; Foreign Affairs; and Health. Other agencies included: British Council; Department for International Development (DFID); Gender, Research and Documentation Centre (GRADOC) of the University of Sierra

Leone; National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR); Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians (NEWMAP); Sierra Leone Association of NGOs (SLANGO); Social Action and Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPA); UNDP and UNFPA.

The consultation would not have resulted in its groundbreaking recommendations and national action plan without the lead presenters and writers on the eight themes of the consultation: Ministers Ibrahim Tejan-Jalloh, Alpha Wurie and J.D. Rogers; and Jebbeh Forster, Iyesha Josiah, Clifford Kamara, Fatmata Kamara, Elizabeth Lavallie, Sao Kpato Max-Kyne, Valerie Nicol, Joe Pemagbi and Augusta Taqi. The lead presentations, for which we are very grateful, have been compiled in this report. Special thanks are due to international lead presenters, Steve Mokwena, South Africa; Florence Butegwa, UNIFEM-West Africa and Andrew Pope, United Kingdom.

The following ministries and organisations prepared background papers, which contributed depth and breadth to the consultation's discussions and recommendations—Ministries of: Development and Economic Planning; Finance; Health and Sanitation; Information and Broadcasting; Lands, Housing, Country Planning and the Environment; and Public Affairs. The organisations included: Campaign for Good Governance; Christian Health Association of Sierra Leone (CHASL); Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CGLF); CORD-Sierra Leone; Council of Churches in Sierra Leone; Gender Research and Documentation Centre (GRADOC); Grassroots Gender Empowerment Movement; National Electoral Commission; Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians (NEWMAP); Planned Parenthood Association of Sierra Leone; Police Service; Sierra Leone Association of University Women; Sierra Leone Labour Congress; Sierra Leone Union on Disability Issues; Social Action and Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPA); UNDP and UNICEF.

The University of Sierra Leone's Gender and Research Documentation Centre (GRADOC) put together a team of rapporteurs who were instrumental in compiling the record of the presentations, working group discussions and recommendations. The GRADOC team, led by Amy Joof, chief record editor, included: Marian Bako, J. Beckley, Eugenia Coker, Pamela Davis, Jeanne Harding, Reynold Johnson, Isa Joof, Elizabeth Kpolie, Blanche Macaulay, Gloria Palmer, Agnes Pessima, Elizabeth Sam and Rosaline Tijani.

Special thanks are due to Gwynne Roberts, Roberts and Wykeham Films, who shot the video footage used for the photographs in this report, assisted by Albert Momoh; and Patricia Macauley and Pat Lewis who co-ordinated the media outreach.

The consultation would not have been possible without the keen involvement of the participants, listed in Annex B, who included government ministers, parliamentarians, paramount chiefs, senior government officials, district council officials, representatives of national commissions, the judiciary, police service, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, the university, media, commercial and financial institutions, and regional and international agencies. Special mention needs to be made of participants representing international agencies: Jogien Bakker, International Labour Organisation, Joe Hall, National Democratic Institute; Anthony Mensah Adjaji, Commonwealth Local Government Forum; and John Fisher, Commonwealth Trade Union Council.

If we have inadvertently omitted any organisations or individuals who contributed to the consultation, we offer our sincere appreciation.

We hope that this report will be of genuine use to Sierra Leone in seeking to make gender equality and equity a central and guiding principle in the post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Introduction

Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen and Linda Etchart

Gender and Youth Affairs Division (GYAD)

Commonwealth Secretariat

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 independent sovereign states bound by common historical experiences, common values and principles. These were first formulated in Singapore in 1971, reaffirmed in Harare in 1991 and strengthened in Millbrook in 1995. They include among others:

- ◆ Democracy and democratic processes and institutions which reflect national circumstances, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, and just and honest government;
- ◆ Commitment to sustainable economic and social development for all people;
- ◆ Reduction of poverty and redressing the imbalance between rich and poor nations; and
- ◆ Equality between women and men, and the empowerment of young people.

The above principles are more likely to be realised in an enabling environment in which peace and stability thrive. The Commonwealth has thus been involved in preventing and resolving conflicts. In addition to contributing to the resolution of conflicts, the Commonwealth undertakes reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction so that the issues that gave rise to the conflict do not recur.

The Commonwealth has been involved in efforts to restore peace in Sierra Leone since the early 1990s. This has included helping to negotiate the holding of elections in February 1996, condemning the overthrow of democratically elected governments and involvement in all the efforts at reaching agreement to end hostilities. The Commonwealth endorsed the efforts of the Economic Community of West Africa Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to restore the democratically elected government. In the aftermath of a rebel attack on Freetown that began in December 1998 and which was driven back by ECOMOG troops, the Commonwealth took an active part in the discussions that led to the Lomé Agreement signed in July 1999 between the government and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The Commonwealth is a Moral Guarantor of the Agreement.

Introduction

Subsequently, Commonwealth member countries convinced the UN Security Council to establish the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to keep the peace. In addition the British government committed troops to assist the peace effort. When it became clear that stronger measures were needed to tackle the RUF, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) held a meeting on 2 May 2000 to review the Lomé Agreement as well as Commonwealth assistance to the reconstruction efforts. It was decided that more robust peacekeeping efforts were required. A meeting of ECOWAS held in Abuja on 28-29 May 2000 pledged additional ECOWAS troops to UNAMSIL. Commonwealth countries were instrumental in changing UNAMSIL's mandate from peacekeeping to peace enforcement on 4 August 2000. CMAG was later involved in galvanising international action against some West African leaders suspected of having supported the activities of the Sierra Leone rebels.

Currently, Commonwealth member governments and the Secretariat are assisting in the post-conflict reconstruction effort in various ways, including retraining the Sierra Leone police under the Commonwealth Police Development Task Force in cooperation with the British Government Department for International Development (DFID). Other areas of support include technical expertise to the National Electoral Commission, a low-cost building materials project, and debt management advice and other assistance to the Ministry of Finance. An interdivisional taskforce has been established in the Commonwealth Secretariat to contribute to post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Sierra Leone.

This national consultation on 'Women and Men in Partnership for Post-conflict Reconstruction' has thus been part of the Commonwealth's ongoing support to rebuilding peace and democracy in Sierra Leone.

Importantly, this consultation also forms part of Commonwealth and international mandates to address the impacts of armed conflict on women, men and young people. As Sierra Leone's experience testifies, war is no longer fought mainly across international borders between professional soldiers in battlefields. Most of today's conflicts in the Commonwealth and globally are fought within countries, between different ethnic and social groups, and with civilians being the main combatants and targets. Armed conflict has moved into the village, the community, the street, and the home, resulting in a gendered distribution of suffering among women and girls, and men and boys. Deaths due to political violence tend to be overwhelmingly among men. Yet, civilians are the main victims of war, with women and children targeted for special forms of attack. Women and children are also increasingly participants in war, particularly as child soldiers who are both boys and girls.

The papers contained in this report focus attention on the fact that a decade of armed conflict and political unrest in Sierra Leone has affected women and girls, men and boys in different ways. The devastating human cost, in terms of suffering and death, loss of livelihoods, rape, torture and mutilation, the use of child soldiers, the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, and refugees and displaced persons, has been borne in different ways by women, men and children. In the same vein, the destruction of basic infrastructure such as housing, water and sanitation, health services, schools and agriculture, has affected women and girls, men and boys differently.

In Sierra Leone the conflict has damaged the entire social, economic, legal and political fabric of the country. The post-conflict recovery programme has to be very broad of necessity, since the conflict has undermined the boundaries between the sectors.

The papers, recommendations and national plan of action in this consultation report identify the following gender equality objectives as essential for the reconstruction of the economy and development of society:

- ◆ Increasing access to education and skills training for women;
- ◆ Raising gender awareness and gender sensitivity among men;
- ◆ The creation of new social values through public awareness and education that will improve the status of women;
- ◆ Effective education, counselling and information campaigns to enable women to have control over their own lives and bodies and to enable them to assist in the prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS and STIs;
- ◆ Zero tolerance of violence against women and children and support for programmes in this area, including changes in the law;
- ◆ Training and sensitisation of the police in the area of sexual violence;
- ◆ Regulatory frameworks and social security to protect women who are especially vulnerable to war;
- ◆ Young people—women and men—must be consulted and engaged in the development of their communities, for whom they are a key resource.

The consultation demonstrates the importance of women, men and young people engaging in dialogue together. Changing the beliefs and practices which prevent women's equal entry and participation into political, peace and development processes at all levels can only come about through women and men creating alliances.

The recommendations and priority areas for action, which we can use in our various institutions and capacities, make an important contribution to the achievement of gender equality in every aspect of the post-conflict reconstruction process in Sierra Leone.

The papers in this volume and the views expressed in the working group reports represent a spectrum of opinion from government and opposition, women, men, and young people. They demonstrate a unity of purpose and a determination to succeed in the most challenging of tasks, the creation of a new society and sense of identification and support for a unified and democratic state.

Women, men, and young people expressed a frustration at past failures: the failure of the colonial administration, inadequacy and corruption of post-independence governments, ineffectiveness of the legislature and judicial systems. Harsh criticisms are made, with sincerity and passion. It is clear that the war represented a disjuncture between widely held social values and the political, economic and social structures that should uphold them, and there is a desire to create systems that are more equitable and accountable than in the past.

While there is an emphasis on partnership and community, there is at the same time a questioning of some traditional practices that are harmful to women, and an endorsement of international human rights conventions designed to protect women and young people and enhance their status in society. Women are encouraged to continue to come forward, to gain confidence and speak out, to contribute to promoting women's, and therefore the whole society's, wellbeing.

Building lasting peace in Sierra Leone requires the full participation of all citizens. Yet, because the challenges are so huge and the resources so limited, it is possible that priority will be given to issues considered urgent and related to security such as rebuilding of infrastructure, or demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants, while not paying adequate attention to other areas that are equally vital.

Such critical issues include the disproportionate negative impacts of the war on women and children, and women's lack of those skills necessary to contribute to the reconstruction of Sierra Leone. This can be traced back to their traditionally disadvantaged position in society, especially in education and the higher rungs of the employment ladder. It is important that gender equality is seen as a critical aspect of the work of the humanitarian agencies in areas including repatriating refugees and displaced persons, child protection, human rights, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, education and agriculture.

A key issue in the reconstruction of Sierra Leone is increasing women's representation in decision-making, linked to Commonwealth and global mandates. The Commonwealth Secretariat was mandated by the Heads of Government Meeting (Durban, 1999) and the fifth and sixth Women's Affairs Ministers Meetings (Port of Spain, 1996; and New Delhi, 2000), to promote women's participation in political decision-making and peace processes.

At this time of rebuilding democracy and peace in Sierra Leone, there is a window of opportunity to ensure that women and men are represented at all levels of political and public decision-making. This will make a big difference in ensuring women and men contribute and benefit equally in the reconstruction process.

If a critical mass of women are represented in parliament, the district councils, and the chiefdoms, they will be able to influence decisions so that higher priority is given to gender-related issues associated with malnutrition and disease, water and sanitation, housing, health and HIV/AIDS, illiteracy, rebuilding agricultural production and entrepreneurship. This is not about excluding men but including women.

Organisations in Sierra Leone, including the 50/50 Group and the Task Force for Women in Politics, have seized this opportunity and have been campaigning vigorously for the selection of women candidates by the political parties leading up to the elections in May 2002. As part of their efforts they have been engaged in training potential candidates and developing their political skills. A three-day workshop entitled 'Women in Parliament' is being held in Freetown on 5-7 February 2002, aimed at increasing the percentage of women candidates elected to parliament to at least 30 per cent, supported by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning, the British Council, National Democratic Institute, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Women's equal participation in the democratic process has until now been resisted. Now is the time for women to come forward and be counted, to advocate for changes to existing laws and the establishment of new laws that affect women, to bring about the kinds of policy changes recommended by the consultation on 'Women and Men in Partnership for Post-Conflict Reconstruction'. For this to happen, women must be represented in parliament. The 'Women in Parliament' workshop is a timely contribution to this objective, one which will benefit the whole of society, women, men and young people.

R.B.S. & L.E.,
January 2002

Consultation Recommendations

Vision of the Women of Sierra Leone

- ◆ We want to live in a country that is at peace.
- ◆ We want to bring up our children so that they respect peace, democracy, the rule of law and equality between women and men.
- ◆ We want to live in a country where the economy is stable, goods and services are affordable, skills training and financial, business and other opportunities are provided, so that we are economically empowered.
- ◆ We want to live in a country where we walk with pride and participate fully at the highest levels of politics and public service without fear or harassment.
- ◆ We want to live in a country where every woman is safe from all forms of abuse, all forms of violence including rape, sexual and other forms of abuse.
- ◆ We want to live in a country that practises zero tolerance of violence against women.
- ◆ We want to live in a country where every woman is an educated woman and every woman is a healthy woman.
- ◆ We want to live in a country where every woman is aware of her legal and human rights and where the government, judiciary and legal systems promote and protect these rights.
- ◆ We want to live in a country where there are gender-sensitive health, social and other programmes which effectively address the spiralling incidence of HIV/AIDS and STIs, bearing in mind the special needs and problems of women, boys and girls of the armed forces.
- ◆ We want to live in a country that provides a stable, secure and safe environment for our young women and men to actualise their potentials, and where they are encouraged and empowered to participate in decision-making at all levels.

Following the feature presentations at the consultation, participants convened in thematic working groups to examine more closely the issues raised in the presentations, and came up with recommendations and a national plan of action designed to facilitate the successful integration of gender equality into the post-conflict reconstruction process in Sierra Leone.

Objectives

The objectives of the consultation were to:

- ◆ Map out the impacts of the conflict on women and girls, men and boys in the political, legal, economic and social spheres;
- ◆ Assess what programmes are currently in place by key stakeholders including government, civil society, and international agencies;
- ◆ Identify the gaps in programming, and which agencies are best placed to respond to these needs;
- ◆ Identify capacity-building, networking and coordination to integrate gender equality into all aspects of the reconstruction process—the political, legal, economic and social;
- ◆ Identify ways in which the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs could be strengthened to play a lead role in integrating gender into post-conflict reconstruction; and
- ◆ Identify mechanisms for strengthening the partnership between women, men and young people in the post-conflict reconstruction process.

Background

The consultation took place within the framework of Commonwealth and international mandates, including the following:

- ◆ The 1991 Harare Declaration issued by Commonwealth Heads of Government, which affirmed the Commonwealth's fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, just and honest government, and gender equality.
- ◆ The implementation of the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development, and its update on Advancing the Commonwealth Agenda into the New Millennium (2000-2005), which were endorsed by Heads of Government (Edinburgh, 1997; and Durban, 1999). Commonwealth Ministers responsible for Women's/Gender Affairs set targets of 30% of women in political and public decision-making at all levels, and in all peace initiatives including conflict prevention, mediation, resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.
- ◆ The Beijing Platform for Action and Beijing Plus Five Outcomes Document, which addressed women in armed conflict, and access to political decision-making as critical areas of concern.

- ◆ For the first time in its history, the UN Security Council held a 2-day debate on Women, Peace and Security (24-25 October 2000). It was chaired by Namibia and 43 countries spoke, including 18 Commonwealth countries. It resulted in an 18-clause Security Council resolution that mandates the UN Secretary-General to involve women at the highest levels in conflict resolution and peacekeeping missions, address the impacts of armed conflict on women, and importantly to report to the Security Council on progress made.

The Security Council debate built on key recent initiatives: (i) Graça Machel's review (1996-2000) dealing with the impact of armed conflict on women and children; (ii) the Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action on mainstreaming gender in peace support operations (May 2000); (iii) the Brahimi Report on UN Peace Operations (S/2000/809); (iv) the Burundi peace negotiations in Arusha headed by Nelson Mandela, which drew on the Women's Peace Conference representing women from the 19 political parties to the negotiations (July 2000); 23 of the women's proposals were used in the peace agreement, including issues of women's rights under the new constitution, their contribution to economic reconstruction, and their role in conflict prevention and resolution.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations of the National Consultation:

Gender Equality in Political and Public Decision-Making

- ◆ The Government of Sierra Leone should take concrete steps to implement the Commonwealth and UN target of 30% of women in parliament, local government, and public decision-making in the forthcoming elections. This should be done by an Act of Parliament that allocates no less than 30% of seats to women in Parliament and local government.
- ◆ The National Electoral Commission should make it mandatory for political parties to integrate gender into all areas of their election manifestos, setting targets for the next five-year period based on Beijing, Commonwealth and African commitments.
- ◆ Government in collaboration with civil society should undertake a public sensitisation programme on the electoral process that asserts women's right to equal political participation and representation. To ensure transparency, fairness and equity, the electoral system should combine the best aspects of proportional representation and constituency-based elections.

Gender Equality in Human Rights and Legal Reform

- ◆ The Government of Sierra Leone should take action within a period of 3 years to review and reform the laws which are weighted against women, such as laws relating to inheritance, violence against women, divorce, etc. In order to facilitate this process, the Law Reform Commission should be reactivated.
- ◆ Given the high incidence of illiteracy and lack of information about the law, action should be taken to ensure that there is an increase in access to basic education; that media coverage is extended to all areas using local languages, and that women should be educated about their rights.
- ◆ Research should be carried out to identify the traditional beliefs and practices that are gender discriminatory, to disseminate the research findings nationally, and to enact laws to abolish discriminatory traditional practices.
- ◆ Government should put in place legislation relating to the censoring of films and drama.

Violence, Sexual Abuse and Crimes Against Women and Children

- ◆ To address poverty which makes women and girls more vulnerable to sexual, and other forms of abuse, mechanisms must be put in place to increase their access to non-traditional and other emerging forms of employment that will provide financial independence.
- ◆ The violence against women and children that is endemic and has been aggravated by the war persists because of the culture of silence and acceptance of the abusive behaviour by men in positions of power and authority.
- ◆ The formal, non-formal and traditional educational systems should, as a matter of extreme urgency, be overhauled with a view to establishing programmes and curricula to bring about attitudinal and behavioural change. Sensitisation of parents, guardians, opinion leaders and especially young boys and men should occur simultaneously. The message for Sierra Leone is that there should be zero tolerance against violence against women and children in all its forms.
- ◆ Gender-sensitive training should be organised for law enforcement officers, especially the police, army and prison officers, to ensure that they enforce the law in all cases of violence against women and children. Gender-sensitivity, fairness and justice should prevail in all processes including prosecution, collection and use of evidence, treatment of victims. In all cases, regardless of the seniority of the officer, disciplinary and criminal action must be taken against any law enforcement officer who is either a perpetrator of violence against women and children or fails to enforce the law fully.

- ◆ A special court should be set up to deal with violence against women and children immediately.

Resettlement of Displaced Civilians and Resettlement/ Rehabilitation of Ex-Combatants

- ◆ In light of the problem of poverty that particularly affects women being resettled, they should be provided with support services for nutrition, health and childcare.
- ◆ Since women being resettled suffer from underemployment, low productivity and dependence, they should be provided with productive skills and encouraged in productive enterprise.
- ◆ There should be parity for all groups including deprived residents of the war-affected communities and internally displaced persons living in the homes of friends and relatives. Skilled workers in their various communities should be encouraged to participate in the reconstruction process.
- ◆ Special attention should be paid to child ex-combatants and young drug addicts in all communities in Sierra Leone by government and other stakeholders.
- ◆ Rehabilitation and resource centres should be established nationwide, in consultation with recognised organisations of the disabled. The disabled must be represented in consultative groups, district communities, etc., through their organisations.
- ◆ Rapid information dissemination should be available to support programmes for community activities for the benefit of all stakeholders to facilitate networking and collaboration—using traditional methods in addition to the electronic media. Information should include details of activities carried out and packages provided in order to avoid misunderstanding.
- ◆ Regular assessment and re-assessment of programmes are required to ensure that they meet emerging needs and challenges that have not been foreseen.

Gender Issues in Poverty, Economic Recovery and Empowerment

- ◆ Government and other providers of education and related services should put in place mechanisms that will enhance coordination and collaboration including facilities for constant monitoring and evaluation of progress.
- ◆ Investment opportunities, particularly for women, should be enhanced by: (i) facilitating the acquisition of capital in the form of low-interest credit from reputable financial institutions; (ii) providing agricultural and other related inputs including processing, transportation and marketing facilities for rural residents, particularly women; (iii) providing access to training to enable men, women and

young people to operate businesses and other income-generating activities with more expertise.

- ◆ Government should grant concessions to companies and industries that employ a certain percentage of the disabled.

Gender Equality in Health, HIV/AIDS and STIs

- ◆ The government should review its national health policy to ensure that it is gender-sensitive, and responsive to the special health needs of women, including the protection and promotion of women's sexual and reproductive rights, and the provision of services.
- ◆ Apart from providing basic equipment and personnel, attempts should be made to train in specialist areas and to procure the necessary equipment to enhance the distribution of medical services.
- ◆ A special gender-sensitive programme should be put in place to address the spiralling incidence of HIV/AIDS and STIs, which is now approaching epidemic proportions.
- ◆ Due to the decline of all structures and systems in the health sector as a result of the war, there should be a complete review of the health service to address the physical, mental, psycho-social and other needs of women, men, boys and girls. Such a review should include health provision at grassroots and community levels, access to hospital facilities in all regions, and the provision of psychosocial counselling.
- ◆ Community-based rehabilitation programmes should be set up to address the needs of war-wounded victims with disabilities. This community-based initiative should provide training for the making/manufacturing of rehabilitation aids, e.g., crutches and wheel chairs.
- ◆ A revised Family Life Education Curriculum that addresses the needs created by the conflict should be taught at the educational levels 1, 2 and 3, bearing in mind the different impacts of the conflict on girls and boys. The existing curriculum for the training of nurses should be reviewed and updated to address the psychosocial needs of the traumatised population.
- ◆ Training schools for nurses and midwives should be established in all regional headquarters of the country to provide easy access to professional skills, to rural women and girls in health and other health-related disciplines.
- ◆ Steps should be taken to either reduce the cost or provide free medical services for poor men.

Gender Equality in Education, Training and Employment

- ◆ More effort should be directed toward reducing the high illiteracy rate among the population, especially among women. Substantial resource allocation should be made for the provision of functional literacy programmes throughout the country. Adult learning and teaching methods/ techniques should be included in the teacher-training curriculum.
- ◆ The unit for the disabled at the Ministry of Education should be run by trained and qualified staff. The unit should promote the immediate enactment of legislation for the disabled. Special education for the disabled should be included in the national curriculum.
- ◆ Special schools should be established for the blind, deaf and mentally challenged in the provincial headquarters to ensure accessibility. The Ministry of Education should ensure the provision of Braille and other educational aids for the blind. Government should provide mobility and hearing aids for the physically disabled and hearing impaired.
- ◆ The Ministry of Education should put in place measures to ensure that grant-in-aid/ scholarships are awarded to female students enrolled in the faculties of pure and applied sciences and engineering.
- ◆ Sharing of available limited resources between the formal and non-formal educational programmes should be encouraged.
- ◆ Programmes should be launched at community level throughout the country to address the special educational and training needs of school dropouts.
- ◆ Revision of teachers' conditions of service should be undertaken to encourage them to stay.
- ◆ More resource support should be given to training institutions to enhance middle level human resource development.
- ◆ Collaboration should be established between the Ministries of Labour and Education, in the area of human resource planning and development.
- ◆ A policy should be formulated on the informal sector.

The Role of Young Women and Men in Post-conflict Reconstruction

Given that the existing situation in Sierra Leone does not provide adequate foundation for the optimum development of young women and men socially, economically, politically and culturally, resulting in the marginalisation and frustration of all youths, leading them to all forms of negative living and actions... we, the women, men and

young people in partnership for post-conflict reconstruction, hereby resolve that our vision for young men and young women is as follows:

- ◆ that young women and young men should have adequate and free access to education and training opportunities at all levels taking into account/cognisance of the culture of peace, democracy and positive change;
- ◆ that affordable health care and shelter should be accessible to all;
- ◆ that government should launch a vigorous campaign nationwide to eradicate drug abuse;
- ◆ that a stable, secure and safe environment should be ensured to enable young women and young men actualise their potentials;
- ◆ that young women and young men should be encouraged and empowered to participate in decision-making at every level;
- ◆ that line ministries and NGOs should coordinate efforts with the view of providing job-oriented training for young women and young men;
- ◆ that all human rights are youth rights;
- ◆ that a National Service Scheme should be introduced to enable young people to serve in other regions of the country, away from their homes. This should act as their voluntary service;
- ◆ that government should revisit the draft national youth policy with a view to ensure its enactment into law, adequate dissemination and implementation;
- ◆ that a Ministry of Youth should be created, a young woman be appointed as Minister, and professionals in youth work are employed.

Our goal is to establish a National Youth Policy and National Youth Council to ensure representation by all youths, especially the most marginalised, to serve as a mouthpiece for young people.

Mechanisms

The government needs to strengthen the capacity of the national gender machinery, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, to provide policy and strategic direction in all gender-related matters. In this regard, there is need to ensure that adequate human, technical and fiscal resources are put in place for sustained policy formulation and advice. The national gender machinery also needs to provide inputs to ensure equity in response to the needs of all women, men, youth and children in Sierra Leone.

The Government should establish an independent National Gender Commission, which should report directly to the Office of the President, and have the mandate to ensure that the Government implements a number of international agreements to which it is a signatory. The Commission should seek to promote gender equality, and protect and promote the rights of women and children. It should monitor all national programmes relating to gender equality undertaken by governmental and non-governmental organisations, both local and international, to ensure that gender commitments are met, including the recommendations of this national consultation. The Commission would also act as a watchdog to advocate and promote critical, new and emerging gender issues which require national attention, and challenge national efforts to achieve higher levels of attaining gender equity.

Government should consider civil society as a fifth estate.

National Plan of Action

Working Group 1

Gender Equality in Political and Public Decision-making

What is the problem? (critical issues)

- ◆ The lack of adequate number of women in Parliament.
- ◆ Lack of gender equality in the political agenda.
- ◆ The lack of adequate education/sensitisation on democratic principles or values that can promote women's participation in political and public decision-making.

What are the priority objectives?

- ◆ To increase the number of women in Parliament.
- ◆ To ensure that gender equality is integrated into the political agenda.
- ◆ To carry out adequate public sensitisation activities to promote/enhance women and men's equal participation.

What is being done? Who is doing it?

- ◆ The creation of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, which adopted national policies on gender. The Commonwealth Secretariat's gender policies signed by the Sierra Leone government to ensure 30 per cent women representation by 2005.
- ◆ NCDHR and NEC input from the consultation to go to national conference on electoral reform. GRADOC involved in research and training.
- ◆ The 50/50 Group sponsored by British Council and NDI involved in training potential women candidates. Education and awareness raising by NEWMAP with support from UNFPA. Formation of women's pressure groups: FAWE, Sisters Unite, Women's Forum, etc.

What are the gaps/emerging needs?

- ◆ Poor co-ordination of women's groups. Need to involve men in their sensitisation, advocacy and lobbying drive. Break in sensitisation /educational activities due to the rebel war.
- ◆ Disenfranchisement of women eligible to vote at local government level (tax exclusion of women); Government should remove all barriers; Training facilities for resource persons.

Which other actors/stakeholders should be involved?

- ◆ Government, all political parties and trade unions.
- ◆ NEC; religious groups; traditional rulers; youth groups; educational institutions at all levels; the armed forces.

Existing/required resources

- ◆ Adequate human resources available.
- ◆ Institutional support; financial support required from Government, INGOs, NGOs. Other resources: office space; training centres particularly at district level, logistical support.

Working Group 2

Promoting Gender Equality through Legal Reform

What is the problem? (critical issues)

- ◆ The existence of laws that are discriminatory against women, and the non-functioning of the Law Reform Commission (LRC).
- ◆ Gender discriminatory traditional beliefs and practices.
- ◆ High rate of illiteracy and lack of information about the law in general, and gender and law issues in particular.

What are the priority objectives?

- ◆ To review and reform the laws that are weighted against women, such as laws relating to inheritance, violence against women, etc.
- ◆ To reactivate the LRC, in order to facilitate the law reform process.
- ◆ To carry out research to identify traditional beliefs and practices that are gender discriminatory.
- ◆ To disseminate the research findings nationally.
- ◆ To enact laws that abolish discriminatory traditional practices.
- ◆ To increase access to basic and adult education.
- ◆ To extend media coverage to all areas using local languages.
- ◆ To educate women about their rights.

What is being done? Who is doing it?

Public sensitisation through the media by the following agencies:

- ◆ National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights (NCDHR)
- ◆ CGG; the police; SLBA; UNAMSIL
- ◆ Documentation of customary laws by government.
- ◆ Government ban on some traditional practices, e.g., use of untrained traditional birth attendants.
- ◆ A number of agencies (listed below) are involved in the following programmes:

adult literacy classes; non-formal education programmes for girls; vocational/technical centre for women.

- ◆ Agencies involved: Ministry of Education; FAWE; PADECO; SLADEA; Plan International; UNICEF

What are the gaps/emerging needs?

- ◆ Non-functioning LRC.
- ◆ Inadequate civil education on gender and law issues.
- ◆ Unwritten customary laws that vary from region to region.
- ◆ Lack of research on women's opinions/knowledge/understanding of the existing laws.
- ◆ Absence of pressure groups for advocacy and lobbying.
- ◆ Dissension between women *vis-à-vis* various traditional practices.
- ◆ Lack of access to information.
- ◆ Need for more public debates on traditional beliefs and practices.
- ◆ Perceived lower status of women by men/male counterparts.
- ◆ Lack of media coverage and access to the media.
- ◆ Low percentage of women in political and public decision-making.
- ◆ Lack of monitoring mechanisms.

Which other actors stakeholders should be involved?

- ◆ The police; SLBA; traditional and religious leaders; women's and other civil organisations; relevant government ministries.
- ◆ Traditional leaders; government; religious leaders; women's organisations; youth organisations; community-based organisations.
- ◆ Line ministries.

Existing/required resources

Existing Resources:

- ◆ Human resources based in the organisations/agencies mentioned.
- ◆ Court officials.

- ◆ Chiefs.
- ◆ Local government and customary local officers.
- ◆ SLBA.
- ◆ FAWE.
- ◆ Regional commissioner.
- ◆ Radio stations.
- ◆ NGOs.

Required Resources:

- ◆ Government funding for office staff and modern equipment.
- ◆ UNDP and UNIFEM assistance.
- ◆ Education and training materials.
- ◆ Government funding for public sensitisation and education.
- ◆ Funds to extend the outreach of radio stations.
- ◆ Improved monitoring.
- ◆ Capacity building and empowerment.

Working Group 3

Violence against Women and Children

What is the problem? (critical issues)

- ◆ Poverty makes women and girls more vulnerable to sexual and other forms of abuse.
- ◆ Violence against women and children is endemic and has been aggravated by the war.
- ◆ Lack of effective laws and law enforcement on violence against women.

What are the priority objectives?

- ◆ To reduce poverty among women and girls.
- ◆ To increase their access to employment as a means to financial independence, including non-traditional and emerging forms of employment.
- ◆ To send a clear message that there should be zero tolerance for violence against women and children in all its forms.
- ◆ To undertake public sensitisation on the issue (through the media, posters/flyers, targeting specific groups—family units, women, children, young people, men, disabled).
- ◆ To provide support services for victims of domestic and other forms of violence (e.g., shelters, family support units, a referral service, psychosocial and parental counselling).
- ◆ To enact laws to protect women and children from violence.
- ◆ To provide gender-awareness training to enforcement officers (particularly the police, army, prison and social welfare officers) to enact the law in all cases of violence against women.

What is being done?

- ◆ Development projects are being put in place.

Who is doing it?

- ◆ Government, through agencies such as SAPA.
- ◆ International agencies.

- ◆ Local and international NGOs.

International agencies and NGOs

- ◆ Support to formal and non-formal education.
- ◆ Child protection unit.
- ◆ Work in collaboration with MSWGCA.
- ◆ UNHCR work with refugee victims of violence, through IRC, MSF, NRC, FAWE, Women's Forum and other NGOs.
- ◆ UNICEF—education and health programmes for child victims of violence.

A number of agencies (listed below) are involved in Gender-sensitisation workshops.

Agencies involved:

- ◆ The police; MSWGCA; lawyers; local and international NGOs.

What are the gaps/emerging needs?

- ◆ Gap between women's existing skills and Sierra Leone's reconstruction needs.
- ◆ Need to expand and diversify skills training for women to include non-traditional skills, e.g., computing, computer repairs, engineering, bricklaying.
- ◆ Need for more affordable skills-training programmes.
- ◆ Need for employment-generating activities and improved wages for women.
- ◆ Need to provide adequate housing for single parents.
- ◆ Need for a one-stop operation led by the police, which also includes linkages with other services, e.g., legal, health, counselling, education, shelters, social welfare.
- ◆ Need to introduce awareness-raising programmes in the formal and non-formal educational systems, in order to bring about attitudinal and behavioural change.
- ◆ Need to sensitise parents, guardians, opinion leaders and especially young boys.
- ◆ Existing laws ineffective—new legislation is needed.
- ◆ Obstruction of existing laws.
- ◆ Need to investigate status of reformation centres, approved schools and the remand home (Banana Island).

- ◆ Ineffective drug control unit.
- ◆ Inadequate support by international NGOs to local NGOs and government programmes.
- ◆ Need for gender-awareness training programmes for law enforcement officers.
- ◆ Need for public awareness programmes on violence against women and children.
- ◆ Need for gender-awareness training programmes for community leaders/trainers.
- ◆ Women's organisations and sympathisers need to organise sit-ins at the law courts to demand speedy trials and just sentences.

Which other actors/stakeholders should be involved?

- ◆ The community (women, young people and elders); local authorities; local and international NGOs.
- ◆ Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs; Attorney-General's office; Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports; Ministry of Information; judges, magistrates, lawyers; the police; religious bodies; women's organisations; international agencies; local and international NGOs.
- ◆ Attorney-general's office; University of Sierra Leone; local communities; international agencies; local and international NGOs.

Required resources

- ◆ Relevant technical training programmes; technology; roads; equipment; communications.
- ◆ Enhanced evidence and data collection; local and international training programmes and refresher courses; shelters for SGBV victims; witness protection programmes.

Working Group 4

Resettlement of Displaced Civilians and Rehabilitation/Resettlement of Ex-combatants

<p>What is the problem? (critical issues)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Security: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of all combatants.◆ Repatriation of all Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees.◆ Social re-integration; poverty alleviation; building of permanent structures; programmes for disabled; health, skills training, etc.
<p>What are the priority objectives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Deployment of forces—UNAMSIL peacekeepers/observers.◆ Transportation and adequate resettlement packages.◆ To support all social, economic reintegration programmes; build a better RRR for Sierra Leone.
<p>What is being done? Who is doing it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Mechanisms set up by government—DDR and other stakeholders (UNAMSIL).◆ Government has co-ordinated RRR programme in partnership with NGOs, and has formulated and initiated resettlement programmes.◆ Resettlement; agricultural activities; micro-credit schemes; health/medical and sanitation; gender sensitisation; education; training; voluntary resettlement; community development programmes; CBO activities; recreation; government, NCDDR, SAPA, NCRRR, NGOs, EU, etc.
<p>What are the gaps/emerging needs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Inadequate DDR centres; food supplies insufficient.◆ Need for more reconstruction efforts.◆ Untimely delivery of services; inflation; high illiteracy; poor supervision and monitoring; over-centralisation; inadequate services to unaccompanied children and child ex-combatants; information dissemination.

Which other actors stakeholders should be involved?

- ◆ Donor agencies; traditional rulers; community/religious/opinion leaders.
- ◆ OCHA; EU; NGOs (local and international); community participation.
- ◆ FAWE; ADRA; UNICEF; Action Aid; Christian Brothers; etc.

Existing/required resources

- ◆ Donor support; human and material; financial resources.
- ◆ UNCHR; IAM; and technical/media teams.
- ◆ Child protection agencies; public sector; education; shelter support programmes; NGOs (local and international)

Working Group 5

Poverty, Economic Recovery & Empowerment

What is the problem? (critical issues)

Health

- ◆ Inadequate health facilities—affordability, accessibility, availability.
- ◆ High level of illiteracy, weak/poor physical infrastructure, need to review national health policy.
- ◆ Inadequate access to safe drinking water. Need to review the implementation of health policy.

Education

- ◆ Low school attendance and high illiteracy level.
- ◆ Lack of productive opportunities.

What are the priority objectives?

- ◆ To provide basic health services to meet the needs of the people, i.e., women, men, boys and girls, and vulnerable groups.
- ◆ To include health education in the curriculum of all sectors of education. Provision of well-equipped peripheral health units.
- ◆ Sensitisation/conscientisation of health issues.
- ◆ Create access and educate all citizens on the advantages of safe drinking water. Restructure health programmes/policies.
- ◆ To increase enrolment of school-age children to 95% by 2011.
- ◆ To provide sustainable income-generating activities for self-reliance.
- ◆ To provide quality skills training for youths.
- ◆ Improvement of existing infrastructure and utilities: electricity, water supply, roads, banking system, communications (telephone, media).

Private sector

- ◆ Provide employment.
- ◆ Provision of goods and services, especially imported ones.

CBOs

- ◆ Implementation of micro-credit.
- ◆ Implementing partners in development projects.

What needs to be done?

- ◆ Recognise training needs and intervene when necessary.
- ◆ The Ministry of Health and employing authorities should introduce cost recovery programmes—NGOs, international agencies.
- ◆ Introduce parenting policies through IEC.
- ◆ CBOs to provide trained manpower.
- ◆ Provision of basic education for all—more schools, teacher training, teacher/learning materials, science equipment.
- ◆ Establish and strengthen more quality technical/vocational institutions for all by the government.
- ◆ Conscientisation/sensitisation to break down cultural barriers affecting female school attendance.
- ◆ Popularisation of science and technology among female students.
- ◆ Automatic grant-in-aid to all female students that enrol for science and engineering.
- ◆ Establishment and strengthening of learning centres for the disabled.
- ◆ Improved remuneration for teachers and lecturers.
- ◆ Provision and support to non-formal learning centres.
- ◆ Rehabilitation, reconstruction and construction of infrastructure e.g. trunk & feeder roads.
- ◆ Policies and new investment code.
- ◆ Provision of micro-financing.

NGOs

- ◆ Provision of planning materials and tools.
- ◆ Provision of employment facilities.
- ◆ Training programmes.

Private sector

- ◆ Provide employment.
- ◆ Provision of goods and services, especially imported ones.

CBOs

- ◆ Implementation of micro-credit.
- ◆ Implementation partners in development projects.

What are the gaps/emerging needs?

- ◆ The government should recognise problems and needs—inadequate health facilities, free medical facilities for pregnant women and under 5s; weak linkages between policy makers and implementers, ineffective maintaining mechanisms.
- ◆ Inadequate personnel, school health programmes; construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure; massive corruption; over centralisation; poor remuneration; poorly equipped diagnostic lab facilities and services; high cost of specialised drugs.
- ◆ Establishment of mobile clinics.
- ◆ Construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure.
- ◆ Payment of fees for pupils in classes 1 – 3.
- ◆ Full payment of NPSE fees
- ◆ School bus programme.
- ◆ Grant-in-aid, study leave with pay in tertiary institutions.
- ◆ Provision of school furniture.
- ◆ Provision of teaching, learning materials, science equipment, school feeding programmes.

- ◆ Teacher training scholarships.
- ◆ Linkages.
- ◆ Inadequate investment/resources.
- ◆ Inadequate incentives for investment.
- ◆ Limited infrastructure facilities.
- ◆ Absence of the right mix of technology.
- ◆ Lack of national commitment to private sector development.
- ◆ Unpatriotic attitude.

Which other actors/stakeholders should be involved?

- ◆ Local traditional institutions, religious institutions, youths.
- ◆ Parents and guardians.
- ◆ Local authorities.
- ◆ Private sector.
- ◆ International agencies.

Existing/required resources

- ◆ Financial resources required to procure, equip and provide services and medical equipment and drugs.
- ◆ Provide for additional classrooms, labs, well-trained staff and attractive remuneration.
- ◆ Means to develop appropriate technology in terms of material, human and financial resources.
- ◆ Improved energy resources.
- ◆ Research and training institutions.

Working Group 6A

Health

What is the problem? (critical issues)

Beliefs (traditional):

- ◆ Sex is a taboo.
- ◆ Talking about sex is immoral.
- ◆ Sex with a virgin cures AIDS.
- ◆ AIDS is incurable.

Knowledge:

- ◆ AIDS is not a reality.

Perceptions:

- ◆ HIV-infected persons feel that cost of treatment is prohibitive.
- ◆ Coping mechanisms are difficult.
- ◆ People of high socio-economic status feel they are above AIDS.

What are the priority objectives?

- ◆ To create awareness of the existence and implications of HIV/AIDS for all Sierra Leoneans.
- ◆ To change negative attitudes and beliefs about sex and AIDS.

What is being done? Who is doing it?

- ◆ Sierra Leoneans are now being sensitised by radio messages about AIDS by the President.
- ◆ Mass sensitisation campaigns and surveillance by government in collaboration with local NGOs (Red Cross, PPASL, FAWE); international agencies (WHO, MSF – Netherlands, IRC, IMC, etc.)
- ◆ Formulation by cabinet of a policy document on HIV/AIDS.
- ◆ Jingles, posters, sign posts and drama on AIDS.

What are the gaps/emerging needs?

- ◆ Most of the interventions do not address the needs of grassroots people.
- ◆ Lack of national policy on HIV/AIDS.
- ◆ Inadequate coordination of AIDS programmes and projects.
- ◆ Folk songs by local artists with high-profile women.
- ◆ Allocate more resources to MOH; empower MOH and line ministries.

Which other actors/stakeholders should be involved?

- ◆ Traditional rulers, religious leaders, traditional leaders (TBA, etc), social development workers, agricultural extension workers, youth, women's groups, community-based organisations, local government functionaries.
- ◆ NEWMAP with Jimmy B and other local artists.

Existing/required resources

- ◆ Trained and qualified manpower is needed.
- ◆ Standardised materials on HIV/AIDS and STIs.
- ◆ Logistics, e.g., transport and stationery.
- ◆ Reproduction of AIDS curriculum materials for schools and youth groups, including values clarification approach to attitudinal changes.

Working Group 6B

Health

What is the problem? (critical issues)

- ◆ No specific training curriculum for service providers on HIV/AIDS.
- ◆ Inadequate incentives/resources in the system.
- ◆ No policy document on HIV/AIDS in Sierra Leone.

What are the priority objectives?

- ◆ The same curriculum should be taught by all interested partners.
- ◆ Adequate incentives/resources in the system will minimise the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- ◆ Achievement of policy document will bring about one message to be carried by all interested agencies (government, as well as NGOs).

What is being done? Who is doing it?

- ◆ Some training for service providers is being done.
- ◆ Very little collaboration/partnership is carried out. MOH and other NGOs.
- ◆ The formation of the council to formulate the policy is in progress by government, other interested INGOs, e.g., WHO, UNDP, UNFPA.

What are the gaps/emerging needs?

- ◆ Varied information in training is carried out.
- ◆ Inadequate training materials for all sectors of the community.
- ◆ Lack of motivation to carry out various services for HIV/AIDS, such as lab clinics, nursing, community-based activities, etc.
- ◆ No standardised policy, therefore varied messages are being sent.

Which other actors/stakeholders should be involved?

- ◆ Health training institutions e.g. MCH, AIDS, TBAs, reproductive health divisions, midwifery schools, PPASL, UNFPA, SLRC.
- ◆ All international NGOs and local NGOs interested in health and SL government (Ministry of Health).
- ◆ Government (line ministries), UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNAIDS, PPASL, Marie Stopes, MERLIN, SLRC and others.

Existing/required resources

- ◆ Equipment for lab, e.g., reagents, gloves, antiseptic lotion, clinical equipment/instruments.

- ◆ Research on HIV/AIDS in Sierra Leone.
- ◆ Funding.
- ◆ Infrastructural: hospitals, clinics, health post units, laboratories.
- ◆ Personnel: trained nurses, TGAs, lab technicians, counsellors, teachers, peer counsellors, social workers, health educators.

Working Group 6C

Health

What is the problem? (critical issues)

- ◆ The decline of the health system due to the war in Sierra Leone.
- ◆ Treatment of HIV/AIDS.

What are the priority objectives?

- ◆ To revitalise the health system by building the capacity of: health institutions; counselling centres; service providers in post-war Sierra Leone.

What is being done? Who is doing it?

- ◆ Needs assessment surveys to assess the extent of damage on infrastructure and available medical facilities in accessible areas (by the World Bank through the MOH & S).
- ◆ Renovation of the facilities and provision of drugs by NGOs through MOH & S.

What are the gaps/emerging areas?

- ◆ No proper co-ordination among NGOs intervening in health.
- ◆ No counselling centre for HIV/AIDS victims.
- ◆ Limited number of trained service-providers for HIV/AIDS.
- ◆ HIV/AIDS drugs are expensive and not available.

Which other actors stakeholders should be involved?

- ◆ Peer groups.
- ◆ Traditional healers.
- ◆ Religious bodies.
- ◆ Family members.
- ◆ Musicians.

Existing/required resources

- ◆ World Bank (finance).
- ◆ WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA for technical advice.
- ◆ NISF (drugs and renovation).

Required resources

- ◆ CBOs need funding, training, equipment, etc.
- ◆ Government needs funding and should provide incentive for personnel.

Working Group 7

Gender Equity in Education

What is the problem? (critical issues)

- ◆ High female illiteracy rate.
- ◆ Low enrolment rate.
- ◆ High dropout rates.

What are the priority objectives?

- ◆ To eradicate the high illiteracy rate.
- ◆ To increase enrolment at primary level to a minimum of 85%.
- ◆ To reduce the dropout rate at basic education level to 5%.

What is being done? Who is doing it?

- ◆ Accelerated literacy programmes.
- ◆ Mass literacy campaigns.
- ◆ Establishment of CECs.
- ◆ Basic Education programmes.
- ◆ Ministry of EYS, SLADEA, PEASL, INSTADEX, UNICEF
- ◆ Non-formal education.
- ◆ Complementary rapid education for primary schools (CREPS).
- ◆ Rapid response education programmes (RREs).
- ◆ Reducing drop-out rate.
- ◆ Free primary education.
- ◆ Reduction in cost of education through supply of learning materials.
- ◆ Increased supply of logistical support.
- ◆ Sensitisation of parents/guardians.
- ◆ School feeding programmes.

What are the gaps/emerging needs?

- ◆ Ill-equipped literacy centres.
- ◆ Untrained literacy facilitators.
- ◆ Poor incentives for most facilitators.
- ◆ Shortage of literacy materials.
- ◆ Irregular attendance of female learners due to women's multiple roles.
- ◆ Negative attitudes of husbands to female learners.
- ◆ Insufficient financial support to government-sponsored literacy centres.
- ◆ Participation of women in politics.
- ◆ Increase in public roles of women.
- ◆ Contribution of education to peace and peace-building.

Which other actors/stakeholders should be involved?

- ◆ Government NGOs/INGOs.
- ◆ Community-based organisations.
- ◆ Individuals.
- ◆ Beneficiaries.

Existing/required resources

Human resources, e.g.:

- ◆ Facilitators.
- ◆ Supervisors.
- ◆ Learners/Beneficiaries.

Required

- ◆ Human: increase the number of facilitators, supervisors and learners.
Physical: transportations for facilitators and/or supervisors.
- ◆ Establishment of additional centres.
- ◆ Provision of logistics/ equipment.
- ◆ Provision of teaching and learning materials.
- ◆ Provision of post-literacy materials.
- ◆ Attractive allowances for teachers.

Working Group 8

The Role of Young Women and Young Men in Post-conflict Reconstruction

What is the problem? (critical issues)

- ◆ There is no national youth policy that is advocating for youth development.
- ◆ Young men and women are always being marginalised in national decision-making.
- ◆ There is a lack of job opportunities for youths.
- ◆ Young women and men are accused and harassed for atrocities committed during the rebel war.
- ◆ Youth are abused and misused by politicians who provide them with drugs and other dangerous substances to achieve their selfish goals.
- ◆ Youth are branded with negative names, e.g., service men, drug men, etc.
- ◆ Young women are also branded with negative names: prostitute, raray girl, kolonko, koro, etc.

What are the priority objectives?

- ◆ To have a national youth policy put in place.
- ◆ Youth should have adequate and free access to education and training opportunities at all levels taking into account/cognisance the culture of peace, democracy and positive change.
- ◆ That affordable health care and shelter should be accessible to all.
- ◆ That a stable, secure and safe environment be ensured to enable young women and young men actualise their potentials.
- ◆ That youth be encouraged and empowered to participate in decision-making at every level.
- ◆ That line ministries and NGOs co-ordinate with the view of providing job oriented training for young women and young men.
- ◆ That all human rights are youth rights.
- ◆ That government revisits the draft national youth policy with a view to ensure its enactment into law, adequate dissemination and implementation.

What is being done? Who is doing it?

- ◆ Development projects are being put in place.

Part 1

Rebuilding Democracy, Peace and Security



Paramount chiefs at May 2001 consultation

Joe Pemagbi

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(NCDHR)*

Introduction

Since 1991, Sierra Leone has been in the firm grip of an armed civil conflict characterised by savagery and brutality of the most primitive and inhuman kind. In spite of a huge concentration of effort on the peace process in Sierra Leone by the international community, which complements the domestic effort of the government and civil society, resolution of the conflict has been notoriously elusive. As the conflict enters a second decade, with a relieving lull in hostilities and hope for peace and resolution of the crisis, it is imperative to examine how the political structures, practices and values that held us together collapsed and generated the conflict, and how these can be reconstructed to provide a foundation for rebuilding sustainable democracy and peace in post-conflict Sierra Leone. It is equally important that this rebuilding process be undertaken within the context of partnership between men and women as the gateway to the creation of peace and democratic culture.

My contribution to this difficult task is presented here in four parts: the first part presents the democracy and peace that have been destroyed and have to be rebuilt; the second is devoted to the rebuilding process, the third examines gender relations in decision-making, and the final part is on the central role women can play in the process of rebuilding peace and democracy.

Pre-war Democracy and Peace in Sierra Leone

This section of the paper is divided into two: the first part examines democracy as practised during the colonial administration, especially how it prepared Sierra Leoneans, if at all, to practise the Westminster model of democracy, and the second part presents democratic practices in post-independence Sierra Leone before the war. Peace and stability during these two administrative periods are also discussed.

Democracy during the colonial administration

Colonial administration was far from being democratic. The policy of Indirect Rule was meant to rule the colonies without interfering much with the traditional power structure of African society, whose practises were at variance with western democratic principles.

Three basic features of colonial rule accentuated its undemocratic character:

- ◆ The police and the army used force to maintain law and order. In fact the colonial state was essentially a military administrative unit. Thus the political culture bequeathed by colonialism contained the notion that authoritarianism was an appropriate mode of rule.
- ◆ The administration undertook activities that it deemed appropriate without widespread consultations. Transparency and accountability to the people were never part of it.
- ◆ Preparation for independence was rather hasty and incomplete. The process lasted for roughly 15 years, from 1946 to 1961, not long enough to teach the people democratic ideas and practice.

Neither were the administrative structures designed to cultivate democratic culture. Members of the Protectorate Assembly, established in 1946, for example, were mainly representatives of formal administrative organs of government and not directly elected by the people. The Assembly could not initiate major policy issues but merely endorsed them.

Elections of Protectorate members into the Legislative Council were done indirectly and Chiefs mostly represented the Protectorate people. In the Colony, there were property qualifications for elections. So here too, the franchise was limited. There was some attempt at opening up the franchise in the 1957 elections, but real adult suffrage was achieved only in the 1962 elections, one year after independence.

Thus the mass of citizens were not prepared for participatory democracy during the colonial period, including the period of decolonisation. Multi-party democracy, democratic institutions, principles, ideals and practice of democracy were all alien to the majority of the citizens at the time of independence in 1961.

Post-independence Era

Like many people, I have uncritically written in some documents that Sierra Leone inherited, at independence, a democratic system of government with effectively functioning democratic institutions modelled on those of Britain, with no reference to the inadequacies of these institutions. The second post-independence general elections, held in 1967, clearly unveiled these weaknesses, including their vulnerability emanating from the lack of proper understanding of, and faith in, their function by both politicians and citizens. The army stepped in because of what it described as a 'stalemate' in the elections, rather than resorting to judicial or other constitutional processes to solve the impasse. From then on the picture of democracy in Sierra Leone has been all doom and gloom. For

the best part of the post-independence period and especially after 1967, the country has been governed by a single-party political structure interspersed with military rule.

Both in principle and practice, single-party and military rule are anathema to democracy—they are absolutely incompatible with it. The democratic rights of the citizens, particularly the right to choose their leaders in conformity with democratic standards and freedom of speech and expression, were relegated to privileges rarely enjoyed by the citizens. Local governments, especially the District Councils that provided the environment for citizen participation in governance, were abandoned in favour of an overcentralised system. Municipal and town councils have been run by management committees, not elected by the people, but appointed by the government of the day. Functional relationships among the three arms of government underpinned by checks and balances, just as the rule of law and equality before the law were generally compromised.

Thus the country was ill-prepared for sustainable democracy, and both the single-party and military regimes that have ruled the country for most of the post-colonial period aggravated an already serious situation, leading to the collapse of the weak democratic institutions inherited at independence. The crisis of democracy the country is going through has hence emanated from the woeful failure of successive post-independence governments to build on this weak foundation by strengthening democratic institutions and delivering sound citizenship education for democracy.

One of the sad consequences of the introduction of dictatorship and authoritarianism on peace and democracy after independence was the widespread use of violence in politics. Citizens whose views different from those of the regimes were coerced into compliance. Lives and property were at the mercy of political thuggery, especially at elections. It is widely believed that the seeds of the unprecedented violence and abuse of rights the country has experienced in this war were sown during this period.

Moreover, the voice of women was a mere whisper throughout this long period of political decision-making and practice. A few, just a few, enjoyed appointive and elective political positions, but women were generally on the thin fringe of the system and decision-making processes.

Peace before the war?

Generally, the country enjoyed considerable peace during the colonial administration, either because of its threatening 'sledge-hammer' administrative approach or because the natives found comfort in the indirect rule system. But the House Tax War of 1898 and the countrywide disturbances of 1955-56, among others, indicate that it was not altogether an unbroken peace.

From the 1967 general elections to 1991 when the rebel war started, there was no openly organised armed challenge to the authority of the state, apart from the brief spell of the Ndogbowusui insurrection in the Pujehun District in the aftermath of the 1982 general elections. However, the persistent violence that characterised political activities deprived many people of genuine participation in the political process. The period was also marred by sporadic student protests and labour unrest, all of which were brutally suppressed. From the point of view of many people, what prevailed then was an uneasy calm, a volcano waiting to erupt.

Rebuilding Democracy and Peace

Rebuilding democracy and peace presupposes that these two concepts once existed in Sierra Leone, but have been destroyed. While the generality of this statement can hardly be questioned, it has been argued above that democracy was both weak and rudimentary, and that what obtained was more of political stability anchored in a zero choice political climate than peace. Our task, then, is much more of building than rebuilding, which is why I have used the two words interchangeably in this paper.

But what are we building for and how do we do this construction work? Using the two words together, democracy and peace, strongly suggests a close link between the two: with democracy we can have peace; with peace we can exercise our democratic rights and responsibilities. An extended interpretation is that peace was shattered because democracy was shattered.

If this interdependence of democracy and peace in our particular context is accepted, then the rebuilding process must be firmly based on the foundation and building blocks of human rights. Democracy is a rights-based ideal. I cannot imagine any argument against the view that peace is considerably enhanced in an environment where the rights of the citizens are protected and promoted; neither do I expect an opposition to the view that democracy is better practised in an environment of peace.

And what are the objectives of this rebuilding process, we may ask?

Cultivation of common values

Sierra Leone has a population of less than 5 million, shared among at least sixteen ethnic groups, each with its own language and cultural practices. Democracy does not call for dissolution of ethnic diversities, but careful cultivation of common or shared values and identity. In Sierra Leone, where political activities and groupings are perceived in terms of ethnic patronage, this is the greatest challenge to democracy. For example, the following comment on the formation of political alliances appeared in the *Standard Times* tabloid on 14 May 2001:

‘UNPP sources said with UNPP Temne support and the GRAO Limba based combined, they would form a strong force to challenge the mainly Mende dominated SLPP.’

Building a sustainable democracy in Sierra Leone thus requires creating an environment where the state has the loyalty of this ethno-nationalism, real or imagined, now enjoyed by the ethnic groups. In this environment, citizens should feel secure and not threatened by other groups. In other words, the sense of belonging and security the citizen is offered from their ethnic group should be provided by the democratic system of the state. Equal opportunities—economic, social, political and judicial—should be enjoyed by citizens without regard to ethnic affinity. Through this, shared democratic values, aspirations and a common national identity are carved out of ethnic and cultural diversity.

The relationship between shared values and aspirations and peace is not difficult to delineate. Shared values and aspirations mean those who hold them have a common goal and stake in the process of nation-building. They serve as a bond of peace, minimising conflict or providing mechanisms for containing conflict. Who wants his/her stake destroyed in conflict?

Democratic institutions

Democracy cannot work without institutions to uphold and promote its ideals. I stated earlier that the three traditional democratic institutions compromised their values and functions during the single-party political era, and the legislature in particular was abandoned during the period of the military dictatorships. Stories of the judiciary compromising its responsibilities, and the legislature merely rubber-stamping the wishes of the executive were not uncommon.

The most important single factor in rebuilding democratic institutions is taking measures that can revive the confidence of the people in these institutions. The judiciary should not only be independent, but should be seen to be independent, commanding the respect of the people, recognising no sacred cows including the state, and expeditiously carrying out its responsibilities to the people. The judiciary should itself, as the major human rights machinery of the state, be conscious of its responsibility to intervene promptly even in the most distasteful of legal conflicts. Democracy will work when people feel safe and confident to take constitutional and other matters on democratic principles to the courts, especially those involving the government.

Democracy needs a legislature that understands the principles of democracy and is prepared to sacrifice for it. Viable opposition providing constructive checks and balances on the ruling party is an imperative in a functioning democracy.

Civil society has emerged in Sierra Leone as an institution that can play a crucial role in rebuilding democracy and peace. Its uncompromising resistance to military rule as demonstrated by its agitation for return to constitutional rule in 1996, the civil disobedience against the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) junta in 1997 and the demonstration against the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in May 2000 leads indisputable credence to this. Civil society's role in the peace process is equally impressive. However, for a more effective contribution to the restoration process, there is need to create awareness of the functions of civil society in a democracy and to be more visible outside the capital, Freetown, in addition to its strengthening and development.

Education for democracy

Democracy is learned. It is not genetically transmitted or bequeathed by parents to offspring. And like all cultural values and practices, it is acquired through processes of socialisation, formal as well as informal. It is a part of civic culture which, when acquired, enables citizens to live in harmony with others and behave as informed, responsible citizens, discharging their civic duties and obligations.

Education for democracy creates a culture in which the citizens understand and zealously protect the ideals and practices of democracy, irrespective of party and other political interests. The citizens must understand the functions of democratic institutions and the functional relationships that exist among these institutions. Perhaps more significantly, the political education programme should cultivate in the citizens confidence in the institutions as the 'shrines of democracy'. And to sustain democracy, the citizens should perceive it as their permanent preference of government over all other forms of government. In it they place their hopes and expectations for justice, freedom, affluence, deliverance from the afflictions of bad governance, opportunity for participation in governance, enjoyment of their rights and of course peace. Education for democracy should recognise these expectations and hopes. It should emphasise patriotism, de-emphasise ethnopoltics, encourage healthy political competition, tolerance and the role of the security forces, especially the military, in a democracy.

While the entire citizenry should be the target of this democratic rebuilding education, particular emphasis should be placed on the young population, especially those in educational institutions, to 'catch them young' so that they grow up into adults imbued with democratic values and the desire to protect those values. It must be emphasised that building democracy is a process and, like all cultural processes, it takes time to produce results.

Education for political parties is critical in rebuilding democracy. The administrative structures, functions and membership should reflect the democratic tenets and practices

to which the country aspires. Party officers should be elected in consonance with democratic standards against the background of gender equality, which should be enshrined in the party constitution, and with full recognition of ethnic diversity. Education for political parties centred on these factors will enable them to operate according to democratic principles, which they can then apply when they are in power.

There is yet another special group for education for building democracy: chiefs and cultural leaders. The indirect rule system of British colonialism and the preservation of chieftaincy institutions in various forms with their authoritarian administrative structures present a tremendous obstacle to true democracy. This, coupled with the practice of the aged male taking decisions on behalf of the rest of the community, denies the citizens the right to participate in decision-making that affects them.

Moreover, chiefs are not directly voted for by the people, and only men vote at chieftaincy elections. The problem is that the voting right is tied to payment of local tax, and women are excluded because they do not pay local tax (the exception is women councillors). It also means that young citizens at school, 18 years of age and above, constitutionally qualified to vote at general elections, have no voting right for chieftaincy elections.

The rebuilding process of democracy must very carefully consider this anomaly. There is need for reform so that the people learn and practise democracy at their local level.

Gender Equality in Political and Public Decision-making

This part of the paper discusses the current situation of gender equality in political and public decision-making as the basis of recommendations for promoting and sustaining gender equality in the post-conflict reconstruction process.

The current situation

We have seen that the authoritarian nature of traditional African administrative structure excludes women and young people from the mainstream of decision-making. The chiefs and the 'grey hairs' have the 'authority' to take decisions on behalf of women and the community at large. We have also seen that the franchise at the chieftain level favours men, limiting the participation of women in decision-making, including the right to choose their leaders. To understand rights, exercise rights and promote rights, rights should be exercised by those entitled to them, not by others on their behalf.

Outside of this rural sphere of life, the situation is minimally different. Here is how *For Di People* newspaper of Thursday, 17 May 2001 satirised the paucity of women in parliament:

'There are Ten men for every One woman in Parliament ... Yes, that's a FACT! There are only seven ladies in Parliament while there are 73 male MPs!'

The executive arm of government does not present any better picture at all, for in 2001 there were only three women ministers in government, two of them of cabinet rank.

In the public decision-making structures, the situation is even more dismal. For example, no woman is a managing director or chair of a board of directors in the many parastatals in the country.

There are many reasons for this small presence of women in these structures:

- ◆ The leadership culture of the country does not favour women to occupy decision-making positions. The Northern Province in particular excludes women from occupying the position of Paramount Chief. In fact, it is only the Proportional Representation (PR) system that seems to have created the opportunity for women from the north to serve as members of parliament.
- ◆ The political violence referred to has served to exclude women from the challenges of contesting elections, especially during the era of the single party system.
- ◆ The apparently low self-esteem of women that makes politics a 'man's game', voluntarily excludes them from the mainstream of political decision-making structures.
- ◆ The low number of educated women, arising from prioritising education for males, limits women's chances to occupy decision-making positions.
- ◆ Subtle discrimination in the workplace that hampers the upward mobility of women to decision-making positions, and the absence of gender policy in political and public decision-making structures.

These obstacles were among factors identified by a study conducted by this writer and three women academics and professionals, for the Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (SLANGO) in 1997, that militate against women holding major decision-making positions in the country.

This situation obtains not because of the absence of legal provisions for equal opportunities. In fact the Constitution of Sierra Leone (1991) provides for equal opportunities for men and women. In addition, Sierra Leone is a signatory to international human rights instruments that guarantee equal rights, specifically the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women that guarantees:

Political rights, in particular the right to participate in elections—to vote and to stand for election—on the basis of universal and equal suffrage, to take part in the Government as well as in the conduct of public affairs at any level and to have equal access to public service.

Unfortunately, these international human rights norms that entitle every person irrespective of sex, to vote, hold office, perform public functions and engage in decision-making at all levels, are yet to be achieved in Sierra Leone.

The Centrality of Women in Rebuilding Peace and Democracy

This part of the paper proposes that women have a central role to play in rebuilding peace and democracy, given their experience of the conflict.

But first, what does the conflict mean to women?

- ◆ sexual violence of the most horrific kind, sometimes inflicted on them in front of their children, male siblings, and husbands;
- ◆ rape and gang rape;
- ◆ torture;
- ◆ loss of friends and family members;
- ◆ insecurity and vulnerability;
- ◆ displacement and homelessness;
- ◆ extreme poverty and dependence;
- ◆ loneliness;
- ◆ the burden of single parenthood and other responsibilities;
- ◆ reconstruction;
- ◆ distasteful activities including begging and prostitution for survival;
- ◆ indignity and humiliation.

These profound and indelible experiences of women and their perceived non-violent nature in our culture demands that they be given, or they seize, a central role in rebuilding peace. This is an even more compelling proposal in the light of the fact that women constitute just over half of the country's population. Their experiences and perceptions of the war and democracy are very different from those of men. They have

different social values gathered from their 'invisible role' in society. As 'outsiders' contributing from the 'fringe and beneath' of society, their contribution to the reconstruction process in post-conflict Sierra Leone will be refreshingly invaluable.

Here are some strategies that can promote this proposal:

Understanding the causes of the conflict

Since women have different social values, experiences and perceptions of democracy and the conflict, it is absolutely essential that these differences are thoroughly identified, understood and appreciated by men and women so that the reconstruction exercise is not carried out to the disadvantage of any one group. Nothing that militates against democracy and peace at all levels of society should be glossed over in this identification process: limited suffrage for women, violence (both domestic and public), obnoxious cultural and legal provisions and practices that affect women, discrimination in the workplace, etc., should all be carefully considered.

Democratic structures and processes

These, especially the electoral system and political parties, have fundamental roles to play in ensuring effective partnership in rebuilding democracy and peace. Sierra Leone has tested two electoral systems, constituency-based elections that have majoritarianism as the basis of victory at elections—otherwise known as the winner-takes-all or first-past-the-post—and a system of proportional representation (PR) that favours multi-group representation in political decision-making. Whichever of the two systems that is selected for elections in post-conflict Sierra Leone should be the one that has greater room for partnership between men and women.

The PR system presents itself as more suitable for this purpose, since lists for party candidates can be selected on the basis of 'all even numbers for women, all odd numbers for men.' If the first-past-the-post system is selected, then affirmative action that allocates an agreed number of seats to women is imperative. This is particularly significant for those parts of the country whose culture and tradition seem to exclude women from important decision-making structures.

Going beyond gender consideration for elective positions, is the suggestion to consider very seriously affirmative action in the appointment of heads/chairs and members of parastatals and commissions.

Decentralisation

Local government structures with increased authority and power should be designed to operate on the basis of partnership. In particular, the proposed structures should be

reformed to accommodate the visible and decisive presence of women, either through affirmative action as suggested earlier, or a PR system that makes participation of women a certainty. This will give women their entitlement to participating in the democratic decision-making machinery at the local as well as regional levels.

Resolve of women

No recommendation for forging partnership for democracy and peace rebuilding can be meaningfully achieved without the resolve of the women themselves to effectively occupy their space in the process. They need to take off the cloak of low self-esteem, image or perception and muster confidence to outgrow their erroneous second-rate citizen status. This will take time, the support of women organisations and a lot of education of all categories of the citizenry.

Popularising the rights of women

It has been stated that both the destruction of democracy and peace were rights-based abuses. This is particularly true of the war, both in terms of cause and character. Therefore the rebuilding process should consider popularising the rights of women as enshrined in the constitution and international rights instruments. My view is that this will take time. But educating the young at school, designing an appropriate gender-based curriculum, instructional materials and teaching methodology, will help considerably. And so will a rights-based approach to development, aid and social reintegration.

Capacity-building

It is one thing to legislate gender equality, even distribute appointive positions with a gender focus, but quite another to yield the desired result. Women in particular should be trained in 'performance skills' such as communication skills, public relations and confidence building. Men should also be 'taught' to understand and appreciate that their role and that of women in national reconstruction are complementary.

Families and communities

Families and communities are critical in building democracy and peace because they are the units that shape socialisation processes and attitudes. It is in the families and communities that recognition and practice of gender equality can start, complexes can be defeated, stereotypes about educated women and women in politics can be dismissed through education, and changes in voter attitude coloured by prejudices against women can be tackled. They are the nuclei of culture of rights and peaceful coexistence. In the centre of it all should be women, in complementarity with the men, not behind them.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that democracy has never been firmly established in Sierra Leone, and that peace before the outbreak of the war was a smouldering tinder box waiting to erupt into flames. It has argued further that women, in spite of their tremendous contribution to development, and the fact they constitute over half of the population, have been on the periphery of political and public decision-making, despite the fact that they have sacrificed for democracy and peace far beyond their level of participation in decision-making. For example, the first real civil society organisation to agitate for the end of the war was the Women's Movement for Peace. An Eastern Province-based women's group has the credit of being one of the first groups to attempt a meeting with the RUF, although the result was a humiliation that they can hardly forget. Women were also in the forefront of the agitation for return to constitutional rule in 1996.

In view of this impressive record, a genuine partnership between men and women in the struggle to build democracy and peace is bound to be a highly productive strategy. This partnership must have a sense of equality and of the indispensability of each person's contribution. It has no place for the traditional notion of the weaker sex associated with women, but certainly a huge place for brains, skills, determination and vision—all of which women possess no less.

Gender Equality in Political and Public Decision-making 1.2

Elizabeth Lavallie

Member of Parliament and Acting Speaker of Parliament

I shall address this topic from three angles:

- ◆ Women's role, as I see it
- ◆ What can women do to be involved?
- ◆ What can the government do towards achieving gender equality?

Introduction

Sierra Leone has a history of political misrule under various preceding governments. Social injustice was the order of the day, leading to deteriorating social and economic conditions. Mismanagement of scarce resources was predominant. Unemployment was at its highest. The youths being the greater percentage of unemployed became easy prey for corrupt politicians who recruited them and gave them drugs to act as thugs in political campaigns.

Key among the consequences of these social, economic and political injustices were the advent of the Ndogbowosui conflict in southern Sierra Leone in the 1980s and the rebel war in 1991. Sierra Leone has since then moved from a one-party dictatorship, through two military governments, to a democratically elected government in 1996. Women played a leading role in the democratic process, acting as advocates for change through sensitisation campaigns, rallies, protest marches and pressure groups. Particular mention should be made of the contribution of women to the success of the Bintumani 1 and 2 conferences. All sectors of the population suffered severe psychological, physical and social dislocation on account of the war. There were rapes, physical assaults, looting, killing, maiming and damage to property acquired over generations. This had a telling effect on the economy. The value of the *leone* decreased considerably, reaching its lowest in 1998 when the rate of exchange was Le3000 to US\$1. Poverty was on the increase and this impacted negatively on the entire population, especially women and children. When one considers that women had become heads of households overnight, serious problems of catering for the family needs were posed.

The present government has been grappling with the many problems brought on by the war and has registered a number of successes, particularly by signing the Lomé Peace

Agreement with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in July 1997. Even though the peace is yet to be consolidated, the ongoing programme of demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants is to be regarded as a sure means of advancing the peace process if carried to its logical conclusion. The efforts of the international community to help the people of Sierra Leone get back on their feet is to be lauded.

Women's Role, as I see it

Western democracy puts emphasis on the basic principles of universal human rights, including the equality of men and women—this they contend is the foundation of democracy. The stability of any democracy depends on the degree of participation by its citizens, which comprise both men and women. For this reason it is a cause for concern in Sierra Leone that only a few women have been included in political and public decision making, including peace negotiations, taking into account that women make up to 51.3 per cent of the population of this country. Table 1.1 in Annex A shows that women are grossly underrepresented in political and public decision-making institutions and can be easily classed as the marginalised majority.

Since the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement, Sierra Leone has gone through a very slow and painful process of rehabilitation, reconstruction and resettlement. The indications are that the economy could pick up rapidly with much more improvement in security. Efforts are being made to create awareness about the need to make the peace work. The National Commission for Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Resettlement (NCRRR) is currently involved in restoring damaged structures as well as providing for the socioeconomic needs of the population especially those in rural communities. NGOs have made a lot of input in this venture.

Even though there are still legal impediments to women's advancement there is ample evidence that their participation in spheres of life has increased considerably. When one considers the magnitude of atrocities wreaked on women and children during the war, women are to be commended for their resilience. The small number of women and at times the non-inclusion of women in peace negotiations is cried down by women. Sierra Leone has gone through four major peace negotiations and one peace plan as a way forward to peace: the Abidjan peace agreement of 30 November 1996; the ECOWAS peace plan of 23 October 1997 (Conakry); the Lomé Peace Accord of 7 July 1999, and the Abuja Agreement of 10 November 2000 and May 2001.

At the Abidjan peace agreement women were not represented. For the ECOWAS peace plan one woman was involved at national level. Improvements were made during the Lomé Peace Accord: two women representatives were involved. Although the women were not chief negotiators, they made immense contributions during the discussions.

Article 28 of the Lomé Peace Agreement relating to post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction states that:

Given that women have been particularly victimised during the war, special attention shall be accorded to their needs and potentials in formulating and implementing national rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programmes to enable them to play a central role in the moral, social and physical reconstruction of Sierra Leone.

Embedded in the peace accord is the formation of commissions that consolidate good governance:

- ◆ Commission for the Consolidation of Peace;
- ◆ Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development;
- ◆ Council of Religious Leaders.

In all these commissions there is no involvement of women: there is therefore still room for gender sensitivity. It is expected that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission would be more gender-sensitive.

Although female representation has been minimal in the country's peace missions, yet women have been involved in an advocacy role in seeking an alternative to war and violence. At the organisational level, women are involved in planning and implementing peace programmes thereby inculcating and nurturing a culture of peace and peace-building. There are various women's organisations involved in peace: e.g., Mano River Women's Peace Network, Women's Movement for Peace, WILPF SL, Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Women's Forum, MCSL FORWASAL, Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians (NEWMAP).

While Article 28 of the Lomé Peace Accord proposes or promises greater opportunities and wider access to women and women's groups to the structures of power and the processes of social change, it is another thing to deliver on those promises evidenced by the lack of involvement of women in the commissions established by the agreement. Serious conflict can never be resolved without the participation of the parties involved. As women are involved in all deep-rooted social conflicts, they must be involved in the processes of resolution, as well as in social decision-making.

Gender inequality was identified in all power and decision-making structures and processes by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). Since that declaration six years ago, very little progress has been made by governments towards gender equality. Instead, our sub-region continues to be male-dominated.

The Beijing Platform for Action states:

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his/her country. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for a transparent and accountable government ... and sustainable development in all areas of life Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account.

During the military rule of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) government, when it became clear that the military government had no intention of holding elections and handing over to a democratically elected government, women were prompted into action by 'WOMEN' (Women Organised for a Morally Enlightened Nation) and were instrumental in the fight for democracy. They were both key advocates and a pressure group. More importantly, they were at the heart of the political campaign, wearing ashobies, preparing sumptuous meals. However, when the time came for a proportional representation election the inequality was evident. Women were relegated to the back seat. In my party, for instance, only 5 women were on the list of 68 representatives. The men made the decisions. When Foday Sankoh's hidden agenda was exposed, it was again the women who took the lead to tell him 'Not again! Enough is enough!'

The need to include women in the planning and implementation of post-conflict reconstruction cannot be overemphasised. In conflict zones throughout the world, it is evident that not only are women in need of specific attention and care but for reconciliation and reconstruction processes to take root, the involvement of women is crucial. Women have increasingly become providers for their families as well as decision-makers. There is therefore the need to develop mechanisms that will involve women in social, political and economic reconstruction in post-conflict situations.

It is important that there must be gender equality at all levels in post-conflict reconstruction. Many women have been made widows and, particularly in Africa, death is culturally a tragedy and widowhood a curse. Women can be disinherited and turned out in the street. It is therefore the responsibility of government to protect the widow from harassment and ostracism. One sure way to protect the widow is for her to have her voice heard in post-conflict reconstruction from the village level upwards.

The most important area where women can make an impact in influencing equality is in politics—local or national. However, until recently women have shied away from politics because they have been led to believe that politics is a dirty and violent game

that must be left to the men to play. As a result of this negative attitude only about 24 women have been involved in politics as members of parliament or as ministers since independence (40 years ago). The first women politicians included: Constance Cummings-John, Paramount Chiefs Madam Ella Koblo-Gulama and the late Madam Honoria Bailor-Caulker, the late Florence Dillsworth, Dr June Holst-Ronese, Agnes Taylor-Lewis, Agnes Labour, Matilda Conteh, Amy Kallon and Christiana Thorpe. Today, there are only eight women in parliament and two women cabinet ministers.

What can Women do to be Involved?

There are evident obstacles that inhibit Sierra Leonean women from taking part in democratic elections and participation in political and public decision-making. These include: violent elections and corruption, tradition, lack of knowledge about the system, the negative attitude of some men, and socio-cultural barriers.

Women need to be encouraged and trained to become politicians. Women need to recognise that the blame must not be put on men entirely. Perhaps we as women have allowed ourselves to be marginalised and relegated to the back seat because we have no confidence in ourselves or other women folk.

Political participation and inclusion in the political structures

Now that the war has ended and peace is imminent, there is an increased demand for psycho-social rehabilitation as well as political and peace education at all levels, but more so in the war-affected areas. This demand cannot be ignored but it is also disheartening to note that the existing facilities and efforts cannot cope with the wide range of demands. In this regard it will be desirable if the Women's Forum could collaborate with the appropriate agencies and institutions to establish support centres at strategic locations to provide much needed assistance in the following areas:

- ◆ more involvement in political affairs;
- ◆ women politicians to sensitise women about political involvement;
- ◆ increase women's decision-making power at all levels;
- ◆ upgrade literacy status especially among women;
- ◆ sharpen women's political skills;
- ◆ train women for leadership/assertiveness;
- ◆ mobilise and sensitise grassroots;

- ◆ remove negative cultural barriers;
- ◆ push for affirmative action/quota system (number of parliamentarians/ministers/others);
- ◆ stipulate leadership positions per constituency;
- ◆ increase political education;
- ◆ female aspirants to political office should be given moral and financial support;
- ◆ push for affirmative action in political parties, i.e., political parties allocating a percentage of safe seats to female candidates.

Much has been done by the 50/50 Group to sensitise women for political office, and with the support of the British Council and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) training in building the capacity of women in politics is being carried out by this group. The Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians (NEWMAP), with the support of UNFPA, has been advocating for women's participation at all levels of decision-making.

Democracy and good governance

However much women's organisations and institutions advocate for gender equality in political and public decision-making, there must also exist the political will of the government to initiate and implement policies and programmes that are gender-sensitive to bridge the gap of inequality evident in Sierra Leone.

Some of the actions government may take as a way forward include:

- ◆ educate for attitudinal change, i.e., moral values;
- ◆ step up voter education for women;
- ◆ disseminate information about civic rights and responsibilities;
- ◆ increase women's participation in constitutional matters (input into the constitution);
- ◆ enhance knowledge of democratic principles;
- ◆ create greater understanding of current issues;
- ◆ accelerate development of literacy projects and legal rights education.

The role of government in achieving gender equality

- ◆ take critical action to build a critical mass of women leaders, executives and managers in strategic decision-making positions;

- ◆ develop career advancement programmes for women of all ages that include career planning, training and retraining;
- ◆ develop communications strategies to promote public debate on the new roles of men and women in society and the family;
- ◆ strengthen the national women's machinery and other governmental bodies integrating gender perspectives into legislation, public policies, programmes and projects, and generating better research and data on how public issues affect women;
- ◆ ensure that before any policy decisions are taken, an analysis of their impact on women and men is carried out.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs has initiated two policy documents:

- ◆ National Policy on Gender Mainstreaming;
- ◆ National Policy on the Advancement of Women.

These should be reference books for all women and men. For these policies to be implemented, however, adequate budgetary allocation must be made to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs. The effective application of these policies will go a long way towards gender equality.

Conclusion

The participation of women in all aspects of conflict resolution, social transformation, and decision-making bodies, requires institutionalised structural change. The roles for women, their inclusion and their legitimacy, need to be fully integrated into the legal, political and economic systems of society. Women must also share responsibility for institutionalising the changes into social structures and processes.

Much improvement has been made towards gender inclusion by appointing women to decision-making positions. For example women have been appointed as judges, board members of parastatals (including chairpersons) and in other administrative establishments. Most recently a woman was elected to the ECOWAS Parliament and as Acting Speaker of Parliament. Much more needs to be done, though, to bring about gender equality in political and public decision-making.

To achieve equality therefore:

- ◆ Governments must make it a policy.

- ◆ Men must be sensitised to accept women leaders.
- ◆ Women themselves must be sensitised to make good use of their potentials and build confidence in themselves to meet the challenges of equal participation. Only then can we truly bring about gender equality in political and public decision-making.

Andrew C. Pope

*Colonel in the British Army, Director of Defence Commitments and Plans, member of IMATT, attached to Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence.**

Introduction

A surprising amount has been written about gender equality in recent years if the many thousands of Web pages are an indication of interest in this subject. If one expands the debate into the similar area of Equal Opportunities there is even more to discover. In Britain, the pressure for progressing the issues of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities has been championed principally by women and members of the ethnic minorities, but also as a direct result of external pressure from legislation, for example the Human Rights Act. This consultation is an excellent example of the need to expose problems and shortcomings and seek to deliver solutions that are appropriate to a country on the threshold of post-conflict reconstruction. For it is as well to square up to these issues now as we move towards a resolution of the current security situation and start to lift our eyes towards the horizon and the goal of reconstruction.

There are clearly roles for both women and men in the security sector and in peace building, and these two areas will form the theme of the paper. It is also important to acknowledge the differences between men and women—as well as the similarities—and take note of the lessons of history in developing a way forward.

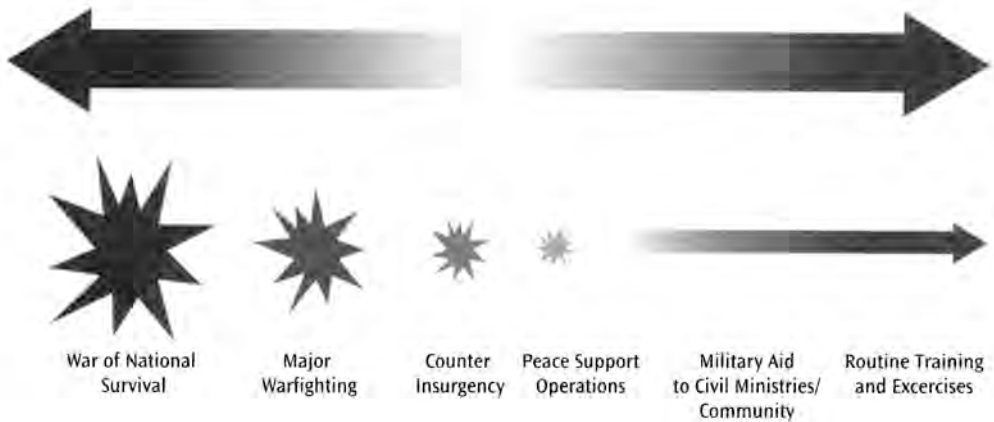
Gender Equality in Security

Security tasks in any country involve a range of agencies, either working together or separately. Typically, the agencies involved are the armed forces, police, prisons, fire service, private security companies, for example in the mining areas, and the intelligence services. In this part of the paper remarks will be limited to gender equality and the role of women in the armed forces.

It is important to have a view of a typical military security spectrum and the impact it can have both upon a country or nation, and more specifically on the roles of men and women. At the extremes of the spectrum are War and Peace, but there are shadings and nuances in between, as shown in Figure 1.1.

* *The views expressed in this paper are personal and do not in any way form the official view of the United Kingdom Government or the Armed Forces, nor should they be taken as such.*

Figure 1.1: The Security Spectrum



One might be tempted to think that the involvement of women across this spectrum would be heavily loaded to the right end and that the left end of high intensity warfighting would be where masculinity predominates with women excluded. This has not been borne out in history.

Women in the Military

Despite some present day squeamishness at the prospect of women being killed in combat, which has been used as one of the reasons for excluding women from front-line units, in reality there has always been such a role for women when the situation faced by a country or nation has become critical. War fighting has never really been solely a male preserve, and in any case the many civilian casualties caused by conflict throughout history have included men and women, old and young alike. History can also provide us with plenty of examples of the way women have been employed in the armed forces and in the support of the national war effort. Paradoxically, many more women serve in wartime in varying and dangerous capacities, than serve in the armed forces in quiet peaceful times when there is no real need to serve, except by choice, and when there are plenty of other avenues of employment. They do so from the perspective of patriotism and national need, rather than any overt requirement for gender equality.

Interestingly, it seems that only when the very being of a state is in doubt do women really come to the fore and gender is simply not an issue—it is actually unimportant by any stretch of the imagination.



British troops train Sierra Leone security forces

In the Second World War, it is noteworthy that in the defence of Russia women played a prominent role. They were frequently assigned to all-female units and fought bravely in Stalingrad and Odessa.

The experiences in the US and UK at the same time were rather different. In the US, a huge country that was not geographically threatened, many women were employed in the armed forces, but strictly in administrative roles with no hint of a combat role. Nevertheless, over 150,000 women served in the Women's Army Corps (the WAC).

In the UK, women performed broadly similar tasks to those in the United States, although there was more of a backs-to-the-wall feeling in the UK, which, for a time, was threatened with invasion by Germany and led women to take on more dangerous and patriotic roles.

Gender Equality in Modern Armed Forces

Over the last 50 years attitudes have changed. Women now serve in an increasingly wide range of mainstream military jobs, which include those that give them a combat role. In the British Royal Air Force (RAF) and United States Air Force (USAF), women combat pilots are more in evidence, as well as in the transport aircraft fleet. The British Royal Navy has mixed crews on surface ships and the first women are about to serve on nuclear submarines, where they will be in close confinement with men for several weeks at a time. Despite these advances in gender equality, there remains resistance to women serving in combat roles in most of the world's armies, which excludes them from the infantry, armour and artillery. It is ironic then that a few women serve in the Royal Engineers, who in a combat situation in their armoured bridgelayers could find themselves forward of the infantry and armour for certain military operations.

The extent to which women can serve in the world's armed forces is variable, even within NATO. In some countries women are virtually excluded (Germany and Spain). In others virtually all positions are open to women, including combat roles, as in Canada, Norway, the Netherlands, and more recently the US and the UK. However, women are still excluded from the infantry and armour in the US, while in the UK, resistance to women in the infantry remains. Interestingly, Israel still conscripts women into the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), but also excludes them from combat situations. The reason harks back to the Six Day War (1967) and Yom Kippur War (1973) when the IDF discovered that despite—in those days—enlightened gender-neutral training, female casualties caused whole units to cease operations while they were recovered. In essence, units lost their combat effectiveness and cohesion and all the unit personnel were put at increased risk as a result.

The impact on combat effectiveness forms the central issue over gender equality in the armed forces. Great strides have been made, admittedly under some resistance by 'military men'. Sadly over the last 50 years there has been plenty of combat experience to study and learn from. Commanders are taught to apply 'military judgement' to difficult situations and choices, and there is a perception that women in combat units could be detrimental to combat effectiveness, which is the key measure of the capability of one force to overcome another and survive.

Eventually it is likely that all jobs will be open to women and true equality of opportunity will apply. In practice women will self select and few may wish to carry a heavy machine gun running at speed to attack a position as part of an infantry section. Those that do accept will have to adapt to the situation they find. In true gender equality, there should be no separate toilet and washing facilities; it would be costly and inefficient to build separate facilities to accommodate women—this is particularly the case and most graphically illustrated in submarines where no special provisions are being made.

With regard to Sierra Leone the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) is completely gender-free, and in this respect is ahead of the UK, although the percentage of women serving in the RSLAF and the UK armed forces is similar, about 7 per cent. The RSLAF personnel database does not include any reference to gender; military personnel are identified solely by their service number. Women are admitted to all parts of the armed forces, including infantry battalions where there are typically 50-70 women in a unit of 600. However, it is not yet clear whether they operate within sections or carry out administrative tasks, as the new armed forces do not have any operational experience. Nevertheless, the current approach and the obvious integration of women into the RSLAF means that there is real scope for men and women working together in meeting the country's security challenges over the coming months and years.

Peace-building

There can be some confusion between peacekeeping and peace-building. At the November 1999 joint United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) and Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIJA) conference in Singapore entitled 'The Nexus between Peacekeeping and Peace-Building', delegates debated the differences between the two terms.

Throughout the conference, participants grappled with the question of definitions. Defining peacekeeping and peace-building with some precision and identifying 'where' the nexus between the two occurred, or even what it consisted of, led to many debates. In general, for many, peacekeeping essentially referred to those security responsibilities carried out by military personnel, and civilian police, including enforcement, along with the more passive and traditional roles. Peace-building seemed more elusive. It could be used in the political sense, i.e., reconciliation, electoral assistance, institution building, human rights monitoring and the establishment of a credible judiciary. But it could also include a predominantly social and economic manifestation—i.e., the reconstruction of schools, clinics and hospitals, water filtration plants, as well as longer-term self-sustaining economic activities. Participants agreed that both the degree and intensity of peacekeeping and peace-building, as well as their range and scope, could change from operation to operation. These distinctions and separations, however, even if conceptually useful, became difficult at the operational level, where the realities of the field influence all decisions. Yet participants agreed that some discipline and analysis was necessary to keep the distinctions between these different, but complementary, mandates clear. This is necessary not least because the very nature of military culture and its purpose are often in contrast to, and sometimes contradictory with, the objectives of development.

It was stated that, often, peacekeeping issues were at the fore of the mission and given more prominence than peace-building matters. One participant noted that, 'Peace-



Coordinating security forces and peacekeeping troops

building and development need more respect.’ As opposed to a dedicated secretariat for peacekeeping, the management of peace-building is currently divided between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), as well as many other UN programmes and agencies, not to mention bilateral assistance and aid from NGOs. Inevitably, the actual capacities of and the coordination issues between all of these organisations affect the success of peace-building efforts.

Where then does peacekeeping stop and peace-building begin? When does peace-building end and development activities begin? What is the nature of the overlap, and what mutual reinforcement can be achieved? In struggling with these fundamental questions and reflecting on the case studies, participants felt that many of these concepts need not be sequential but could exist concurrently, rather than chronologically, depending on the contexts. In all the cases reviewed, however, the peacekeeping forces could have played a key role in supporting peace-building initiatives. In its simplest form it was agreed that, where adequate security was not established, peace-building efforts invariably suffered.

The nature of today’s peacekeeping and the necessity for broader missions has thus led to at least two new sets of problems. First, careful articulation of the exact scope of operations is needed in order to accomplish the desired objective, without leaving too large a gap between the peacekeeping mission and peace-building phase. Second, the problem of

coordination among efforts carried out by various segments of the UN system and the many intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations operating in the same fields and working for similar purposes must be understood and addressed from the outset.

Participants recognised that though each peacekeeping case was unique, they shared many similarities and therefore it was reassuring that the conceptual plans for the missions in Kosovo and East Timor seemed to have benefited from lessons learned from past cases. Participants felt that this was a good sign for the UN: the thoughtful and realistic conceptualisation of a mission is vital even if it alone is not a sufficient guarantor of success.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) defines assistance provided to countries lacking modern economies in stable periods as 'development assistance'. It is generally oriented towards long-term economic growth and towards correcting the conditions that lead to conflict.

Peace-building is similar, but generally refers to restoration of normal conditions permitting development following a conflict. However, what constitutes normal conditions, and in whose terms are they defined? Often they are defined in western terms based on western experiences and an aspiration to improve towards conditions which sit comfortably with the observer. There is of course a range of factors to be taken into account when defining normal conditions. These include:

- ◆ From which datum are normal conditions measured?
- ◆ What were the conditions that prevailed at the time?
- ◆ How long is the period of reconstruction to be?

War and conflict cause people to lead abnormal lives with varying degrees of deprivation and usually accompanied by abnormal or dysfunctional behaviour. The duration of the period of conflict can have a profound effect on the degree of reconstruction and rebuilding of institutions required within the affected country as well as on the psyche of the people and their ability to move back to normal conditions.

The answer to the question of duration of the reconstruction phase bears a direct relationship to the duration and intensity of the conflict and the variance from the previously articulated 'normal' conditions, as the country switches from conflict to peace. It seems to me that getting the basics right is the most important first step. Invariably this means food, water, shelter and medical assistance in a secure environment, and these factors should apply in any post-conflict situation anywhere in the world. Subsequent steps are more difficult to judge though, because they depend on

the ability of the people to motivate themselves to restore the normal conditions of their daily lives, on the government to give a strong lead in coordinating a national reconstruction plan which takes into account the needs of the people and harnesses the energies of the people, and on the international donor community to offer such human, material and financial assistance as they are able to provide until such time as the country is back on its feet and generating sufficient national income to reduce its dependence on other countries.

Peace-building is certainly not a male domain—everyone should have the opportunity to play his or her part. The many talents of men and women should be brought to bear. It would be surprising to believe that an all male or all female solution was more effective than a solution arrived at together.

Peace-building: the Sierra Leone Dimension

Turning to the current situation in Sierra Leone one is struck by the magnitude of the task. The process to restore the country to a peaceful, democratic and prosperous country will require heroic effort.

So the essence of the problem is how do people know what to build?

The natural and latent talents of the population need harnessing. The burden of work will inevitably fall to those about to leave school and those in their twenties and thirties, for they represent the most precious natural resource in the country. The value of national service in the broadest sense should be instilled into young people, for the task they face is of heroic proportions. And here the role of women is crucial, particularly as they represent 50 per cent of the population. It is of note that the role of women (and men) in work has declined dramatically in the 15 years to 1994, fuelling widespread unemployment, discontent and a drift to a dependency culture. The rise in unemployment was exacerbated by the invasion of Freetown in January 1999, as it resulted in the destruction of many public buildings, public and commercial businesses and private dwellings.

This downward spiral needs to be broken in order to lay the foundations for success, and the remedies proposed should try to engage the whole population in a major nation above self effort. Developing the role of women in national reconstruction, working alongside men, but bringing their different talents and perspectives to bear, will be a major challenge, particularly as women are behind men in their access to education.



International Military Advisory Training Team (IMATT)

Conclusion

From a military perspective, gender equality in security is being steadily implemented around the world. There remain particular difficulties and anxieties when the debate turns to the role of women in combat situations. The vital ground is that nothing should be allowed to compromise the ability of commanders to maximise combat effectiveness in a warfighting scenario, where good military judgement is required for a force to prevail.

However, in practice all roles within the military will eventually be open to women, but women themselves will probably self-select the areas where they can make the best contribution. For this reason it is likely that few women will elect to fight in the trenches alongside men. Gender equality already exists in the Sierra Leone Armed Forces and this should be taken as a positive sign when considering the maintenance of security in Sierra Leone over the next few months and years.

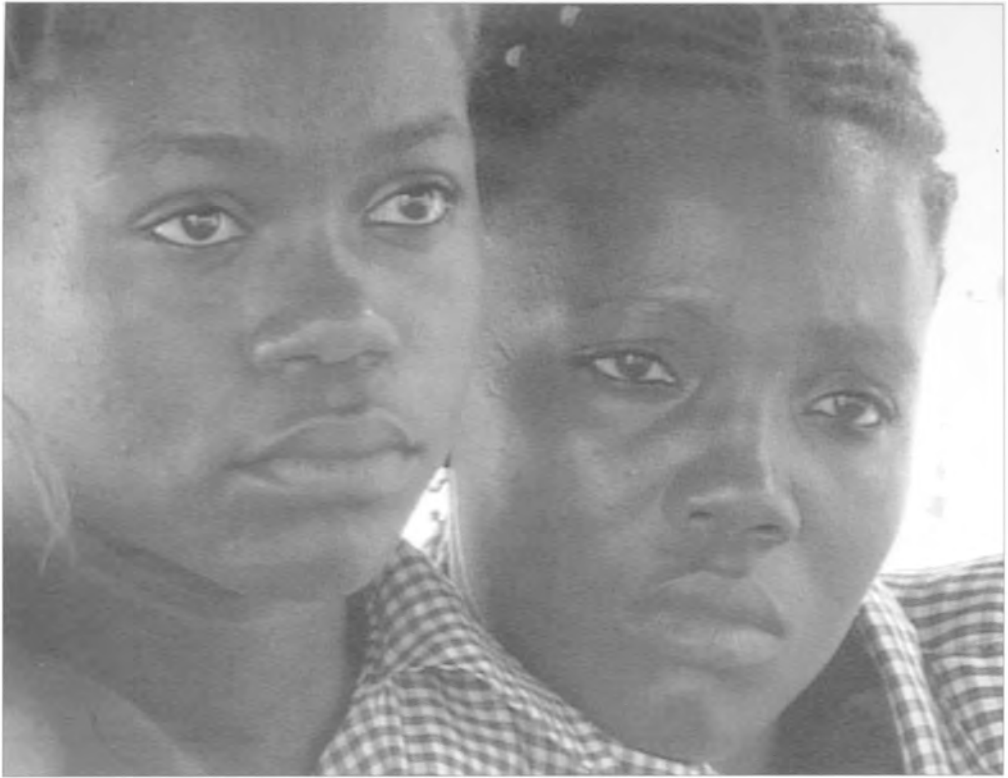
In peace-building gender equality is essential to make the best use of the natural talents of men and women. There is simply no benefit in preserving single-sex bastions, which impede the rapid progress required in a country like Sierra Leone to emerge from a period of turmoil. Successful peace-building will require the harnessing and mobilising of the entire nation to involve itself at every level in projects to restore not just a sense of normality, which might itself be illusory, but real and lasting normality for which an achievable vision, sound leadership, much planning, sheer hard work and wise investment will be required.



Destroyed Law Courts, Freetown

Part 2

Human Rights and Legal Reform



Women have shouldered the burden of war, FAWE centre, Freetown

Valerie Nicol

Barrister-at-Law and member of the Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians (NEWMAP)

One of the greatest obstacles to the development of a country is the little recognition that is given to the role and worth of a woman in her community and in her country as a whole. Her traditional role is seen to be inferior to that of the man and she is still typecast as mother and homemaker. In times of conflict and crisis, however, her role undergoes a dramatic and significant change. Often she is forced to become the sole breadwinner and the person who has to make all the major decisions in order to protect her family.

Sadly, however, when normalcy and peace return that selfsame woman is again relegated to her inferior position behind the man and the kitchen sink or pump, despite the active role she may have played during conflict.

'Promoting gender equality through legal reform' appears to be a very daunting task for Sierra Leone when viewed in the context of our legal system and the fact that little or no legal reform has taken place over the last two decades. The legal system of Sierra Leone, together with the high rate of illiteracy, in themselves are problems to be tackled, coupled with what may be described as a lack of political will to ensure that the laws of Sierra Leone keep up with at least other developing nations and with international conventions to which Sierra Leone has become a signatory or state party. In working towards gender equality through legal reform one must take cognisance of the traditional cultural and religious beliefs and practices in our society, which in most cases give men a title of supremacy and authorise them to play a role of dominance over women. Added to this, or possibly because of this, Sierra Leone has a pluralistic legal system made up of the General Law, Customary Law and Muslim Law.

General Law is defined in the Local Courts Act No. 2 of 1963 Laws of Sierra Leone (1960) revised edition as 'the common law, equity and all enactments in force in Sierra Leone except in so far as they are concerned with Customary Law'.

Customary Law, which is largely unwritten, refers to laws governing the various ethnic groups in the country except the Creoles, and varies from locality to locality.

Muslim Law governs people who are of the Islamic faith.

This pluralistic system causes confusion and denies women equal opportunities, not only in regard to their male colleagues, but also as against their female counterparts living in different regions of Sierra Leone or governed by different traditions and customs. One must also look at the constitution of Sierra Leone Act No. 6 of 1991 which provides in chapter/111 for the recognition and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual and contains conventionally accepted human rights such as civil and political rights, individual liberties and due process of law regardless of race, tribe, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed or sex (Section 15). Section 27 of the constitution provides for equality before the law. On the face of it that section appears to be gender neutral, making for equality before the law and protection against discrimination for all. However Section 27 (4) (a), in particular, limits the scope and application of Section 27(1) and (2) by not making it applicable ‘with respect to adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, devolution of property on death or other interests of personal law’. This in effect exempts and turns a blind eye to the root cause of discrimination suffered by women in Sierra Leone.

Therefore in considering the areas of law which need reform to bring about gender equality in Sierra Leone, one has to consider these areas under the General Law, Customary law and Muslim law. Perhaps the areas of greatest concern, where there is great need for reform are under (1) Family Law; (2) Law of Inheritance; (3) Land Law; (4) Violence.

Family Law

The rights available to a woman during and after marriage depend upon which form of marriage was contracted—whether it was a Christian or a civil marriage, both forms of which are recognised as marriages under the General Law, and referred to as Statutory Marriage, Customary Law Marriage or Muslim Law Marriage.

Marriage

General Law

The Christian Marriage Act and the Civil Marriage Act apply to marriages contracted under the General Law. The feature of these types of marriages is that they are monogamous in character. S.2 of the Matrimonial Causes Act, Cap 102 of the Laws of Sierra Leone 1960 defines marriage as ‘the union of one man and one woman for life to the exclusion of all others’. In this respect a woman who has contracted a marriage under the General Law has some semblance of equality with her husband. Whilst these provisions are applicable throughout the country, only those who profess to be of the Christian faith may opt for marriage under the Christian Marriage Act. However marriage under the Civil Marriage Act is open to couples regardless of their religious beliefs.

There is no express legal minimum age stipulated for marriage. If the requisite consents are obtained, a person can marry at any time. However, the practice for most marriages under the General Law is that most couples attain the age of 18 before marrying.

In order for a marriage to be valid under the General Law, it is stated in the Civil Marriage Act that a person below 21 who is subject to the General Law can only marry with the consent of his/her parents or guardians, whilst a person subject to Customary Law and below the age of 18 must obtain the requisite consent if he/she is marrying under the provisions of the General Law. A further prerequisite for a marriage to be valid under the General Law is that there should be no subsisting marriage of either parties with any other person. Prior to 1965 it was possible for a party who had contracted a marriage under Customary Law to enter into a monogamous marriage because marriage under Customary Law was not recognised. After 1965, however, Customary Law Marriages are now equated in law with Civil and Christian marriages. Therefore a marriage contracted with a third party under the General Law by one person during the subsistence of a Customary Law marriage with another person renders the subsequent statutory marriage Null and Void.

The position remains unclear in law wherein a man who marries under the General Law, which stipulates one wife, decides to marry a second wife under Customary Law without first obtaining a divorce. The second 'wife' is thus left unprotected under the law.

Under the General Law spouses have a corresponding duty to cohabit with each other, which usually means sharing a common matrimonial home. Sometimes a spouse has to work in a different town from where the family resides; however if the intention is to live together then cohabitation is considered to be continuous. When one partner refuses to cohabit with the other he/she may find him/herself being petitioned for desertion. Despite the fact that more wives are working now, it tends to be the husband who determines the location of the matrimonial home.

Customary Law

Marriages under Customary Law are polygamous in nature, with the husbands having the capacity to marry several wives. There are no uniform procedures, and these vary from tribe to tribe and region to region. There are, however, several characteristics of Customary Law marriages which have been classified, and they include polygamy, alliance of two families, marriage consideration (dowry), inferior status of the woman vis-à-vis her counterpart in the statutory marriage under the General Law, procreation of children, and the peculiar nature of divorce which can be obtained with ease and could be extra-judicial.

Here also there is no fixed age limit for an individual to be seen as capable of marrying under Customary Law. The capacity to marry is determined on the individual's physical development and his or her ability to consummate the marriage. Both parties must have reached puberty and be capable of procreating.

There have been known instances where very young girls, not having attained puberty, have been given in marriage to much older men, especially to elders and chiefs, or men perceived to have influence, particularly political influence. The man has to consent to the marriage, even when it is his first to be contracted, whereas the woman's consent is subordinate to that of her father's. This rule has less relevance when the woman has been married before and is now either divorced or widowed.

Before her marriage, a girl has no right or status as far as marriage is concerned. Decisions pertaining to her initiation into the secret society and consent for her marriage are made for her and taken by her mother in the former case, and parents in the latter case. She is to all intents and purposes treated as a Minor under the guardianship of her father or father's brother whilst single under Customary Law.

Marriage under Customary Law does not confer absolute right to guardianship of children nor does it confer any to property on divorce.

For a Customary Law marriage to be valid, the male spouse should provide a marriage consideration—mostly money and gifts of clothing and ornaments and in some cases livestock. The woman is regarded as her husband's chattel and he can divorce her at will. If the wife initiates the divorce, however, she is compelled to return the marriage consideration, and then the children belong solely to the husband.

Muslim Law

These are marriages that are contracted and celebrated in accordance with the Islamic religion. This type of marriage is applicable throughout Sierra Leone, but only for those who profess the Islamic faith. It is a potentially polygamous marriage where the husband can marry up to four wives with the proviso that he treats and loves each one equally.

There is no legal minimum age requirement for marriage but both the man and the woman are required to have reached the 'proper age', which has been said to be 18 years—an age when they are supposedly capable of discerning right from wrong and can be held responsible for their actions. Unlike under Customary Law, where a woman can be married off before reaching the age of 18 and without her consent, the Muslim woman's consent is always obtained, and in any case she cannot marry under the age of 18 (H.M. Joko-Smart: 'Women, Children and the Law in Sierra Leone', Sierra Leone Bar Association Third Annual Conference, May 1982).

At marriage, Muslim Law gives the husband absolute right over the wife, and the husband is regarded as trustee, guardian and protector of the wife. In this respect the wife occupies a lower status in the home. He is also responsible for the full maintenance of his wife.

Marriage under Customary Law is by far the marriage that discriminates most against women, and this is the marriage contracted by the majority of women in Sierra Leone.

The discriminations against women that exist during marriage infringe the principles of justice, and are in conflict with Articles 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Article 18 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, which enjoin state parties (of which Sierra Leone is one) to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations, on a basis of equality of men and women. Article 16 of CEDAW imposes an obligation to ensure the right to freely choose a spouse and enter into marriage only with free and full consent.

Maintenance of Spouse

General Law

The husband under the General Law has a duty to maintain his wife, and this includes the provision of shelter and the necessities of life. The wife has no such corresponding duty to maintain her husband. Where a husband fails in his legal duty to maintain his wife during cohabitation:

- ◆ A presumption of agency is raised. This simply means that she has the power to pledge her husband's credit for the purchase of necessities, and the husband would be responsible to settle the bill. The goods regarded as necessities depend on the husband's status. This process is of limited use, however, because most wives are unaware of it—and in the case where a wife is aware of it, the husband may expressly forbid that she pledges his credit, which would rebut the presumption; and he may inform tradesmen that he is unwilling to pay for credit pledged on his behalf by his wife. The wife is also deprived of the right of maintenance if she commits adultery. The agency is terminated at the death of the husband, when the parties cease to cohabit, and upon a decree of divorce or nullity.
- ◆ An Application to the Magistrate Court can be made for maintenance where the husband refuses or neglects to maintain his wife and family under the Married Women's Maintenance Act 1888 Cap. 100 of the Laws of Sierra Leone.

This statute is archaic and no longer serves the needs of women because Magistrates only have the power to award the sum Le8.00 (less than 1 pence) per week for the wife and her family. Even if the sum capable of being awarded were

adequate, she would only have access to this law if she had been deserted by her husband. The Act would also not apply if the wife had committed adultery (S.2(12)).

- ◆ Under the Matrimonial Causes (Amendment) Act No. 16 of 1961, a married woman whose husband has wilfully neglected to provide reasonable



Children are our future

maintenance for her and her infant children may apply to the court for periodic payments (S.4.). The shortcomings of this Act for the wife include the fact that the application has to be made to the High Court, which is more expensive.

The determination of reasonableness may create a problem with the court, because most wives do not know their husband's true earnings or any other additional sources of income. This would make it difficult to determine their exact income.

In any case, before she can apply, the wife has to have grounds for Judicial Separation, which means she has to show adultery, cruelty or desertion. This burden may prove onerous to the wife, as the husband may not be maintaining her, but yet not be guilty of these acts of adultery, cruelty and desertion. Also, alleging these grounds would be tantamount to indicating to the husband that the marriage is at an end.

After cohabitation, where a husband fails to comply with an order of the courts for the resumption of marital rights, the court may make a further order requesting the husband to make periodic payments to the wife as may be just.

This provision is rarely used because it is lengthy and not easily enforceable as S.18 prohibits attachment of the husband in case of default.

When making an order for divorce or nullity of marriage, the court has a discretion to order that the husband pays a lump sum or makes such periodic payments to the wife as

the court considers reasonable, having regard to the wife's fortunes, the ability of the husband to pay and the conduct of the parties (S.21 Cap. 102). The court can also direct that the husband makes monthly or weekly payments for her maintenance or support as the court considers reasonable. These could also be interim orders during the hearing of the petition. The court may direct that the alimony be paid either to the wife or to a trustee approved by the court.

The reality, however, is that the husband usually defaults in payment and, because of the difficulties involved in the enforcement of the orders, these orders remain only on paper, with the wife carrying the burden of looking after the children.

It should be noted that under these provisions the court has the power when the husband is granted a decree for divorce or judicial separation by reason of adultery, cruelty or desertion of the wife, to order such settlement of the wife's property as it thinks reasonable, the settlement of such property to be made for the benefit of the innocent party, presumably the husband and the children of the marriage or any or either of them (S.22 (1)).

It should be noted that the property of the wife includes the profit of her trade or earnings. There is, however, no such corresponding provision for the wife.

Customary Law

There is no legal responsibility for a husband to maintain his wife under Customary Law. The extent of his liability largely depends on his economic status and her duties in the matrimonial home (Joko-Smart, 'Sierra Leone Customary Law', 1983).

It appears that the general rule is that the daily upkeep of the wife and children in the rural areas is the sole responsibility of the wife through her subsistence farming activities.

The husband becomes liable to provide financial assistance in times of illness or death in the family or to provide clothing for his wife for special occasions and festivals.

In some instances the husband may assume full financial responsibilities for running the home depending on his economic status and level of literacy. This is, however, more prevalent in the mining areas. Sometimes the husband provides seed money for petty trading by the wife, the profit from which she uses to upkeep the home.

The wife appears to be entitled to certain maintenance during the period of breastfeeding of her child whilst she is residing with her parents. Even then she is not 'maintained' directly, as the husband's main obligation is to her parents.

Muslim Law

The husband has a moral obligation according to the Qur'an to maintain his wife. This includes the right to shelter, to general care and wellbeing, as well as to clothing. The Muslim wife, like the wife under the General Law, has no corresponding duty to maintain her husband.

The Qur'an makes it clear that during cohabitation, the husband has a duty to feed and clothe nursing mothers.

The duty of feeding and clothing nursing mothers in a seemly manner is upon the father of the child. No one should be charged beyond his capacity. A mother should not be made to suffer because of her child, nor should he to whom the child is born (be made to suffer) because of his child (Sura 11 v. 233).

The Qur'an exhorts the husband to be kind to his wife and to discharge his responsibilities cheerfully without reproach or injury (Hammudah Adbalaliti, *Islam in Focus*, 1988: 117).

It should be noted that the obligation is a moral one, which is not enforced in Sierra Leone. The wife who has been deserted by her husband during cohabitation and has not provided maintenance for her, can apply to the Magistrate Court for maintenance under the Married Woman's Maintenance Act 1988 (Cap. 100), which is an act to provide maintenance for married women.

The Muslim Law is silent with respect to the provision of maintenance for the wife when cohabitation ceases, regardless of what her circumstances might be.

The Law of Inheritance

Inheritance is the acquisition of property, that is, land or moveable property on the death of some person. Such acquisition arises either as a result of the deceased's wishes stated in writing or orally before his death, which is known as testate succession; or by operation of laws or customs relevant to deceased—that is, intestate succession.

When instructions are left in writing (by Will) or orally, in the case of natives, these determine who the beneficiaries are, the persons who would administer the estate and the quantum of property that he or she inherits. In Sierra Leone the provisions of a valid Will are strictly enforced. A wife for whom no provisions were made in her deceased husband's Will has no legal procedure through which she can apply to the courts for some provision to be made for her as a dependant out of the estate of her deceased husband. It must be noted, however, that there is provision in S.29 of the



Muslim children learning Arabic

Administration of Estate Act Cap. 45 for petitions to the court by persons who are interested in the estate of a deceased person who has died intestate and where there is no widow/widower or next-of kin on legal, equitable or moral grounds.

Virtually any person in Sierra Leone can make a Will irrespective of whether the testator is a native, non-native, Muslim or Christian. S.4 of the Interpretation Act 1971 as amended by S.1 (3) of the Sierra Leone citizenship (Amendment) Act 1976 defines the term 'native' as: 'a Citizen of Sierra Leone who is a member of a race, tribe or community settled in Sierra Leone, other than a race, tribe or community: Which is of European or Asiatic or American; or Whose principal place of settlement is in the western area'.

A 'non-native' is defined as 'Any person other than a native'.

The enactment of the Muslim Marriage (Amendment) Act of 1998 has removed all doubt as to whether a Muslim could make a valid Will.

Under the Wills Act of 1837 a native has the capacity to make a Will in so far as property located in the western area. However in Joko-Smart's 'The inheritance of property in Sierra Leone: an analysis of the law and problems involved' Sierra Leone series No. 24 1996: 10ff, doubts have been expressed regarding the capacity to do so in respect of property located in the provinces under the jurisdiction of a local court. Where intestate succession is to be determined, the Sierra Leone woman finds herself in a very unenviable position. Her position in respect to inheritance to her husband's estate depends first on whether:

- (1) She and her husband are classified as natives or non-natives (her personal law);
- (2) The type of marriage that she contracted.

Non-native who is not a Muslim

The personal law of a non-native who is not a Muslim is the General Law and the relevant statute is the Administration of Estate Act Cap. 45 as amended by public notice No. 28 of 1964, and Act No. 19 of 1972, S.19 of Cap. 45 makes *inter alia* the following provisions for distribution after costs, administration fees, debts, etc., are settled:

- ◆ If a woman dies intestate the whole of her estate shall go to her husband.
- ◆ Where a man dies intestate leaving widow and children or issue (children, grandchildren and other lineal descendants) the widow shall be entitled to one-third of the estate and the children and issue the remaining two-thirds equally between them.
- ◆ If a man dies leaving children or issue but no widow, the children or issue take the whole between them.
- ◆ If a man dies leaving a widow but no children the widow shall take one-half absolutely and the other half shall be divided amongst his nearest relatives or next-of-kin.

Muslim

The distinction between a native and a non-native is irrelevant because the same rules apply to all those who profess to be Muslims. The widow of an intestate Muslim man cannot under any circumstances take out letters of administration for the estate of her deceased husband, unlike the widow who is a non-native and a non-Muslim, who may administer the estate of her intestate husband.

S.9(2) of the Muslim Marriage Act as amended only entitles:

- ◆ the eldest son of the intestate if he is of full age according to Muslim law;
- ◆ the eldest brother of the intestate if of full age according to Muslim law;
- ◆ the Administrator and Registrar-General to administer the estate of the intestator.

The estate is distributed in accordance with Muslim law:

- ◆ On the death of the wife the husband takes half of her estate if there are no children and the rest go to her beneficiaries.
- ◆ If the deceased wife leaves a child the husband only gets one-fourth.

- ◆ On the death of the husband the widow receives one-fourth of his estate if he has no children.
- ◆ If there are children she receives one-eighth.
- ◆ If there is more than one widow then their collective share is one-fourth if there are no children and one-eighth if there are children, which is to be divided equally.

The general principle in Muslim law that there is a share for men and a share for women is applicable so that female children get half of what male children receive. If, however, the only heirs of the deceased are girls and they are more than two, they will have two-thirds of the share. If only one child, she will receive one-half (*Woman and the Law in West Africa*).

Customary Law

The position is that the eldest surviving brother of the deceased is invariably the administrator of the estate, though the modern trend is for the eldest son if at mature age at the death of his father (Joko-Smart, 1983) to do so. If there is no adult son, then the eldest of the deceased's brothers shall so act.

If the wife of the deceased were to marry one of the deceased's brothers and he inherits the whole or part of the estate of the deceased, then she can benefit from her late husband's estate indirectly, and similarly so if she has an adult son who is the administrator of the estate.

The majority of the tribes of Sierra Leone are patrilineal, therefore the main beneficiaries of the estate of a deceased man consist of his sons, his brothers and uncles. The traditional Sherbro society is matrilineal, so that it is the children of the deceased's sisters who inherit, failing which the children of any female relative are the beneficiaries.

The position of the woman who has not undergone any recognised form of marriage but who has cohabited with a man until his death leaving property capable of being inherited is not protected under the law as far as right of inheritance is concerned. If there are children, they themselves may not benefit from the estate of their father.

However under S.29 of the Administration of Estate Act, Cap. 45, referred to earlier, they could petition on equitable or moral grounds to secure a share in the estate of the intestate who leaves no widow or next of kin. However, it has been held in *Re Thomas* (deceased) that the mere tie of blood relationship between the petitioner and the

deceased does not entitle the petitioner per se to a share in the estate. There must be some close relationship and a proved need on the part of the petitioner.

In the case of a child who has been adopted, Section 14 of the Adoption Act No. 9 of 1989 states that for the purposes of inheritance an adopted child is to be treated as if he were the natural child of his adopted parent only.

Land Law

In Sierra Leone, in so far as Land Law is concerned, two systems of law operate—that is, the General Law which applies to the Western Area and Customary Law which applies to land in the provinces.

The importance of land cannot be underestimated: 'He who owns the soil owns the sky above and the soil below.' Ownership of it indicates economic, social and political power.

Under the General Law applicable today (The Law of Property) Adoption Act 1960 of the Laws of Sierra Leone, there are no clear discriminatory areas affecting women's title to property. However very often the law and practice differ. This is the case wherein most landlords are reluctant to rent premises to women, particularly single women.

Under Customary Law there is no legislation which defines Land and the Land Tenure System which operate in the provinces. There are two schools of thought, with the old school believing that there is only one form of land holding, which is communal ownership. The modern view, however, is that there are two forms of holding, they being family and individual. The extent of individual land holding is unclear and is said to be more prevalent in large urban towns.

Under communal and family land holding, ownership is determined upon the lineage of the community. Most of the tribes in Sierra Leone, with the notable exception of the Sherbro, are patrilineal, and therefore even though ownership of land is vested in the community and women form part of that community, yet control of the land is in the hands of the men who wield power in their community.

Women are given exclusive use of some lands for their secret society and other activities, but by and large women are only allowed to use the land for subsistence farming.

Where a man and his wife are granted family land by the wife's family, they are entitled to occupy it but the ultimate ownership remains in the wife's family. The husband's right to occupy the land continues even after his wife's death, even if there are no children and he

remarries. If, however, he or his family challenges the deceased wife's family's ownership of the land, he may be required to give up possession of the land—otherwise he continues in occupation until his line becomes extinct when it reverts to his late wife's family.

If the land is granted by the husband's family, she is allowed to continue to use and occupy the land. However the position is unclear as to whether she would be allowed to continue in occupation if she remarries outside her deceased's husband's family.

It is still uncommon for women to own land in the provinces.

Violence

Violence against women is a universal phenomenon which cuts across all economic, social or culture barriers and has been recognised as a serious obstacle to development and peace with obvious implications for gender equality.

Violence against women has been defined in the Beijing Declaration as:

any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public life or private life (Beijing Declaration 1996: 73).

Defined as it is, it includes *inter alia* domestic violence, marriages entered into without the consent of the bride, rape and sexual assaults, and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

There are no specific laws which protect women against violence. However, the Offences Against the Persons Act 1861, which is the legislation most commonly used, offers the same protection to both men and women, and this law is available to every woman in Sierra Leone. The reality, however, is the difficulty of getting cases of violence reported heard and determined.

As a result of the rate of illiteracy and because of some traditional beliefs, the majority of women believe that the husband, father or brother has a right to use force against her, be it physical or psychological.

In some areas in Sierra Leone wife beating is viewed as the overt show of a man's love for his wife.

The majority of cases that arise in the rural areas are settled according to various recognised traditional ways; whilst violence is not necessarily condoned, it is tolerated.

In the urban areas it is estimated that less than half of cases which arise get as far as the police, and less than a third of those reach the courts, especially in cases of sexual violence.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is widespread in Sierra Leone. Although Sierra Leone is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and CEDAW, which affirm the rights of the girl-child and woman to protection from harmful traditional practices including FGM, a survey of females in the Western Area by Koso-Thomas in 1987 found that 89.7 per cent were circumcised. Despite the medical evidence of pain and suffering associated with FGM, this subject is almost a total taboo in Sierra Leone. Very little has been done to sensitise the public about the harmful effects on the woman who undergoes FGM.

There is no specific law against FGM in Sierra Leone, although one might succeed on a charge under Section 43 of the offences against the Persons Act 1861 for aggravated assault.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that women are at a great disadvantage compared to men in Sierra Leone. It has also highlighted that even woman-to-woman, some are more equal than others. It is safe to say that the majority of women in Sierra Leone have Customary Law as their personal law, and Customary Law has been shown to be the most discriminatory of all the types of laws in all the areas dealt with in this paper.

Perhaps the first step towards breaking the barriers of gender inequalities in Sierra Leone is for the creation of a unified system of laws after comprehensive research in the area of customary laws governing the different ethnic groups, especially in the areas of family law, inheritance and property rights for all women in Sierra Leone, irrespective of their region of birth, ethnic background or religion.

In seeking to achieve gender equality women should also refrain from fostering or enhancing discriminatory practices, especially harmful traditional practices against women, like the sanctioning of gender-based violence, which it is said is perpetrated by women against women.

A minimum age for marriage should be adopted for women across Sierra Leone with the prerequisite condition that her consent is given informedly and freely.

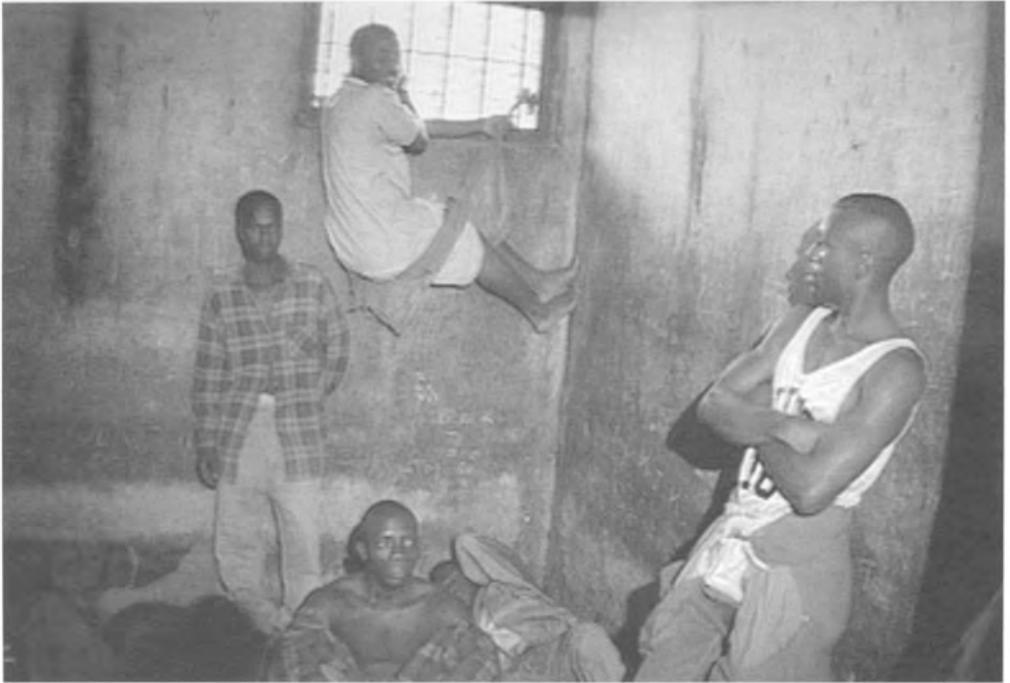
It is also recommended that married women and unmarried women who have cohabited with a man for a specific period of their lives should have an improved status

and share in the administration of their husbands' or partners' estates. Further, it is recommended that the same rights of succession that apply to legitimate children be applied to illegitimate children.

The enactment of laws that would effectively prohibit violence against women, including a ban on all harmful traditional practices, would not only help in reducing the cases of violence against women, but would send signals that Sierra Leone shall no longer tolerate or condone any form of violence against the mothers and daughters of the soil.

Sierra Leone is a state signatory to almost all of the international conventions and agreements including the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). CEDAW seeks to address pervasive social, cultural and economic discrimination against women, and the CRC, in addition to upholding specific rights of children, also deals on a broader spectrum with gender relations. By expediting the process for incorporating the CEDAW and the CRC into our National Laws, most of the stumbling blocks towards gender equality would have been removed.

The government has eventually to take the fundamental decision to forge ahead on gender equality. Civil society groups can, however, through advocacy and lobbying, force government's hand to move that much more quickly so that government could show its commitment to a more gender equitable society.



Men and women in prison cells

Gender and Human Rights in Post-Conflict Reconstruction

2.2

Florence Butegwa

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As Sierra Leone emerges from the conflict you need to ask yourself, ‘What does post-conflict reconstruction mean?’ People often talk about reconstruction as the task of rebuilding the infrastructure, repaving the roads, reconnecting the electricity, repairing the schools and wells, and so on. This is very, very important. However, equally important is the framework within which you carry out this reconstruction—the values you bear in mind as you undertake your country’s reconstruction and development. Over the last two decades there has been a debate on development taking place both internationally and at the national level, which many of you may have been engaged in or heard about. The debate has centred on whether development is about economic growth or something more.

When we talk about development we are talking about more than income. We are talking about the quality of life and a whole range of issues including health, education, the environment, freedom of thought, speech, expression and religion. And once you understand this, you are talking about development and reconstruction that are founded in a belief in the rights of individuals and people. However, in the process of post-conflict reconstruction, I see these rights as made up of two competing strands, so that when I speak about where the challenges lie, you will be able to understand them in this context.

In many conflicts you have two sides fighting each other. In the Sierra Leone conflict you have had many different sides fighting each other. In the process of peace building and reconstruction, you have on the one hand, the drive towards a cessation of hostilities, reconciliation, nation building, unity, development, and moving on. While on the other hand, you have a drive towards justice, compensation for the loss caused, the suffering and the injuries. This is a complex set of drives, which a country needs to negotiate in its reconstruction process.

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It is in this context that I would like to focus on human rights for men, women and young people. I would particularly like to challenge you to think of human rights for women as building on the legal reform that Valerie Nicol has talked about, but going even further. Because in addition to the right to equality and equal treatment, women are entitled to the right to participate in public life, to health, to education, to bodily integrity, to be free from torture and cruel treatment.

Within that broad context, we have several challenges to think about. We don't have a respect for human rights unless we have peace or we are moving towards peace and peace-building. This is a challenge for the women, men and young people of this country, and for the friends of Sierra Leone. If you can think of peace-building as a project, then each person needs to be motivated to be part of this project. The question of what a person gains from participating is not something that the president or the government are going to define. It is something that needs to be defined by the entire population. As the women of Sierra Leone, you need to think of what is at stake for yourself. What should be the purpose of project for peace? Young people also need to ask this question. And the same is true for men, for the chiefs, for the religious leaders. And the composite picture you come up with is what will drive you towards peace.

The other challenge is to see human rights as part of the solution. Human rights are often talked about as stemming from politicians and leaders. On the contrary, human rights are about the day-to-day concerns of people. Human rights include the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to food, clothing and housing. Previous presenters have talked about violence against women. Human rights include violence against women—women have a right to be free from torture, cruel and inhuman treatment. And when a woman is battered, that is cruel; when she is raped or gang raped, that is torture, that is cruelty, that is inhuman treatment.

People in every country, as in Sierra Leone, are concerned about access to health care. I haven't looked at Sierra Leone's statistics for HIV infections, but in most African countries there is an extremely high infection rate. HIV affects your immune system and you are likely to fall sick with all kinds of opportunistic infections. Therefore the demand for medical treatment is that much higher, and combined with the fact that incomes are very low, this means that the majority of people cannot afford to go to private clinics. There is a right to health, so health as a concern for each one of us is part of our human rights. And you can say that about each of the concerns talked about earlier—for example, about unemployment levels in Freetown and in Sierra Leone in general. There is a human right to work, a right to earn a living.

The point I am making is that as we engage in the process of reconstruction, let us use human rights as the basis for what we do or what we define as priorities. Let us start from the point of view that if people are entitled to certain rights, there are other people who have corresponding obligations, legal duties, to make sure that people can enjoy these rights. In the human rights system, the state, the government of Sierra Leone, is under an obligation to create an environment that enables people to enjoy these rights. But the obligations go further. Sierra Leone has development partners, for example, friendly governments, donor agencies and, if you look at the various human rights instruments, there is some obligation for international cooperation, for development assistance that is founded on the concept of human rights. And when we come to the rights of women, since gender equality applies to the whole range of rights, let us use this as a guiding principle. As we undertake the process of law reform, let us not have an Education Act that is totally blind to the rights of girls and women, and expect the Gender Ministry some years later to start seeking to engender that law. Let us not have a law or a policy on agriculture that totally ignores women.



Re-living a painful experience, FAWE centre, Freetown

Part 3

Violence against Women and Children



Woman and child amputee

Augusta Taqi

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)

Violence against women and children is a universal problem which violates their fundamental human rights in peacetime as well as in conflict situations; violence usually has a tremendous impact on the basic wellbeing of a community.

Violence can be grouped under three broad headings: physical violence, sexual violence and psychological violence.

Physical violence includes:

- ◆ sexual;
- ◆ domestic;
- ◆ peer/social group;
- ◆ abuse and exploitation.

Sexual violence includes:

- ◆ rape;
- ◆ abuse by spouses/parents;
- ◆ harassment/molestation;
- ◆ forced prostitution;
- ◆ trafficking.

Psychological violence, which emanates from physical and sexual violence, includes:

- ◆ threats;
- ◆ deprivation;
- ◆ condoning of violence by the established authority and security.

It is well known that violence against women and children is under-reported and under-recorded for various reasons, chief among which is the stigma associated with survivors; in most cases the offender is known to the family.

This paper is focused on the interventions made by the Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE) after the 6 January 1999 invasion of Freetown and the horrific experiences of some of the survivors of sexual and gender-based violence; it will also highlight lessons learned from the interventions and make suggestions for the prevention of violence.

FAWE's mandate is to support women and girls to acquire education for development. The senseless 10-year war in this country has deprived a large percentage of women and children the opportunity to acquire education; this was what triggered off FAWE's intervention.

It should be noted that universally women and children are rarely in the planning stages of wars and conflicts but they end up bearing the brunt of it all.

There is no single agreed definition of violence against women but Articles 1 and 2 of the UN Declaration for the Elimination of Violence against Women define the term 'violence against women' as any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty whether occurring in private or public life. The term is also used to include the abuse of girls.

There are various forms of sexual violence but rape is the most commonly referred to.

Rape is generally defined as sexual intercourse with another person without their consent. It is committed in circumstances when the survivor's resistance is overcome by force or fear or under other coercive conditions.

Sexual violence can also involve the use of or threat of force in order to have sexual acts performed by a third person or persons.

Those who perpetrate sexual violence usually do so from a strong desire for power and domination.

An act of forced sexual behaviour can be life-threatening and, like other forms of torture, it is often meant to hurt, control and humiliate, thereby violating a person's innermost physical and mental integrity.

It is unlawful for sexual intercourse to occur with someone under a specified age.

Sexual violence is universal, and women and young girls are vulnerable to such attacks. To a lesser extent men and boys are also open to such attacks, particularly during armed conflicts and in situations of displacement.

According to *UNHCR Conditions for Prevention and Response*, the term sexual violence is used to cover 'all forms of sexual threat, assault, domestic violence, interference and exploitation, including involuntary prostitution, statutory rape and molestation without physical harm or penetration'.

In short, sexual violence is a gross violation of fundamental human rights and, when committed within the context of armed conflict, it is a grave breach of 'humanitarian law'.

At a recent conference organised by UNHCR on 'Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Refugee Situations', in which FAWE participated, the expected outcomes included:

- ◆ Increased awareness of the issue;
- ◆ Operational guidelines on how to intervene effectively;
- ◆ Analysis of sexual/gender-based violence programmes: what has been accomplished and the impact;
- ◆ Political commitment/support to enhance programming.

FAWE hopes that these points will be taken into account during this consultation.

In cases of domestic sexual abuse of children, the physical and psychological wellbeing of the children is of paramount importance.

Violence against children reflects significant structural components of our society: it results from feelings of disempowerment and the inappropriate emphasis on responsibility rather than the rights of children.

Articles 34 and 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are explicit on violence against children. Article 34 states that 'children shall be protected from violence, exploitation and sexual abuse'. Article 39 states that 'a child who has been subjected to negligence, abuse, neglect, torture, armed conflicts or other inhuman treatment has the right to rehabilitation and readjustment'.

The Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civil Persons in Times of War (the Fourth Geneva Convention, 1949) Article 27 states that 'Women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution or any form of indecent assault.' Protocol 1 relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflict (1977) Article 77 states that 'Children must be the object of special respect and must be protected against any form of indecent assault.'

International Criminal Tribunals in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia confirm that sexual and gender-based violence is an offence.

The African Charter on Human and People's Rights 1981 Article 18 states that the state shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women and shall also ensure the protection of the rights of the woman and child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions.

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) affirms that 'discrimination against women means any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the enjoyment or exercise by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms.' Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination against women.

These examples of international instruments and declarations are not exhaustive but it is pertinent to note that states, Sierra Leone not exempted, have agreed to abide by them, and yet the worst atrocities have been inflicted on our women and children in the last ten years.

A total of 2,350 survivors were registered in Freetown between March 1999 and March 2000 during FAWE's initial Rape Victims Programme. Collaborating agencies were Sierra Leone Association of University Women (SLAUW), the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) and Médecins San Frontières (MSF), The Netherlands. Later UNICEF and UNHCR also became partners.

The first step of the intervention was public sensitisation on radio and television and talks to schoolchildren, followed by counselling sessions and referrals to the team doctors. Those survivors who were pregnant benefited from antenatal and postnatal care. There were male doctors and counsellors.

There were some male survivors and equally of interest is that the violence they suffered was no less a crime. FAWE Branch Kenema ran a similar programme.

The Medical Report on Abductees following the 6 January 1999 invasion of Freetown showed that, although the medical team treated over 2,000 patients, only 1,168 patients with a complete record of their history and treatment were included in the report. Of the patients, 99 per cent had been abducted from Freetown and the rest had been abducted from Makeni and Kono.

The survivors had suffered from physical, psychological and sexual violence, viz:

- ◆ Physical: 274 (23.4 per cent) had been beaten. The degree of violence ranged from a few slaps to severe and brutal beating.
- ◆ Psychological: 114 (9.7 per cent).
- ◆ Sexual: 648 (55.4 per cent) had been raped: some of them had been raped by one, two, three or even ten or more men. Two survivors in particular were raped by 15 and 30 men respectively. The former had given birth to a baby only two weeks before being raped. Both patients suffered from prolapse of the uterus (the womb descending via the vagina). The former woman had a repair to return the uterus to its proper position. The latter woman had a major degree of prolapse and the uterus had to be removed, i.e., total hysterectomy.

Of the 1,168 treated, 901 were females (77 per cent); 139 were males (11.9 per cent). For the remaining 128 (10.9 per cent), the gender was not specified.

Some children actually witnessed their mothers being raped and/or their parents being gunned down.

The attempted rebel invasion of Guinea has swelled the number of sexual violence survivors. For these survivors it has been a double tragedy: having fled the war in Sierra Leone only to have to go through further traumatic experiences. FAWE has intervened with support from UNHCR and other partners to provide information, counselling and medical services, and skills training for an initial period of three months. The skills will include non-traditional skills for females, such as the building trade (carpentry and masonry) to equip survivors to take part in the reconstruction process.

Mark Anthony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* had this to say to the crowd at Caesar's funeral: 'If you have tears prepare to shed them now.' FAWE is saying, this is not the time for tears. Listen to some of the survivors' stories, and if you have consciences prepare yourselves and begin to take action now, because violence against women and children is an immediate crisis that needs immediate attention. Failure to respond adequately may result in consequences that are unspeakable and unacceptable.

Survivors' Stories

Survivor A (25 years old)

She was abducted on 7 January from central Freetown, witnessed the brutal killing of her husband by the rebels and was raped in the presence of three children before being abducted and taken to the jungle, where between 15 and 20 men raped her while she was tied hands and feet apart to a tree. She was released after months. She came to seek medical help at FAWE with a complete prolapse of the uterus.

On January 7 1999 very early in the morning, we were still in bed when I heard gunshots in our compound. I quickly got up, woke my husband, called our three kids, one girl 8 years, and two boys, 11 and 6 years respectively, to our room where the kids and myself took cover in the wardrobe. My husband was so confused he didn't know what to do. Suddenly the rebels banged our door and forced it open. As soon as they entered our room, they demanded money from my husband. He gave them fifty thousand leones (Le50,000), which was all the money we had. They asked for more, but my husband told them he had no money. One of the rebels cocked his gun and threatened to blow his head off if he refused to give them more money. 'You people thought we had gone, but we are here today to kill all of you bloody civilians who refused to support us', the rebel said. 'If you have no money then let me send you to eternal rest', the rebel with the gun cocked said. Then he shot my husband on the chest. My husband fell shouting, 'You have killed me.' I couldn't bear it, so I opened the door of the wardrobe, shouting 'You killed my husband.' So they caught hold of me and told me not worry—that they would take care of me.

Immediately in the presence of my kids all six soldiers raped me one after the other. After this first rape, they asked everybody else in the house to come out. By then everybody had left the compound except my own family members. My kids came out crying. One of the rebels ordered me to march forward, pointing his gun at me. While we were a little bit away from the house, I saw smoke coming from its direction. The rebel who held me under gun point started laughing at me and then told me that it is our house that is now on fire, so why can't I follow them, since I had no more husband and no more house. I cried throughout, but they refused to release me. Eventually they took me to the jungle as they retreated from the ECOMOG advance. My two months in the jungle was a horrible experience. The six men who raided our house kept torturing me. They tied my legs and hands apart on a tree, kicking me in the stomach accusing me of overlooking [overlooking in the jungle means disrespect]. They raped me again one after the other and invited other combatants to join them. Whenever I cried and begged them, they insulted me and intensified their assault. I counted between 15 and 20 men who raped me that night. I was so helpless. I kept bleeding and eventually I felt something come out between my legs. I later learnt that it was my womb. I was left alone to die for more than a month. With the help of other women, native herbs were prepared to ease my pain. Then my condition worsened, and my abductors eventually released me in March 1999.

My relatives then immediately took me to FAWE. Thanks to FAWE I am alive today to narrate my horrible experience.



Rebuilding broken lives: girls at the FAWE centre, Freetown

Survivor B (19 years old), who spent four years with the RUF

She was among the schoolchildren abducted by the rebels in the secondary and primary school in Kambai District in 1995. She escaped during the January 6 1999 invasion on Freetown when she was eight months' pregnant.

I was among the schoolchildren captured by the RUF in 1995. When we were captured, we were all taken to a very remote RUF base at Malal Hills. By then I was 14 years old and a virgin. I was gang raped the very night I was captured as an initiation to the RUF community. We spent three months in military training in the hills there.

When the government jet bombarded our base we pulled out to another location for one month. Then we were eventually sent to Kailahun. We were drugged whenever we were to go on mission. On coming back to the base, there were three particular rebels who would ask me for sex. If I dared to refuse, I would be forced at gunpoint or gang raped.

When the soldiers took over in 1997 and invited the RUF to join them, we were all brought to Freetown and kept in a camp at Benguema. During those days we were under

tight security and surveillance: they did not want us to escape and join our relatives. They were so cruel to us then, I mean, to most of the girls: I was gang raped on so many occasions. When the rebel who used to defend me was away guarding a checkpoint, they killed most of my friends who refused their advances. I remember being tortured once for refusing the advances of one self-styled commando. I was made to lie on my back facing the sun with my legs apart. Whenever I attempted to shift my leg, I was whipped. I tried on so many occasions to escape but was not successful.

When ECOMOG intervened in 1998, we were all loaded in a truck and taken back to the jungle in Lunsar. I seized the opportunity to escape when we attacked Freetown in January 1999. By then I was eight months' pregnant: barely two months after my escape I delivered twins—two boys.

Survivor C (13-year-old girl)

When the rebels raided Allen Town in the East End of Freetown on January 6 1999 morning, everybody in our house ran for his or her life.

Instead of running towards Freetown, I headed towards Waterloo. I remained in the bush together with other girls from our area for nearly two weeks. When the rebels were retreating from the city, we were unfortunate that we were all discovered in our hiding place by the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) renegade soldiers.

One of my friends, about 15 years old, was the first to be raped by five of them, one after the other under gun point. Then it was another's turn, then mine. I shouted that I had never known a man. One of them immediately dragged me and dropped me on the ground and scattered my legs: 'If you have never known a man, then you'll know a knife today.' He drew a knife from his side still holding my legs apart with the help of another rebel. Then he stabbed me in my privates three times with the knife. I immediately became unconscious. I woke up later to discover myself in the same location. I don't know whether they gave me up as dead, but they had abandoned me. I did not even know which day it was I managed to find my way back to Allen Town. I was lucky that no member of my family was killed nor our house burnt. My parents immediately took me to a doctor for medical treatment, where the doctor told me that my urinary gland had been destroyed. To this day a tube is connected inside me to channel my urine to a bag attached under my dress. I feel so uncomfortable carrying the tube and bag.

Survivor D (17 years old)

She lost her parents on the night of January 6 1999 when they were used as human shields. Two brothers raped her, and she was also conscripted in the fighting force. She escaped in December 1999.

When they entered the city that night of 6 January 1999, they entered our house and ordered all of us to stay put—we were all used as human shields as they were advancing towards the centre of the city. My parents were both killed that night in crossfire. On 7 January 1999 I was abducted together with other girls. I was locked in an unfinished house where I was regularly raped by two young boys whom I came to learn later on were brothers. When they decided to pull out we were taken first to Waterloo then later to Masiaka where we were based for some time.

During that period most of us who were abducted were conscripted into the fighting force. Every day we used to go on looting missions. They would drug us first thing in the morning before taking us out. I was given a machete to cut off people's hands and a pistol to fire at any enemy. Most of the children abducted died during those raids; we were given ammunition to carry during those raids.

When the government forces raided our base we pulled out to another base in Mile 91. One of the men who used to force me to have sex with them died during that raid. Another rebel took charge of me, a RUF commando. He used to lock me in a cage naked for the whole day. Anytime I refused to honour his request to have sex he would leave me in the cage after beating me. Then whenever he felt like it he took me out of the cage and raped me. He kept threatening me in this manner until one day when I managed to escape together with a few other girls. By then I was five months' pregnant. *[She escaped in December 1999.]*

Survivor E (16 years old) was captured in 1994 by the RUF in Kono at the age of ten. She was forced to carry a heavy load on her head from Koidu to Kabala. She was assaulted by two particular rebels consistently. She was conscripted into the fighting force at the age of ten, and she still suffers from the effects of drugs.

In December 1994, when the RUF attacked Koidu, it was still dark in the morning. They raided our compound and put everybody in the house at gunpoint. I was taken away together with my two brothers who were the same age. Mohamed, Alusine and myself were forced to carry ammunition and looted property on our heads to Kabala. It was so heavy, whenever we slowed our pace we were beaten with gun butts. On reaching Kabala one rebel deflowered me that very night—he was rough. He hurt me, and when I tried to fight he slapped me on my face and tied my mouth, so that I couldn't shout. There were two of them who persistently assaulted me. At Kabala myself and my brothers were drugged every morning. We used to take it as our breakfast. We were also trained to use guns: we used to go on raids twice every month.

These are just a few horrific and dehumanising experiences our women and children have been subjected to in the last ten years.

Far too many women and children have already died and many more will continue to suffer and die if we fail to recognise the urgency of violence prevention against women and children. It is very easy to become overwhelmed with helplessness and hopelessness about the violence we have experienced in this our beautiful and once peaceful country.

Ending violence against women and children won't occur overnight because men's violence against women is based on the inequalities between men and women and the way boys learn to be men. Boys must learn that they do not need to control women and children to become men.

The police and courts must work tirelessly to enforce such laws to fight violence against women and children.

Lessons Learned

- ◆ Sensitisation and counselling sessions as well as medical treatment for the survivors were just a tip of the iceberg. Other needs included shelter, food, clothing, educational support and seed money to restart their battered lives.
- ◆ The under-eighteens who were pregnant were worried about their babies as well as continuation of their education, which had been abruptly disrupted.
- ◆ Some survivors went back to school willingly without fear of stigmatisation.
- ◆ Some survivors became strong advocates for the programme.
- ◆ Education is a useful tool to deal with sexual and gender-based violence because it became evident that families as well as survivors needed education about parenting skills, which should include culturally appropriate programmes, life-skills training and health education.
- ◆ Funding is necessary for the continuation and sustenance of the programme as well as replication in other parts of the country.
- ◆ Partnership with other agencies is essential for the success of the programme.

Suggestions for the Prevention of Sexual Violence against Women and Children

- ◆ Active participation in public information and education on violence prevention from the cradle to the grave. Let us catch them young.
- ◆ Intensification of peace education in school curriculum—with emphasis on conflict resolution through peaceful or non-violent means.

- ◆ The media, in particular. Television programmes should desist from implying that there can be violence without pain. Sometimes violence is portrayed as funny, and this encourages children to become aggressive and others to learn to become passive survivors of violence.
- ◆ Violence is a major health problem that can be prevented. National campaigns similar to 'Roll Back Malaria', 'Kick Polio Out of Africa', and HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, should be vigorously launched. Schools of nursing and the College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences must include violence prevention in their curricula.
- ◆ Provision of follow-up support for the changes children and their parents make to help prevent violence must be monitored and evaluated by the community.
- ◆ Male involvement in the prevention of violence against women and children should be encouraged: as men are *part* of the problem, they should be made *more* of the solution.
- ◆ Research into sexual and gender-based violence must be coordinated and sustained so that organisations do not appear to be reinventing the wheel.
- ◆ Women and children must be actively involved in the peace-building process.
- ◆ Survivors must be part of future sexual and gender-based violence prevention programmes.
- ◆ Survivors should be trained in a variety of skills to enable them to live above subsistence level as well as in skills which are relevant to the economy of the area where they reside. All skills training programmes for survivors should include basic literacy and numeracy, as well as peace education. Leadership skills to empower survivors to participate fully in society should be included.
- ◆ Monitoring and evaluation of sexual and gender-based violence programmes must be an integral part of the planning and implementation activities. Keep It Simple and Systematic (KISS).

Conclusion

As Sierra Leone emerges from a conflict situation, let us match our words with action, because it is only when action and words agree that the message becomes loud and clear. The message is 'Violence Prevention against Women and Children'.

Now is the time for all women's organisations, legal and law enforcement agencies, health organisations, religious and traditional leaders, school groups, sports associations, drama groups, the media, men's associations, community-based groups and all well-

meaning Sierra Leoneans to come together to support survivors and help put an end to violence against women and children. Men must also get on board. The prospects of economic growth are threatened if our children and women are not educated. The rallying call for the Global Movement for Children–Sierra Leone partnership as an unstoppable crusade to end at long last, the poverty, ill-health and violence that have destroyed so many young lives is a step in the right direction.

The setting up of a National Commission for War-affected Children with an Ombudsman for children must be pursued vigorously with the right political will.

A prevention and response plan should be designed because sexual violence is a multi-sectoral inter-agency problem, which should be well coordinated.

In short concerted participatory efforts and partnerships are necessary to deal with this all-pervasive problem.

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Woman police officer

The Role of the Police in the Prevention of Violence against Women and Children

Fatmata Kamara
Sierra Leone Police

The ten years of civil war saw a significant increase in violence, sexual abuse and other heinous crimes against women and children in Sierra Leone. Although most of these offences have been unreported, police statistics do indicate an increase.

Many women and children have experienced violence at the hands of fighting forces, ex-combatants, strangers, as well as those with the responsibility to protect them.

These sexual offences have often been characterised by extraordinary brutality and have been frequently preceded or followed by violent acts against other family members.

Similarly, the rebels have also used sexual violence as a weapon to terrorise, humiliate, punish, and ultimately control, the civilian population. The perpetration of sexual violence is often marked by the systematic breaking of taboos and undermining of cultural values. Fathers were forced to watch the raping of their daughters, middle-aged women were raped by boys as young as eleven years old and women were raped in public places.

The abuse of women in the Sierra Leone conflict is rooted in the persistent human rights violations that push women into lower status with limited rights in all spheres of their lives, from home to work.

The Sierra Leone police have a crucial role to play in minimising violence against women and children, and ensuring that justice is done, thus protecting the human rights of women and children. The Sierra Leone police also have the responsibility to ensure the effective implementation of the general recommendations of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, both of which emphasise the need for state parties to prevent, prosecute and punish those guilty of violence against women.

In a bid to minimise violence, sexual abuse and other heinous crimes against women and children, the Sierra Leone police offer a 24-hour, 7-day-a week emergency service to battered or otherwise abused women and children. Furthermore, as a frontline service in curtailing violence against women and children, the Sierra Leone police also ensure the enforcement of law and order in relation to violence, sexual abuse and other crimes against women and children.

For this purpose, under the Changed Management Process, a new unit called the Family Support Unit has been established in the Sierra Leone police force, mandated to combat the incidence of sexual abuse of children and the physical abuse of women and children within the 'family' unit. Victims of physical and sexual abuse within the family environment will be provided with a professional and expert police response by the Family Support Unit.

Under the Family Support Unit there will be a Domestic Violence Officer who will provide support and guidance to victims of domestic violence throughout the investigation process and any subsequent court hearing.

In accordance with its constitutional responsibility to protect life and property, to arrest and prosecute offenders, prevent crimes and ensure human rights, the Community Relations Department has embarked on a series of crime prevention initiatives to minimise the incidence of violence and sexual offences at community level.

Prior to the restructuring process of the Sierra Leone police, police response to domestic violence and other forms of violence against women, and child sexual assault, was often inadequate. These offences were regarded by the police as domestic and family problems. The preference was to respond by mediation rather than law enforcement. This way of thinking was based on stereotypical beliefs about gender roles and relations between men and women which acted to obstruct a recognition of criminal behaviour. Police response to these reports normally used to be: 'Go home and settle it. It is family business'; or 'This is a husband-and-wife affair.'

With the present restructuring process, making the police a 'force for good', the Community Relations Department and the Family Support Unit have been working relentlessly to minimise violence and sexual abuse against women and children. These two departments have also embarked on sensitisation programmes in the police stations and police barracks to bring awareness to policemen, police wives and police children on the effects of violence and sexual abuse of women and children.

As a measure to attend promptly to sexually abused victims, the police intend to establish a Sexual Referral Centre, which will comprise trained doctors, trained counsellors, lawyers and trained police officers in the investigation of sexual offences. The centre will provide free medical treatment and counselling services to victims. This referral centre will provide free lodging for a night for victims who may not wish to return home on the same night of the incident.

The management of violent situations and child sexual assault is demanding to an extent that the police alone cannot successfully handle such a situation. Collaborative



Literacy class for police cadets

efforts would be required to minimise the occurrence of violence and other crimes against women and children. The following interventions would therefore enhance and support the Sierra Leone police in its drive to minimise violence against women and child sexual offences.

Society at large has a crucial role to play. Victims and their parents sometimes refuse to report incidents to the police because of scandal. Some victims who make reports to the police are then compromised and withdraw halfway along the line. Some even withdraw at court level. The issue of violence and child sexual assault therefore should be acknowledged as a serious problem that requires priority attention. Sensitisation of society at large regarding the consequences of violence and child sexual abuse is therefore paramount.

Similarly, sensitisation of police officers in dealing with these crimes of violence, sexual assault on women, and child sexual abuse, must include an assessment of stereotypical attitudes to women and children, particularly with regard to sexual activity.

The crucial role of the Sierra Leone police in dealing with crimes of violence, and sexual assault on women and children, must be acknowledged by the police themselves and society in general.

Furthermore, the police must be provided with clear legal powers in order to provide them with an appropriate base for action. The law dealing with violence and child

sexual assault should be reassessed to provide the police with adequate powers in dealing with such crimes: for example Cap. 30 and 31 of the Laws of Sierra Leone, which deal with women and children, are to be revised and amended.

The mass media, in all its forms, must be fully utilised both in public education on the issues and in shaping social attitudes.

The protection of women and children who are at risk from family violence, sexual and other abuses, must be ensured. This should include the provision of safety, security and basic human needs.

Similarly the exchange of information on police methods and technological know how should be encouraged between police stations within Sierra Leone.

A reporting system needs to be established which will enable the government ministries responsible for health, welfare and education to report on sexual abuse cases. Corroborative efforts by providing the Sierra Leone police with all relevant information to pursue such matters must be ensured.

The importance of interdisciplinary cooperation in dealing with violence in the family, sexual abuse of women, and child sexual abuse, must be emphasised. This approach can be achieved in a number of ways. One way could be the establishment of committees functioning at varying levels which would comprise senior police officers, welfare officers, psychiatrists, medically qualified personnel and lawyers to monitor the legal system, initiate reforms where appropriate, and to establish such committees at lower level.

Police response to violence, sexual offences and other crimes against women and children will be inadequate in the absence of proper training. Although violence, sexual abuse, etc., make up a large proportion of police work, police officers have not been provided with the prerequisite training to equip them for this task. Every officer in the Sierra Leone police therefore requires training in handling such violence and sexual assault, and in investigation techniques, and requires knowledge of the work of other agencies offering support to victims. Such training will not only provide general information on violence against women and children, but will also provide an opportunity for officers to air and review their values and beliefs.

In conclusion, the Sierra Leone police are committed to addressing the problem of violence, sexual abuse and other crimes against women and children, which we can only achieve as a law enforcement institution through the collaborative effort of all stakeholders.

Part 4

The Resettlement of Displaced Civilians and Resettlement/ Rehabilitation of Ex-combatants



Abducted child soldiers are returned by the RUF to the UN, May 2001

Resettlement of Displaced Civilians and Resettlement/Rehabilitation of Ex-combatants

Sao-Kpato Max-Kyne

Programme Manager, Relief and Resettlement, National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR)

Introduction

The 10-year civil war in Sierra Leone inflicted death on more than 25,000 and caused the internal displacement of more than 1.2 million people. An estimated 500,000 people fled Sierra Leone into neighbouring countries. The war has resulted in the devastation of the economy and the destruction and debilitation of houses, infrastructure and basic services in both rural and urban communities.

The previous peace agreements and the on-going peace talks have rekindled the opportunity for peace and reconciliation within the country. A central requirement for peace is the disarmament and demobilisation of all combatants and their reintegration into society. As these and other tenets are being implemented, the government of Sierra Leone, together with its local and international partners, are endeavouring to extend humanitarian assistance to previously inaccessible parts of the country and to re-engage in reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in support of war-affected populations.

A core part of this process involves the planning and implementation of programmes to support the resettlement and reintegration of the internally displaced, returning refugees and ex-combatants and their dependants back into their communities. Resettlement therefore is in part conditional upon the continued progress of the disarmament and demobilisation process and, with this, the expansion and consolidation of security within the country. As this develops, the provision of support to reconstruct and rehabilitate the livelihood and security of returnees will enhance the opportunity for reconciliation and the shift to longer-term development.

The National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR) therefore in carrying out the resettlement part of its mandate has made sure that all planned resettlement programmes are gender-sensitive. Through these programmes the Commission reaffirmed the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and has stressed the importance of their equal participation in sustainable development.

The first phase of resettlement began in April 2001 for those internally displaced persons (IDPs) resettling into areas declared safe by the government. So far, to date (May 2001) the NCRRR, together with its partner agencies, has facilitated the resettlement of about 7,000 people in various parts of the country from the Western Area IDP camps.

It is hoped that, given the positive developments resulting from the Abuja meetings, that the government will declare new areas safe, so that we can start the facilitated resettlement of both Sierra Leone refugees and IDPs back into their communities. This will include those refugees still living in neighbouring countries and those that have already returned to Sierra Leone, but who have been temporarily located in settlements or host communities as their area of origin has not yet been declared safe. In addition, the assistance offered through NCRRR and its partner agencies will support the reintegration of ex-combatants and their dependants through community-based programmes.

These programmes, such as the provision of basic services and employment opportunities, offer a light at the end of the disarmament and demobilisation process and provide a bridge for ex-combatants re-entering civilian life. This bridge, which needs to be strengthened by community-based reconciliation efforts, offers the means by which ex-combatants and their dependants can re-establish themselves within home or new communities for building a new and meaningful existence.

The paper focuses on the support that is offered to displaced people as they resettle back into their communities. In the case of ex-combatants and their dependants, it only covers assistance being provided in support of their reintegration back into communities. This is NCRRR's mandate. Other aspects of support to ex-combatants and their dependants through the different phases of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration are the purview of the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR). Of note to this consultation are policy and programmes that NCDDR have developed for female combatants, the assistance to the dependants of male ex-combatants during disarmament and demobilisation, female child ex-combatants and abductees.

Principles of Resettlement

The key principles on which the resettlement programmes have been based are as follows:

- ◆ The government of Sierra Leone will only facilitate resettlement into an area when it is deemed that the area in question is sufficiently safe to allow for the protection of returnees;
- ◆ As far as possible support measures provided during the resettlement process will be standardised and in parity to avoid inter- and intra-community tensions;

- ◆ As far as possible support for integrated resettlement, reconstruction and rehabilitation will be community-based, incorporating resettling internally displaced persons (IDPs), repatriating refugees, ex-combatants with their dependants and existing resident populations;
- ◆ All beneficiary groups are fully informed of the support they are entitled to and of the procedures for accessing them;
- ◆ Resettlement and reintegration programmes for IDPs, refugees and ex-combatants and their dependants are integrated as far as possible;
- ◆ Every effort will be made to ensure that there is close coordination of all aspects of assistance for the resettlement process to ensure appropriate targeting and efficient use of resources;
- ◆ The resettlement process is closely monitored to ensure that appropriate interventions or adjustments are made for those beneficiaries failing to cope adequately during this transitional period.

Beneficiary Groups

In view of the scale of displacement within the country and the longevity of the conflict, there exists a broad spectrum of beneficiary groups to be supported in the resettlement



Return of abducted child soldiers

process. This also includes existing resident populations in areas in which resettlement is occurring, who too have been severely affected by the conflict and for whom assistance is also required for the most vulnerable. This is to ensure parity of assistance and reduce potential tensions that may arise.

The various beneficiary groups are as follows:

Registered internally displaced persons (IDPs)

This population consists of those displaced persons who have been registered and verified, and are currently receiving IDP support services. This group includes spontaneous returning refugees whose areas of origin are not safe for resettling.

When their home of origin is declared safe for resettlement, these IDPs will enter into the resettlement programme. This will include transportation and the receipt of a resettlement package, the potential for entry on to seeds and tools or other employment-based safety-net programmes, and benefits from community rehabilitation and reconstruction targeted at basic service provision and income generation.

Vulnerable groups

Within the registered IDP beneficiary population, as with other beneficiary groups, there are a number of vulnerable groups deserving special attention during the resettlement process, who include:

- ◆ female-headed households (with no additional able-bodied persons);
- ◆ pregnant and lactating women;
- ◆ mentally and physically handicapped persons (including amputees and war-wounded);
- ◆ orphans;
- ◆ the infirm;
- ◆ the elderly.

Female-headed households

Female-headed households face considerable challenges in returning to their resettlement areas and rebuilding their lives, particularly those who do not have extended families or able-bodied children to support them. Attention has to be given to their basic requirements, such as shelter, rebuilding their livelihoods and protection from sexual violence. Close monitoring of their ability to cope during this transitional process is crucial.

Female-headed households account for roughly 45 per cent of registered IDP households.

The disabled

The exact number of people, both civilians and ex-combatants, who have been disabled as a result of mutilation or war-wounds is unknown. In the case of amputation victims, there are currently 401 registered amputees. It is envisaged that this number will increase as new areas become accessible. Estimates of the war-wounded are as high as 30,000. There are other disabled groups requiring special assistance, such as polio victims.

The current response to these vulnerable people consists primarily of the essential tasks of physical reconstruction, such as through the use of prostheses and physiotherapy, as well as psychological rehabilitation. A key challenge now being faced is in supporting this vulnerable group to become reintegrated back into their communities and re-engaged in meaningful economic activities. The greatest challenge will be faced in rural areas. Special programmes need to be developed to support this transitional process.

Unregistered Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

There is no clear information on the number of unregistered IDPs in the country. This population of IDPs has not been registered and so has not benefited from the support services provided to registered IDPs. Given the drive to phase down IDP camps and support resettlement, the government does not support the registration of new caseloads, unless there is a significant new displacement of people.

Despite this, unregistered IDPs are not excluded from support during the resettlement process. They will be eligible to enter on to seeds and tools programmes and/or other employment-based safety net/income generating schemes, as well as gain benefits from community-based initiatives supporting the rehabilitation and reconstruction of basic services and the resuscitation of the local economy. It is also recommended that agencies consider providing non-food items to the most vulnerable members of the community in the resettlement area. This could be achieved through targeted distributions or through employment-based safety net schemes.

Although this group will not be eligible for resettlement food rations, provisions of food aid for vulnerable groups within this category may be provided through employment-based safety-net schemes, school feeding programmes, VGF rations in cases of food insecurity and, in cases where there is acute malnutrition, therapeutic feeding. The promotion of such interventions will be determined through food security and nutritional monitoring.

Refugees and returnees

Refugees who repatriate spontaneously (without any UNHCR involvement or assistance) to a situation of internal displacement, shall be considered as IDPs and included under relevant mechanisms for IDPs' resettlement. For proper tracking purposes, their formal refugee status will be stated on their resettlement benefit cards. These returnees will not be entitled to benefit from UNHCR repatriation assistance, but will be included under community-based reintegration assistance by UNHCR and other agencies.

Sierra Leonean refugees returning under the framework of UNHCR-assisted repatriation will be given assistance in parity to that offered to registered IDPs.

Organised transportation will however only be provided in the context of a promoted return. This will consist of the provision of transport to the most vulnerable households. In the case of food, a two-month food ration will be provided in their areas of return. This will be distributed at the chiefdom-level alongside resettlement food rations provided to resettling, registered IDPs.

In parity with registered IDPs, refugees will receive a resettlement package. In the case of shelter, ways will be found to ensure that those who cannot build on their own will be provided with assistance to do so. Like other beneficiary groups, returnees will have the opportunity for entering on to seeds and tools projects and/or other employment-based safety net/income generating schemes, as well as gaining benefits from community-based initiatives supporting the rehabilitation and reconstruction of basic services and the resuscitation of the local economy.

Like the internally displaced, the decision as to when their homes of origins are suitably safe to allow their facilitated repatriation will be determined through the Resettlement Assessment Committees, for which UNHCR is represented at all levels.

Non-displaced war-affected population

Non-displaced, war affected populations living in areas of resettlement will receive benefits in the resettlement process similar to that of unregistered IDPs living with host families. This includes the opportunity of entering on to seeds and tools projects and/or other employment-based safety net/income generating schemes, as well as benefits from community-based initiatives supporting the rehabilitation and reconstruction of basic services and the resuscitation of the local economy. As with resettling non-registered IDPs, it is recommended that agencies consider providing non-food items to those most vulnerable members of the community in the resettlement area who were not entitled to a resettlement package. This could be achieved through targeted distributions or through employment-based safety net schemes.



UN documentation of abducted children

Although this group will not be eligible for resettlement food rations, provision of food aid for vulnerable groups within this category may be provided through employment-based safety-net schemes, school feeding programmes, VGF rations in cases of food insecurity and, in cases where there is acute malnutrition, therapeutic feeding. The promotion of such interventions will be determined through food security and nutritional monitoring.

It is envisaged that in areas yet to be declared safe for resettlement, this population group will be provided with humanitarian assistance by non-governmental and international organisations where access is feasible.

Ex-combatants and their dependants

Each ex-combatant discharged from the disarmament and demobilisation process, is provided with assistance to support his or her reintegration into civilian life. This is provided and distributed by the Executive Secretariat of the NCDDR.

Through the reintegration programme of NCDDR, ex-combatants are supported by the training and employment sub-project activities. In addition, ex-combatants and their

dependants, as they reintegrate into communities, will benefit from community-based initiatives supporting the rehabilitation and reconstruction of basic services and the resuscitation of the local economy.

Community-based projects

A core support component of the resettlement process, over and above immediate 'start-up' assistance, will occur through community-based reconstruction and rehabilitation activities that enhance reconciliation and livelihood development. Such activities include:

- ◆ agriculture, fisheries and livestock rehabilitation;
- ◆ shelter;
- ◆ rehabilitation of community infrastructure;
- ◆ re-establishment of essential services;
- ◆ promotion of reconciliation;
- ◆ small enterprise promotion and vocational training schemes;
- ◆ capacity building of local organisations.

As community-based activities, the participation of all members of the community in their development and implementation is a prerequisite for building both the community's and households' livelihood security. Such activities will be a cornerstone for supporting the resettlement and reintegration of IDPs, refugees, ex-combatants and their dependents into their local economy and society.

Support programmes for these activities include:

- ◆ Emergency Recovery Support Fund of the Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme (NCRRR);
- ◆ Training and Employment Programme of the Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme (NCDDR);
- ◆ Sierra Leone Rehabilitation and Resettlement Support Programme (EC);
- ◆ Social Action and Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPA) (NCRRR);
- ◆ SRR Programme (NCRRR);
- ◆ Integrated Development Programme (NCRRR);

- ◆ Reintegration Projects (UNHCR);
- ◆ Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Programmes of NGOs, international organisations, UN agencies and line ministries.

NCRRR and targeted community-based assistance for women

Two of the above programmes of NCRRR, the ERSF and SAPA, will be used to demonstrate the specific community-based projects targeted at women:

The Social Action and Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPA)

The Social Action and Poverty Alleviation Programme has specific areas of concern targeting women in very difficult circumstances as a result of the war.

- ◆ The Special Programmes for Women line item assists displaced women, disabled women and very poor women in income-generating activities such as soap-making and vegetable gardening. This programme has supported about 7,500 women through 30 NGOs.
- ◆ The Micro Credit Programme has benefited over 12,000 women in various safe communities countrywide with soft loans for various income generating activities.
- ◆ The SAPA Programme also rehabilitates and reconstructs maternal and child health centres that cater for the health needs of mothers and children.

The Emergency Recovery Support Fund (ERSF)

The Emergency Recovery Support (ERSF) also supports programmes for resettling populations. Some of these projects are specifically women-focused. To date the programme has funded 13 women's programmes in various areas, for example skills and vocational training, food production and processing, vegetable gardening, capacity building and training in trauma healing, peace-building and reconciliation.

Conclusion

In conclusion it is important to emphasise the need for partnership between men and women in all resettlement-related programmes. The war we all know had damaging consequences. Let us, however, not lose sight of the lessons learnt during those troubled times. One of the greatest lessons learnt is the realisation about the persevering nature of women and how they coped with the responsibility of being sole breadwinners and protectors of their families during the war. Because of the difficulties women experienced during the war as sex slaves, combatants, rape victims, etc., they are the key vehicles to forgiveness, peace-building and reconciliation. It is only by involving them equally in post-war reconstruction, rehabilitation and resettlement can any meaningful



Male amputee, Amputee Camp

development occur in Sierra Leone. The NCRRR is fully aware of and totally committed to the need to make all resettlement programmes for both displaced civilians and ex-combatants gender-sensitive. Government through the NCRRR will continue targeting the most vulnerable for specific benefits during the implementation of the resettlement strategy.

Part 5

Poverty, Economic Recovery and Empowerment



Refugee camp, May 2001

J.D. Rogers

Deputy Minister of Development and Economic Planning

There are compelling reasons why poverty eradication, economic recovery and empowerment should be of immeasurable concern to the government and people of Sierra Leone at this time in our socioeconomic and political development. Poverty dehumanises people and makes them lose their self-esteem, self-respect and dignity. Economic recovery and empowerment are needed to enlarge people's choices and provide opportunities to realise their full potential.

The theme of this paper is 'a failure of imagination'. This derives from the simple fact that extreme poverty characterised by *inter alia*, the high and increasing number of people who go to bed hungry every day, innumerable numbers of children and adults who die from easily curable diseases, high maternal and child mortality rates, could have been avoided with a little bit of imagination.

The grim situation of poverty and extreme suffering is succinctly echoed in the words of a 15-year-old girl:

I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever approaching thunder which will destroy us too; I can feel the suffering of millions, and yet if I look into the heavens, I think that it will come right that this cruelty too will end.

In Sierra Leone the human development and social indicators, including illiteracy, primary school enrolments, life expectancy, maternal deaths, malnutrition, and child mortality rates, suggest that there is extreme human suffering. The infant mortality rate (IMR) is about 182/1000, while life expectancy at birth is about 38 years compared with 45 years for Sub-Saharan Africa. The adult literacy rate is estimated at 30 per cent, while the population with access to safe drinking water is about 34 per cent. Endemic diseases, especially malaria and HIV/AIDS, loom as a new menace. More than 80 per cent of the population lives in absolute poverty, below US\$1 a day.

Macroeconomic indicators show that a high GDP growth rate of 5.8 per cent in the decade following independence (1961–70), gave way to a slower growth rate of 1.5 per cent in the 1970s. By the 1980s GDP growth was virtually zero and negative by the early 1990s. Shortage of basic commodities and high inflation further undermined economic growth. The gains of the early years of independence were systematically eroded by poor

government and reckless economic management characterised by indiscriminate plunder of the national treasury and patronage by political leaders of the poor populace that kept people silent.

Fashiole Luke describes the relationship between political leaders and their constituents as a patron-client or neo-patrimonial relationship:

Within this relationship, the constituents are willing to tolerate their leaders to remain in office, as long as reciprocal returns are provided to the people in the form of jobs, scholarships and so forth, even though they are aware that their representatives are part of an exploitative and kleptocratic elite.

Luke maintains that such relationships 'are the foundations of dictatorship and a reflection of the institutional fragility of the post-colonial nation state in Africa'.

Poverty in Sierra Leone, mainly attributable to several years of bad governance and economic mismanagement, is endemic and pervasive. It is not surprising, therefore, that the country has systematically ranked at the bottom of the Human Development Index since 1990. The ten-year civil war has further exacerbated the depth and severity of poverty.

This state of affairs has been exacerbated by the continuing negative impact of the war. The internal and external displacement of at least 3 million of the approximately 4.7 million people has further worsened both the incidence and severity of poverty. The situation has further impoverished vulnerable groups, especially the rural poor, low-income urban families, and small-scale farmers. A significant category among this group is the women of Sierra Leone.

Given the pervasive and deepening poverty facing a greater segment of the population, the government's key objective is to fight poverty and improve the living conditions for the most vulnerable population in the near term. In working towards the attainment of this goal, the government is committed to forging strong partnerships with the private sector, civil society groups and the donor community.

The main evidence of poverty in Sierra Leone includes:

High Unemployment and Under-employment

A survey of businesses in 1998 showed that the modern sector had narrowed significantly. This is largely due to the shrinkage in public sector employment and the destruction and closure of many private sector establishments. While some of the

redundant formal sector workers have sought refuge in the informal sector, mostly as petty traders, they lack the skills and qualifications required to re-enter formal employment when the situation improves. Currently, it is estimated that the informal sector accounts for at least two-thirds of the labour force and over 70 per cent of the urban labour force. Prospects for rapid employment growth in the modern sector are extremely limited and a growing proportion of the labour force will be compelled to seek employment in the informal sector.

Lack of Access to Social Services

A large proportion of the population do not have access to social services, education, health care, etc., in spite of recent increases in government's budgetary outlays in these areas.

High Debt Burden

This has been evidenced by the high budgetary expenditure on public debt, including external debt service and interest payments. This accounted for about 29 per cent of total recurrent expenditure in 1999 compared with 24.4 per cent for social services during the same period.

Increased Vulnerability from the Civil War

The adverse impact of the civil war on the macro-economy and disruption of economic activities in the rural sector, especially agriculture and mining, has deepened poverty. The increased uncertainty and risk associated with the conflict not only eroded investor confidence, leading to drastic decline in both public and private investment, but also decreased the presence of our development partners in the country. Consequently, the protracted conflict ruined and damaged both economic and social infrastructure.

The government's poverty strategy primarily focuses on addressing the immediate challenges of the transition from war to peace. The strategy emphasises the continued implementation of sound economic policies to attain macroeconomic stability within an overall framework of good governance. A stable macro-economy will also underpin the sectoral and other more specific interventions that would be designed through participatory processes involving consultations with civil society.

In the transitional phase, the strategy will focus on rebuilding the war-ravaged economy, and addressing the urgent and basic needs of war victims will remain government's utmost priority in the transitional period. In this regard, emphasis would be placed on the restoration of security for life and property including the protection of human rights,

relaunching the economy, and the provision of basic social and economic services to the most vulnerable groups as well as enhancing access to productive assets.

The resolution of the conflict remains an important first step in any programme designed to address the poverty needs of the population. In this regard, the government has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to the principal provisions of the Lomé Peace Agreement, which represents a broad framework for cessation of hostilities and establishment of sustainable peace.

The second priority is to relaunch the economy. In this connection, government recognises that the maintenance of macroeconomic stability is a prerequisite for the attainment of sustainable and higher economic growth, essential for reducing poverty. The government's short- and medium-term macroeconomic strategy would seek to sustain the gains already achieved in reducing macroeconomic imbalances in the economy by continuing to implement sound fiscal and monetary policies, while ensuring the prudent management of financial resources.

Government's key objective is to reduce the debt overhang, which crowds out private investment as well as public expenditure in the social sectors. Hence the country's debt strategy will remain an integral part of both the macroeconomic and poverty reduction strategy.

In this connection, government will seek maximum debt relief under the Enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Any relief obtained will be utilised as additional resources to finance critical poverty alleviation activities. Also government will ensure that all new borrowings are highly concessional with a grant element of at least 35 per cent. The government is committed to targeting new loan resources to basic social and economic activities.

The third priority is to focus on some key sectoral programmes including activities to improve food security, increase access to basic education and health facilities and provide community-based counselling and support to the most vulnerable war victims. In this regard, the government is reviewing the roles of key sector line Ministries *vis-à-vis* their relationship with civil society and other stakeholders in budget formulation and implementation to ensure better and effective delivery of services.

In the meantime, in tandem with the implementation of these key priority activities, government has continued to work with various partners to implement emergency poverty implementations. To this end, the Social Action and Poverty Alleviation (SAPA) programme, funded by the African Development Bank (ADB), has made tremendous strides in the areas of poverty reduction and reconstruction of community

infrastructure facilities in the education and health sectors. It has also played a key role in the government's micro-credit programme.

The Community Re-integration and Rehabilitation Project (CRRP) which seeks to address the short-term post-conflict needs of ex-combatants, refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and the communities to which beneficiaries return, was successfully launched in March 2000 in Freetown (Western Area), in Bo (Southern region) and in Kenema (Eastern region). Insecurity and hindered access precluded launching in the North. Notwithstanding, sub-projects implementation in the North has been initiated. The CRRP has two components: the Economic Recovery Support Fund (ERSF) funded by the World Bank and the ADB and the Training and Employment Programme (TEP). The ERSF will facilitate the recovery of communities through the restoration of basic economic and social services via demand-driven community oriented projects that target IDPs and refugees. The TEP supports social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants through counselling, training and employment initiatives.

The Economic Rehabilitation and Recovery Credit (ERRC) is a World Bank quick disbursing loan in the amount of US\$30 million that will help finance the 2000/01 slice of the NRRP. It provides critical balance of payments and budgetary support to finance part of the foreign exchange and budgetary costs of the programme to establish peace



Women are the main agricultural producers.

and security. These funds also contribute to the transitional safety net allowance for adult ex-combatants and the settlement plan of domestic arrears in the private sector.

The Preventive Development Project (PDP) funded by the UNDP focused on the resettlement and reintegration of the conflict-affected population, including ex-combatants, by means of community-based initiatives and reintegration programmes linking emergency and humanitarian assistance to long-term development. The programme was, however, disrupted by the events of January 1999. However, available resources were converted to the Quick Impact Action Programme (QUAP) to respond to the humanitarian crisis presented by the rebel incursion of the Western Area.

The successor programme to the PDP is the Support to Resettlement and Reintegration Programme (SRRP). The project will seek to link emergency and development assistance in the restoration of an environment that will permit the resumption of peaceful and sustainable reintegration.

Government's priority is to ensure access to relevant, reliable and timely socioeconomic information on the poverty situation. In the transition period, the Strategic Planning and Action Process (SPP) Technical Committee, in consultation with the Central Statistics Office (CSO), would carry out surveys to establish benchmarks regarding the current poverty situation. In the medium term, priority will be given to building a comprehensive information base for poverty analysis and monitoring.

An important activity in this direction will be to conduct a population census in 2002 that will provide information about the geographical distribution and characteristics of the people. The census would also provide a basis for comprehensive household income and expenditure surveys or living standard measurement survey.

Presently, the Central Statistics Office, in collaboration with various donor agencies, has concluded the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey. The report was first launched in the Western Area in 2001 and will soon be launched in the provinces.

Added to this, a major objective of the UNDP-funded project, the Integrated Approach to Aid Coordination (IAAC), is to conduct baseline surveys on external aid inflows. The results will provide updated information on some of the statistics required for measuring and monitoring the poverty situation and addressing gender disparities in the country.

As part of the efforts to strengthen the CSO, government intends to transform it into an autonomous statistical institution. The legislation to do this will be enacted by parliament during 2001. The Act will advance the planning, production, analysis, documentation, storage, dissemination and use of social and economic statistics.

In support of further reforms and efforts to stabilise the economy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved an economic programme in the context of the Emergency Post Conflict Assistance Facility in December 1999. The World Bank also approved the Economic Rehabilitation and Recovery Credit to assist government in restoring protective and economic security. Other donors, including the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the Department for International Development (DFID) UK, and the European Commission (EC), have provided ongoing emergency recovery assistance, including budgetary support, to enhance government's capacity to fund critical programmes and enhance its capacity to deliver services.

A further evidence of the government's commitment to poverty alleviation has been the increased social sector expenditure in the face of a severe dwindling of revenues. The share of social sector expenditure in total recurrent expenditure rose from 15 per cent in 1990/91 to 21 per cent in 1995/96. Despite high security and external debt interest payments, the share of social sector expenditures has averaged 26 per cent in the last five years. The government has also demonstrated the importance it attaches to poverty reduction by supporting a programme of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants. The DDR programme is being implemented concurrently with the Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (RRR) programme, whose major objective is reconstruction and poverty reduction.

In Sierra Leone, women account for about 51 per cent of the total population and contribute to most of the household food requirements, including carrying out domestic chores and caring for the aged and children. This notwithstanding, they are marginalised in society and lack adequate access to productive assets including land, credit, training and technology. With limited access to formal sector employment (less than 10 per cent), women resort mainly to food production and petty trading to earn a living for themselves and their dependents where the earnings are generally low.

Government has also accorded high priority to gender equality and mainstreaming of gender in policies and programmes. In this regard, the government has established special national machinery for gender- and children-related activities including the creation of a Ministry for Gender and Children's Affairs. A national gender programme in development policy has also been formulated. The formulation of this policy demonstrates the commitment of government to the principles of social justice and equity. The focus of the Ministry will be to create a vision of hope for women and children, the disabled, marginalised and disadvantaged.

Presently, the Ministry, through various women's NGOs, has embarked on strategic actions dealing with the poverty of women and children. The main thrust is to empower particularly women and young persons in rural and depressed urban areas through

capacity-building and employment creation. In the case of women, government will enhance their access to all essential productive resources (including credit and appropriate skills training), as well as their participation in decision-making at national, provincial district and local levels. Constraints to women's access to resources, customary laws, will also be reviewed. For children, their empowerment will be facilitated by the enactment of appropriate bills in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Government has also recently approved the creation of a National Agency for War-Affected Children.

The challenges facing us are monumental. In taking on these challenges it is important to note the great opportunities that the country provides, including:

- ◆ Strong family and religious background demonstrated by the powerful individual, family and community coping capacities that have absorbed extraordinary difficulties and pressures imposed by the ongoing conflict.
- ◆ The existence of strong will and determination on the part of the government to end the war, and facilitate the democratisation process, leading to multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections.
- ◆ The existence of sectoral policies and action plans that would be of value in the design of programmes.
- ◆ The huge potential in human, mineral and agricultural resources, and opportunities that exist for change of attitudes and adoption of new ideas and approaches for restructuring and modernisation of the socio-economic and political systems.
- ◆ Strong support for the NGO community, some of whom have had a long history of assisting disadvantaged communities/groups in Sierra Leone.
- ◆ Strong international commitment, particularly from donors represented in Sierra Leone, to work with the United Nations not just on the peace initiative but in the mobilisation of resources required for reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction of war-affected areas.

These opportunities are a source of hope, and must be used to the fullest extent possible in addressing the problems currently facing the country.

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Introduction

The economy of Sierra Leone has undergone a series of downturns since the early 1970s, from which it has not yet recovered. Negative growth rates were particularly noticeable in the national economic statistics in the 1980s. An oft-quoted statement by policymakers and the citizenry alike is the fact that Sierra Leone was a richer country in per capita terms in 1961 when it attained its independent status, than at its fortieth anniversary of independence in the new millennium. The economy revolves around agricultural and mining activities, which accounted for nearly two-thirds of GDP in the 1990s.

Trends in the Macroeconomy (1990–99)

The negative trend in the 1980s continued during the 1990s, though the reasons for the decline were not necessarily the same for the two periods. A look at the macroeconomic trends in the past decade reveals discouraging statistics of economic performance.

According to the tables provided in the Annex A, Table 5.1 shows a decline in real GDP from US\$1,227.19 million in 1990 to US\$674.74 in 1999. Agriculture and related activities account for 47 per cent, Services 25 per cent, Industry 24 per cent, and



FAWE training centre, Grafton Village: 'employment is a means to financial independence'

Electricity and Water Supply less than 1 per cent of GDP for the decade, respectively. Average inflation was 43 per cent, but with treble digit inflation rates on an annual 'year-on-year' computation in the first two years of the decade. The interest rate, i.e., the commercial banks' prime lending rate, was 34 per cent on average for the decade, as in Table 5.2. Government's budget as portrayed in Table 5.3 shows Defence, 18.6 per cent, Foreign Interest Payments 15.0 per cent, Education 14.1 per cent, and Health 6.0 per cent, as percentage share disbursements for the average period. With reference to Table 5.4, government's finance recorded a persistent deficit throughout the decade except in 1998. Likewise the Balance of Payments shows payment deficits, apart from 1991 as recorded in Table 5.5.

The official Exchange Rate (period average, mid-rate), spiralled from Le148 to the US dollar in 1990 to Le1818.1 to the US dollar in 1999, as reflected in Table 5.6. The gap between the official mid parallel markets widened in 1999. Also Gross Reserves improved towards the end of the decade, from US\$ 4.8 million in 1990 to US\$ 37.6 million. Total External Debt was averaging US\$1,222 million and remained more or less stable for the review period, as shown in Table 5.7. Also in that Table, Public Debt had grown significantly in money terms from Le10,642 million in 1990 to Le231,667 million in 1999.

Table 5.8 provides Memorandum Items and attention is drawn to three key items. The first is that real GDP annual growth rate was basically negative. The second is that Domestic Debt as percentage of Fiscal Revenue was high. The third is that Total External Debt to GDP ratio was increasing towards the end of the decade and was twice as much as the ratio at the beginning of the decade. Official Development Assistance (ODA) is seen in Table 5.9. The years 1993 to 1996 attracted the highest donor support, averaging nearly US\$50 per person. In terms of allocation of external assistance, Table 5.10 shows a preference for Investment Project Assistance. This item accounted for 35 per cent of all assistance for the selected years. The Bumbuna HEP Project particularly and the Electricity Power Sector generally, were a primary source of allocation for that item (see Annex A for Tables 5.1–5.10).

Main Reasons for Economic Decline

The question to ask is, 'Why has the country's economy continued to slump?'

According to the *Action Programme for the Development of Sierra Leone, 2001–2010*, prepared for the Third LDC (Least Developed Countries) Conference in Brussels, May 2001, the factors that impeded socio-economic growth and development, are identified as being basically structural and include:

- ◆ low level of human development and technology use;
- ◆ low productivity of labour, especially in agriculture;

- ◆ inadequate infrastructural facilities;
- ◆ acute shortage of skilled manpower;
- ◆ high population growth rate;
- ◆ low status of women;
- ◆ high dependence on the external sector;
- ◆ small domestic market.

These may be acceptable as far as an economic explanation can be advanced. There are, however, two main political-economic reasons, which should complement the factors given above. The first of these is that of bad economic and political governance. Sierra Leone had its first spate of political instability with a military coup in 1967. Since the imposition of one-party rule by the All People's Congress (APC) government in 1978, the country has experienced an era of civilian and military dictatorships, except for brief periods between 1996 and May 1997, and also from March 1998 to the present, apart from a rebel invasion in 1999. Economic management in those 'undemocratic periods' has been characterised by reckless and widespread public corruption. This resulted in over-expenditure and 'cost-overruns', as well as the extra-budgetary financing of public debt.

The second and more marked reason, on hindsight, has to be the incidence of the Rebel War from March 1991 to the present. The impact of the war has profoundly damaged the economic infrastructure. What it did was not only to prevent economic recovery that was already on the decline in the 1980s, but imposed unbearable hardships on an already impoverished nation.

Finally, other causes, which are worth mentioning, are the Hosting of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Summit in 1980 and the 'shocks' of the two 'Energy Crises' of 1973 and 1979. The combined effect of these economic landmarks was the total drain of foreign reserves, leaving the country in a state of bankruptcy and a proportionately sizeable external debt situation.

Debt Burden

The country has a small economy, but has incurred a relatively large external debt over the years. The beginning of the debt crisis in Sierra Leone has its origins in the oil crises of the 1970s and the Hosting of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Summit in Freetown, 1980, as stated above. Reserves, which were at a precariously low level because of the increased oil bills, were used to ensure that the OAU meeting was hosted without any hitches and the event presented as a 'national showcase'. Economic mismanagement was also blamed for the lack of foreign exchange needed for the



Providing quality skills-training for young people

repatriation of profit by foreign-owned concerns. This untenable situation caused a number of closures of foreign businesses. There was also a 'cash-strapped' economy in the mid-1980s as inflation soared. The high inflation rate necessitated the institution of a floating exchange rate regime in 1986, which reflected the true value of the Leone and did not require foreign exchange reserves to maintain a 'par value'. External borrowings were needed to finance imports for misconceived and reckless investment projects. As a result, Sierra Leone became blacklisted as a debtor country by the IMF at the end of the 1980s and had to accept IMF conditionalities through the Structural Adjustment Programme in 1989.

Table 5.7 and 5.8 show the status of public debt. In Table 5.8, Total External Debt /GDP (per cent) had increased from 97.4 per cent in 1990 to 182 per cent in 1999. Two factors were at play. The total debt stock and the falling GDP levels were the causes of this movement or trend. The secondary impact was definitely war-related. First, there was a need to finance the war and, second, low national productivity (GDP) resulted because of war constraints on economic activities. Efforts at debt reduction paid off, through

rescheduling under the Paris Club Accords of 1992, 1994 and 1996, and the successful debt buy-back operations in 1995. These initiatives reduced the debt stock from US\$1,346m in 1993 to US\$1,142m in 1998, thus clearing arrears with the African Development Bank (ADB), European Investment Bank (EIB), the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). A total of US\$245 million of debts were rescheduled between 1994 and 1996. A commitment was made under the Policy Framework Paper 1995-98, not to embark on any new external borrowing on non-concessionary terms.

It has been fully agreed by the World Bank and other international development experts that 'unsustainably high external debt has also become a key constraint on development' for many LDCs in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Poverty in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has been categorised as the very last of the least developed countries, according to the UNDP's Human Development Index, for the last five years. This index comprises per capita income levels, education and health indicators.

Profile of Poverty

The poverty profile for Sierra Leone 1995, using 1989/90 data, indicates that 75 per cent of the total population is poor and more than two-thirds is absolutely poor. Spatial distribution shows that the Northern Province has the highest incidence of poverty at 85.8 per cent. The Southern Province has relatively the best circumstances with 77.5 per cent. Both the Western Area and the Eastern Province have approximately the same situation, with 80.8 per cent and 80.0 per cent, respectively.

Gender Dimension

The poverty profile for Sierra Leone also acknowledges that women are poorer than men. The sectoral overview of the 'Integrated Approach to Aid Co-ordination' (IAAC) report (February 2001), confirms that at the time of the survey (1989/90), the poorest females relative to males were recorded in the Bonthe District (53.2 per cent). The males in Kono were the poorest (55.9 per cent). Table 5.13 demonstrates a predominance of poor male-headed households. The female-headed households are very small in percentage terms—only 2.3 per cent, as compared with 97.7 per cent for their male counterparts, but recorded better standards of living. The reason seems to be that 'these households mainly have a significant proportion of the female population' (viz. Draft I-PRSP Report, 2001).

Occupational Dimension

Table 5.14 (see Annex A) addresses the occupational disparities in the incidence of poverty. The revelation is that occupational groups, which are thought to be better off in nominal income terms, were proved not to be the case. Professional/technical personnel, for example, are the poorest, whilst production/transportation and agriculture/forestry workers are the relatively better off. This is shown in Table 5.1 at 0.660, as against 0.529 and 0.535, respectively.

In Table 5.14, 'Poverty Indices for Selected Years', the non-income components, basic health and education figures, are given for the more qualitative aspects of poverty. The life expectancy in Sierra Leone is 38 compared to 45 for Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. Infant and child mortality, as well as maternal mortality rates, are among the highest in the world. Only about three in ten Sierra Leoneans can read and write.

One fundamental aspect of poverty relates to food intake. Malnutrition (underweight children) is recorded in the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), 2000, as 34 per cent of under-five children. Only 2,035 kcal and 44 gms of protein constitute an average daily diet for Sierra Leoneans. The comparable figures are 2,663 kcal and 67 gms of protein for other Sub-Saharan (SSA) countries. This new MICS Report 2000 is giving a grimmer profile of the state of poverty in Sierra Leone. One deduction that can be easily reached is the fact that the country is progressively worse off now than in the 1960s.

Causes of Poverty

Many diverse causes of the poverty situation in Sierra Leone can be put forward. However, the Draft I-PRSP Document 2001 suggests the following:

- ◆ lack of access to social services;
- ◆ increased vulnerability from the rebel war;
- ◆ bad governance and economic management.

The sum total of the causes of the incidence of poverty, however, cannot be also divorced from low productivity due to the poor state of the human capital of Sierra Leone. A brief natural resource survey will readily disclose that the country is endowed with mineral resources such as diamonds, gold, rutile, ilmenite, bauxite and iron ore in economically exploitable quantities. There is also evidence of platinum, lignite and oil. It also has a fair percentage of agriculturally cultivable land and forest resources, a good fishing ground, and adequate water resources. There is also the possibility for mini-hydroelectricity development, because of the presence of numerous sites that could be exploited for power production.

Economic Reform

Serious economic reform to address the decline of the economy can be traced to the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. The agreed objectives of the programme were:

- ◆ to achieve and maintain a stable macroeconomic environment;
- ◆ to redefine the role of the public sector while restoring the government's capacity to provide basic services;
- ◆ to create an economic environment conducive to private sector development with a predictable, transparent, and fair regulatory framework.

The strategies emanating from the above objectives were as follows:

- ◆ liberalisation of trade and exchange rate;
- ◆ de-regulation of process;
- ◆ strengthening of fiscal management and domestic resource mobilisation;
- ◆ elimination of subsidies (especially on petroleum products, and the staple food, rice);
- ◆ streamlining of the civil service;
- ◆ divestiture of state-owned enterprises.

According to the 'Action Programme for the Development of Sierra Leone, 2001–2010' (2001), 'these objectives and strategies still constitute the basic framework of Government's economic reform policy.'

Addressing Poverty

Poverty concerns in economic policy lean on two pillars. The first is a reaction to the harsh consequences of instituting the Structural Adjustment Programme. The second is aimed at ameliorating the ravages of the rebel war.

The SAP elicited intervention not from within the policy environment, but introduced as a general response to the worldwide programme by the international development agencies. The World Bank Group and the African Development Bank (ADB) supported the establishment of SAPA, Social Action for Poverty Alleviation programme in 1993. It gave out small community and personal grants/loans to the 'adversely-affected' as a result of SAP programme implementation. After assessing the state of development in LDCs at several key meetings, such as that for the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), the World Bank Group stressed a poverty focus as the new development strategy to be adopted by LDCs, entitled a 'pro-poor growth strategy'.

The idea of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) was therefore conceived, thereby setting poverty-reduction in the centre of international development strategy. The increasing globalisation portrays more evidently that only a few wealthy nations and multinational companies consume the greatest proportion of the world's resources, leaving in their wake untold billions of the poor. Such a novel approach attempts to bridge this great divide to more acceptable proportions.

To quote IMF staffers, David Andrews et al., the imperatives of the PRSP approach are as follows:

The adoption of the mutually owned Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper represents a new paradigm for integrating poverty reduction efforts through coherent macroeconomic policies, structural reforms, and social policies consistent with this overarching goal. The international community must now move rapidly to support the country-specific implementation of PRSPs.

The second policy reason for addressing poverty is related to the war. Poverty through bad economic governance was blamed for the start of the rebel war. The associated reason is to deal with the poverty exacerbated by the rebel war, in post-war rehabilitation activities. The target groups are not just ordinarily poor citizens, but the ex-combatants, the displaced, the refugees, the war-injured (amputees), the war orphans and other such categories of persons.

The policy blueprint to address this area is the Draft Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) within the context of an IMF/IBRD lending programme, called the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility. However, already in place is the National Resettlement Rehabilitation and Recovery Programme (NRRRP).

This current programme of support is subdivided into a number of other programmes such as:

- ◆ The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Programme. A welfare programme for ex-combatants;
- ◆ The Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme (CRRP). A programme designed in two components to give economic recovery support in a fund, and the training and employment of ex-combatants;
- ◆ Economic Rehabilitation and Recovery Credit Programme (ERRC). This is described as a 'quick disbursing credit' for B.O.P., law and order, social and economic infrastructure;



Income-generating activities are needed for self-reliance

- ◆ The Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP) financing provided for medical and other supplies for displaced persons;
- ◆ European Commission Sierra Leone Resettlement and Rehabilitation Programme (EC/SLRRP). Multidimensional programme for community infrastructural development;
- ◆ The Reconstruction Resettlement and Rehabilitation Programme (RRRP). This programme is aimed at consolidation of the on-going peace process.

Donors/Partners

Table 5.15 gives a self-explanatory guide to the major donor/partners and their contribution. It is pertinent to note that some of these funds are loans, albeit soft ones, while others are grants, which need not be repaid. This is significant in resolving our debt problems, thereby releasing more funds for economic development.

Other key macroeconomic stabilisation and support programmes are the Economic Recovery and Rehabilitation Credit Programme (ERRC) I and II (World Bank), the Structural Adjustment Credit (SAC) II (ADB) and the Programme Aid (DfID).

Empowerment

Because of the sad experiences of the rebel war and the general political instability that pervaded the country for the last twenty odd years, good governance principles need to be encouraged. The SLPP government took its cue from the international community to instil qualities of good governance for economic, political and social progress. For example, the British government hinged development assistance for Sierra Leone on the good governance record of the NPRC military regime in 1992, forcing it to recognise the importance accorded to the principles in the Western donor community and the United Nations.

A 'National Strategy for Good Governance' was produced in February 1997. It stressed five broad areas of concern, given as follows:

- ◆ national formulation and analysis of policy;
- ◆ local government and decentralisation of authority;
- ◆ civil society awareness and empowerment;
- ◆ public sector reform;
- ◆ rule of law and human rights.

Institutionally, a Governance Secretariat has been established within the present Ministry of Presidential Affairs. Sub-programmes include *inter alia*:

- ◆ the nomination of an Ombudsman;
- ◆ the appointment of an Anti-Corruption Commissioner;
- ◆ expansion of the Mass Media (nation-wide broadcast);
- ◆ support to the police, parliament, political parties and local government;
- ◆ establishment of the National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights.

Of particular importance is the attention given to women's rights and gender sensitivity. A Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs was established (later combined with the Social Welfare Ministry), following the country's participation in the Nairobi, Abuja, Dakar and Beijing Conferences on women. Two significant national policy documents on the advancement of women and gender mainstreaming, were produced in 2000.

In terms of national policy and public sector management, there have been opportunities for civil society participation in rather impressive ways. Two important national Consultative Workshops were called in 1995 to seek advice on political courses

of action. A host of other National Consultative meetings were conducted in a similar vein, which included, *inter alia*:

- ◆ The National Consultative Conference on the Power Sector (June 2000);
- ◆ The National Consultative Conference on Privatisation of Public Enterprises (October 2000);
- ◆ The National Consultative Conference on Education (November 2000).

The widespread consultative strategy has been developed into an approach now dubbed the Strategic Planning and Action Process. A Technical Committee, comprising public servants, periodically runs surveys on the civil societal preferences, appreciation, national development priorities and public service delivery. This bottom-up approach to development planning was adopted for the preparation of the March 2001 National Long-term Perspective Studies (NLTPS, Vision 2025).

The formulation of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme, the country Paper for the Third LDC Conference in Brussels Belgium, May 2001, the preparation of a National Indicative Programme for EU intervention, all went through the SPP system of nationwide civil society participation. The idea that such a document must be 'owned' by the people of Sierra Leone has gained currency.

Of a more important empowerment-enhancing civil society programme relating to poverty and gender is the Medium-Term Economic Framework (MTEF) process and the National Budget 2001. From the premise that public sector corruption, as evidenced in numerous commissions of enquiry, has created or increased the levels of poverty, efforts are presently being made to address this national malaise. Indeed, the SPP Technical Committee conducted a survey between April and June 2000, captioned, 'Regional Focus Group Validation of Development Priorities and Medium Term Strategies of Poverty Reduction and Economic Recovery in Sierra Leone'. Of the six most important policy priority areas chosen by the civil society, the rankings in order of importance are given in the Table 5.16 in Annex A.

It should be noted that after security, good governance (particularly regarding corruption in the public sector), was deemed to be of high priority.

On the instigation of the IMF/IBRD the MTEF Process was introduced in public sector management in the Budget Speech of the Minister of Finance in December 2000. The Minister stated that:

In order to improve the budget process and enhance application of existing tools and improve their effectiveness, Government has approved and adopted the new

Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). The MTEF takes a multi-year planning perspective and focuses attention on the monitorable outcomes of the budget (example, number of primary pupils enrolled) rather than on the budget expenditures alone.

On Monitoring Budget Outcomes and Service Delivery, the Minister advised on the use of the SPP framework, 'to enhance monitoring of public expenditures and the delivery of basic services to the rural communities on a periodic basis'. He concluded by stating that:

To this end, the budget has been designed to ensure greater beneficiary involvement in the delivery of services and more emphasis on results with a role for the MTEF Technical Committee in sensitising civil society in budgetary oversight.

The MTEF Committee has been set up and has conducted its first nationwide sensitisation exercise. The sum of the exercise has been to encourage civil society as the targeted beneficiaries of public funds, to be more vigilant in monitoring service delivery in the public sector. This approach received nationwide support from civil society. Finally, an on-going programme is the 'State of the Nation's Symposium', which is a public forum where there are opportunities for civil society members to question and comment on the workings of line Ministries. The respective Ministers make public progress statements and lead a panel of their officials that respond to public queries.

Conclusion

A cursory glance can be taken on strides made and some preliminary assessments. Poverty in Sierra Leone is endemic and has been found to be deepening because of the political instability of the rebel war. Alleviation of poverty is strongly linked to agricultural production. The agricultural sector engages some 70 per cent of the work force (I-PRSP Document, 2001) and contributes 47.3 per cent to GDP (1990–2000) (LDC Doc. 2000). Approximately half of the country's land area was under the control of the rebel RUF. Over two-thirds of the population is either internally displaced or live as refugees in neighbouring countries. The brain-drain resulting from insecurity has effectively depleted the small quantum of human capital that is needed to form the 'critical mass' for improved economic productivity.

Economic reconstruction is essential to reestablish production, create employment and stabilise prices. A number of such programmes have been launched, some with emergency implications like the Quick Impact Action Programme (QUAP), the Emergency Post-Conflict Facility (EPCF) and the Ninety-day Action Plan. Others are short to medium-term, like the Structural Adjustment Support Programme (SASP) and

the Medium-term Expenditure Framework. Yet others are poverty-focused such as the SAPA and the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility. The major partners have been identified above, but UNICEF and many NGOs that operate in communities have spearheaded poverty-focused development. These institutions have propped up the economy in a number of ways, but more importantly, for social service delivery. The needs of reconstruction are indeed very great, when stock is taken of the enormous destruction to the physical and social infrastructure of the nation. A massive inflow of funds is ideal, reminiscent of the Marshall Plan by the US to Germany after the Second World War. Obviously, such funds cannot be raised quickly within the economy. A lot of external assistance is needed, but may not be forthcoming, and therefore proper planning and allocation of available funds for maximum impact is mandatory, if the reconstruction is to have any meaningful results. A more functional donor policy by the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning (MODEP) is now in place, to assist in the coordination of NGO support. Again, a blueprint in a 25-year vision is also in the process of being developed in the hope that a sense of direction is derived for the nation's economic development.

Empowerment has taken roots, as the efforts of public awareness programmes appear to be paying some dividends. Culturally, women have not been given equal status as men. The problems and issues are well known, but perhaps it is fair to say that there is more public acceptability of women in this society than 20 years ago. The governance programme is funded from without and is in no danger at present of being scuttled by lack of funds. The people have been decisive over their democratic freedoms as demonstrated under the AFRC Regime (May 1997 to February 1998), with a campaign of civil disobedience. The demonstration at the residence of the Revolutionary United Front's (RUF) leader on 8 May 2000, was another landmark event that immortalised 22 martyrs, who gave their lives for the cause of democracy. Open media debates attest to the growing participation of civil society in national affairs.

The question of political leadership and strong political will has always been overshadowed by the spectre of war. Poverty and economic development will have to be taken by the 'boot strings'. A concerted effort is needed, so that Sierra Leoneans can say to poverty what they have said to coups, 'No, never again!'

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Part 6

Gender Issues in Health, HIV/AIDS and STIs



HIV prevention poster campaign: 'AIDS can get you totally wasted'

Ibrahim Tejan-Jalloh

Minister of Health and Sanitation

Health is increasingly being seen as one of the cornerstones and prerequisites of economic growth and development. As the saying goes 'Health may not be everything, but without health there is nothing'. The health status of the population has a prominent place in the cycle of poverty and degradation that characterises Sierra Leone a decade after the war began. This cycle can only be broken if people can achieve and maintain a satisfactory level of health that will permit them to lead economically productive lives.

With regard to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), as the name implies, they are transmitted principally through sexual intercourse, that is, hetero- as well as homosexual; some can also be transmitted through blood and blood products. These include common infections like gonorrhoea and syphilis. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is caused by the HIV (Human Immune Deficiency Virus), which attacks and, over time, destroys the body's immune system. To reproduce, HIV must enter a body cell, which in this case is an immune cell. By interfering with the cells that protect us against infections, HIV leaves the body poorly protected against the particular types of infections that these cells normally deal with. On destruction of the immune system, the human body becomes incapable of defending itself from various diseases that are named 'opportunistic infections', many of which, like common influenza and TB, affect the lungs; they also include other sexually transmitted infections like herpes.

Since it was first diagnosed in the United States, HIV/AIDS has gradually spread worldwide. This pandemic is undoubtedly proving to be the most important threat to health and development, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where it continues to spread like wildfire. To date, the causes for the emergence and spread of this infection are still contentious, and form the basis of numerous heated debates. What we have to contend with is an extremely serious, escalating problem that needs to be urgently addressed to prevent catastrophic consequences.

When it was initially recognised, HIV/AIDS was considered a health problem principally; this is not the case anymore. It is now considered one of the most complex development problems caused by health, socio-cultural and economic factors, all of which fuel the spread of the disease and lead to adverse impacts on individuals,

communities and nations. To date, there is no known cure for HIV/AIDS; the very limited drugs, which could prolong patients' lives, are very expensive, and limited largely to the developed countries of the world. There have been some recent changes in this situation, with concrete steps being taken to make these drugs more readily affordable for poor, developing countries, including Sierra Leone. We are presently in the process of negotiating with Boehringer Ingelheim—a well-known pharmaceutical company that has committed itself to providing us with free anti-retroviral drugs that prevent mother-to-child transmission and with other drugs at reduced cost. At the sub-regional level, ministers from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) met with pharmaceutical companies at the 2001 summit on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases and at the 54th World Health Assembly in Geneva, to work out a common strategy on drugs for HIV/AIDS.

In Sierra Leone the first cases of the disease were reported in 1987, diagnosed in the Southern (Bo) and Eastern (Kenema) provinces. Since then, numerous efforts have been made to determine the magnitude of the HIV/AIDS situation in Sierra Leone. Many of these studies have been restricted in geographic coverage and extent, and different groups have hotly contested the inconclusive results. One striking pattern that is agreed by all is that there is a gradual increase in the prevalence of the disease. Indeed, many of the predisposing factors for this already exist. These include the breakdown in civil society as a result of the war, massive population displacements with attendant losses in livelihoods and shelter, increase in prostitution (also amongst males), homosexuality, intravenous drug abuse, and the presence of peacekeeping troops from many countries where the problem is much more pronounced from the epidemiological as well as socio-economic points of view.

In the early 1980s, HIV/AIDS was considered primarily a health problem—consequently solutions were sought in the health sector. With support from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other UN agencies and organisations, the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health established a National AIDS Control Program with offices at Connaught Hospital. This was considered the principal structure charged with the responsibility of controlling this emerging scourge. As the problem escalated, other adverse development-related consequences of the disease became more apparent. The realisation dawned that if the scourge is to be contained, the determinants that lie outside the health sector, especially the socio-economic causes and effects, must be addressed.

Currently, the World Bank, in partnership with UNAIDS, other agencies and partners, is spearheading the development of a multi-sector response to the emerging HIV/AIDS epidemic in Sierra Leone through the formulation of the Sierra Leone HIV/AIDS Multi-Sector Project (SHARP). This is to be a country programme within the context of the US\$500 million Multi-Country HIV/AIDS Program for the African Region (MAP),

which was approved by the Board of the World Bank in September 2000. This project will help to organise the response against the emerging HIV/AIDS epidemic, as well as against sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis, which are important risk co-factors in the early stages of the epidemic. This is to be achieved through a multi-sector approach by:

- ◆ containing or reducing the level of the epidemic;
- ◆ mitigating its effects;
- ◆ increasing access to prevention services as well as care and support for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

The emphasis of the project will be on prevention among youth and women of child-bearing age, groups that are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and that represent a large segment of the Sierra Leonean population. The intention is also to address the military and ex-combatants.

This contribution from the World Bank and other above-mentioned partners is not intended to replace, but to supplement existing, planned, or proposed activities of others. The proposed four components of SHARP are:

1. Capacity Building and Policy Development

This will enhance the institutional capacity to develop and implement a coordinated, multi-sectoral prevention and care HIV/AIDS campaign based on a national strategy and action plan. It will support the assessment, restructuring and strengthening of the National HIV/AIDS Council and Secretariat for coordination and administration; assist in the development of a National HIV/AIDS Strategy and Action Plan; provide advocacy training and technical support activities; and support monitoring and evaluation.

2. Multi-Sectoral Responses for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care

This will support key line ministries in developing their plans and implementing HIV/AIDS-related activities for their staff and for their client groups, with respect to HIV/AIDS prevention and care, including support for people living with HIV/AIDS and their dependants.

3. Health Sector Responses

These will improve Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) health services related to HIV/AIDS/STIs, including management protocols, training, testing, counselling, HIV/AIDS patient care, and related improvements in delivering services. Other specific interventions will include capacity-building of staff, procurement of condoms, refinement of National Health Action Plan in relationship to HIV/AIDS and STIs, and

support to the development of guidelines and the strengthening of health infrastructure to make the use of anti-retroviral therapy safe, effective and sustainable.

4. Community and Civil Society Initiatives

These will support community-based initiatives proposed by civil society organisations and other groups for HIV/AIDS prevention, as well as care and support of people living with HIV/AIDS and their dependants. Emphasis will be on Information, Education and Communication and Behaviour Change Communications (IEC/BCC) campaigns; support to high-risk groups and vulnerable groups subject to sexual abuse; youth-related activities, and income-generating activities for People Living with HIV/AIDS and other dependants. It is expected that over 50 per cent of SHARP resources will be allocated for these activities, highlighting the importance of this component.

To date, implementation arrangements for the proposed National AIDS Control Programme include the establishment of the following structures:

- ◆ National HIV/AIDS Council (NAC) with the President as Chairman. Council members will be representatives of civil society and the government in equal numbers. The composition includes ministers, NGOs, civil society, the private sector, representatives of religious, women's, and youth groups, as well as people living with HIV/AIDS. Duties of the NAC will include overall responsibility for SHARP and the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and Plan of Action, defining broad proprieties of action for the SHARP, and monitoring both the performance of the SHARP, as well as national performance in responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, including that of the health sector.
- ◆ National HIV/AIDS Secretariat will have dual responsibilities in that it will both serve as the NAC Secretariat, but also be responsible for SHARP multi-sector activities including planning, coordinating, monitoring and evaluation, and research. It will be headed by a director who will report to the National HIV/AIDS Council. It will be administratively supported by the overall coordinating ministry, that is, the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning, and would not be an implementing agency.
- ◆ The National HIV/AIDS Control Program will continue to work under the Ministry of Health and Sanitation; principally, it will carry out testing, HIV/AIDS/STIs management, and patient care.
- ◆ HIV/AIDS Committees will be established in each district as the country situation warrants. Members of these committees will include representatives of NGOs/CBOs (Community-Based Organisations), representatives of principal line ministries, religious groups, women and youth, and people living with HIV/AIDS.

The chairpersons will be selected from among the members for a one-year period, on a rotational basis.

In addition to the aforementioned, in 2001 the cabinet established a sub-committee on HIV/AIDS to support national policy formulation.

The World Bank fielded an Identification Mission from 3 to 18 May 2001 headed by a lead specialist with experience in the formulation of HIV/AIDS Control Programmes in The Gambia and other Sub-Saharan African countries. The purpose of this mission was to explain the MAP process and structure, to work with Sierra Leonean counterparts in gathering baseline information, developing the project design objectives, prioritising proposed activities, formulating the financial and procurement architecture, the monitoring and evaluation systems, and to identify what further work needs to be done to adequately prepare the project. Workshops were held with line ministries to reinforce the partnership nature of the process, as well as to provide guidelines for the preparation of line ministry project plans.

Conclusion

Whilst the current rate of HIV/AIDS infection is unknown, it is certain that, if unchecked, the continued spread of the disease will dramatically alter the country's prospects for post-conflict recovery and development. It will slow economic growth, act as a further disincentive for foreign investment, further weaken the already fragile human resource base, intensify poverty and inequality, place an enormous additional burden on the government's health budget, reduce life expectancy even further, and leave the next generation of Sierra Leoneans more vulnerable to the epidemic and with less hope for the future.

HIV/AIDS is not just a health problem, but one that cuts across almost all sectors, and is a major link in the poverty cycle. This link, in conjunction with numerous others, must be broken if Sierra Leone is to survive and develop. This can only be achieved through the formulation of a multi-sectoral policy, with relevant strategies and activities, effectively coordinated and implemented. Let us all join hands in concerted efforts to control this scourge, and thereby contribute meaningfully towards achieving our overall goal of a speedy post-conflict reconstruction and development of Sierra Leone.



Inmates of Kisumu Mental Hospital

Jebbeh Forster

President, Society for Women and AIDS in Africa–Sierra Leone (SWAASL)

HIV/AIDS has become one of the greatest health problems in the world. Although originally identified among gay communities in the USA and some rural communities in East Africa, the transmission routes of HIV have made it a cause of global concern. It has spread to virtually all countries in the world within 20 years of its identification, in varying degrees of prevalence. At the end of 1999, there were an estimated 33.6 million adults and children living with AIDS.

No cure has yet been found for HIV/AIDS, although the transmission routes are well known. This in itself could have been a means of controlling the virus. Unfortunately, however, AIDS is not only a medical condition, but also a social problem and can be compounded or contained by social factors and attitudinal patterns.

According to statistics published by WHO for 1999, the cases of new infections in developed countries has decreased, whereas the opposite seems to be happening in the developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Out of a total of 5.6 million new infections in 1999, 3.8 million were from Sub-Saharan Africa, that is, about 68 per cent. In the developed countries, it is also observed that new infections are higher among minority-disadvantaged groups such as Hispanics and African-Americans. This lends credence to the social and attitudinal patterns of AIDS.

Sierra Leone, by virtue of its location in Sub-Saharan Africa, is in an HIV/AIDS zone. The prevalence of the virus in the country cannot be adequately assessed because of lack of laboratory and other associated facilities to carry out regular surveillance among selected groups. The indicators from available statistics, however, suggest that we are heading for a problem. According to figures culled from one of the local tabloids in 2001, the Deputy National AIDS Control Programme Manager stated at a workshop for health personnel, organised by the Sierra Leone Medical and Dental Association, that over 1,700 cases have so far been diagnosed. In addition, the figures for service personnel, which will be discussed later, were alarmingly high.

The poor social and health conditions in the country create an environment conducive to the spread of the virus. These are greatly assisted by social norms and traditions that encourage multiple sexual partners, promiscuity in both sexes, low status of women and

violence against women. The aforementioned in turn lead to a syndrome of women's dependency on men, and reduce women's ability to control their lives, including their sexual wellbeing.

HIV has far greater implications for women, as the biological and social status of women make them more vulnerable to the infection and its consequences. Women are more likely to contract HIV from an infected male partner than vice versa. The likelihood of cuts and abrasions due to sex, which provide access for the virus, is greater in women than in men. Women are also more likely to need blood transfusions and therefore are at greater risk of exposure to contaminated blood. In addition they are burdened with the task of looking after sick family members.

HIV/AIDS is not the major cause of death in many countries including Sierra Leone. There are many other diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhoea and meningitis, to name a few, that continue to claim lives at an alarming rate. The importance of these diseases is in no way minimised by the attention that is being given to HIV/AIDS and in relation to it, sexually transmitted infections (STIs). AIDS is being given special attention for a variety of reasons.

It is a hidden disease that affects an individual long before it becomes visible. During this invisible stage, the individual appears healthy but can spread the disease through the normal and sometimes essential processes of everyday life: sexual intercourse, blood transfusions, through the placenta of a mother to the unborn baby, in breast milk, and so on. In fact, the natural means of human procreation is the most common mode of HIV transmission, that is, sexual transmission. In Sierra Leone, this accounts for almost 100 per cent of the diagnosed HIV cases.

AIDS becomes visible, in the majority of cases, when the HIV virus has already been passed on to the vulnerable persons associated with the infected individual. These include the sexual partners, the carers, the unsuspecting health worker who does not observe the highest clinical standards or who does not possess the required protective clothing, and persons who share blood-letting instruments, to name a few. In effect it is those who are closest to the infected individual who run the risk of infection. This has made HIV/AIDS all the more painful and caused to some extent the stigma and fear that is associated with the condition.

The epidemiology of AIDS shows an initial low prevalence with the attendant factors of denial or inadequate responses from the relevant authorities, leading to a pandemic some 10 years later.

In Botswana, the prevalence among pregnant women rose from 8 per cent in 1991 to about 35 per cent in 1993¹ In South Africa, 1 in 5 persons is estimated to be infected with HIV. In Sierra Leone, sentinel serosurveillance among pregnant women in antenatal clinics showed an increase in prevalence of 6.8 per cent over a period of 8 years between 1989 and 1997. This increase is highly significant and reflective of the potential of the virus to spread at an alarming rate in the country. The diagnosis of a single HIV case should therefore be a cause for general alarm, as experiences from most countries show that AIDS has the potential of exploding in a population within a relatively short period of time.

In some African countries like Côte d'Ivoire, Zaire and Uganda, AIDS has now become the leading cause of death among the adult population. Levels of HIV infection are even higher in Botswana.²

The potential of AIDS to spread at such an alarming rate among the sexually active population of a country has grave consequences for its development. It can cause a whole generation to be wiped out, as is happening in Uganda and Botswana. The generation is usually the most productive in terms of age and work. The country then faces serious manpower shortages as the skilled and trained personnel die away leaving a gap of a whole generation before they can be replaced.

The social consequences of this scenario are just as grave. As this generation passes away, it leaves behind the young and the old, the two categories of people that need to be cared for. Grandparents are put in the situation where they are the only ones left to care for their grandchildren and, in badly hit areas like Uganda, where there is a large population of AIDS orphans, there can be found many child-headed households.

HIV/AIDS has also brought a new dimension to sexually transmitted infections, the majority of which could be successfully treated with antibiotics. In addition to AIDS being primarily a sexually transmitted disease itself, the presence of other STIs, such as gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis, chancroid, and trichomoniasis, increases a person's vulnerability to HIV about three to four fold; and, unlike other STIs, HIV has no cure

In Sierra Leone, the prevalence of STIs is speculated to be high. In a study done by Dr Euphemia Gooding over 20 years ago, in one of our tertiary institutions, the ratio of students suffering from some form of STI was 2:3. The current sexual attitudes and practices of students in higher institutions may indicate that the ratio still holds true. Dr Arthur Williams, speaking at a media press conference organised by PPASL in October 2000, estimated that 5 to 10 per cent of all hospital attendances were as a result of STIs.

PPASL, in their report on a baseline study carried out in the Western Area, Bo, Kenema and Port Loko, reported that 25.9 per cent of their total sub-sample of sexually active youths in the project sites had had at least one incident of STI and 12.3 per cent in the 6-month period ending September 1999. Figures from Marie Stopes, a reproductive health clinic, reported far lower figures: 6 per cent of their total client population in 1998 and 2 per cent in 1999. It was stated, however, that the vulnerable groups do not turn up for treatment, viz. sexually active teenage girls, women with several sexual partners, commercial sex workers and local migrant workers.

The consequences of STIs, if untreated, are serious. In women it could cause chronic abdominal pain, infertility, ectopic pregnancy, spontaneous abortion and its sequel, congenital abnormalities, cervical cancer, anal cancer and kaposi sarcoma, as in AIDS. Men could also suffer from urethral stricture and infertility (in cases of chlamydia and gonorrhoea).

STIs have far greater implications for women than men. The symptoms may be more bearable for them and less obvious. As a result, they may be less likely to present themselves for treatment, leading to the long-term consequences just mentioned.

STIs are not a health condition exclusive to developing countries. Many developed countries, however, have facilities and resources to deal with them. The health care facilities in many developing countries is not sufficiently developed to provide all that it takes to successfully control STIs. In Sierra Leone, reproductive health facilities are found in the major towns, provided by the government and international and local NGOs. Villages and remote areas do not have access to these services.

The control of STIs entails more than the provision of health care facilities. The drugs for STIs can be expensive and therefore out of the reach of most Sierra Leoneans. Treatment for most people is therefore not complete, and the infection may recur in a more virulent form. To control STIs effectively the treatment and drugs must be made accessible to all. This means that health care workers in remote areas must be trained to diagnose and treat STIs in the early stages. This training must take cognisance of the attitude people have to STIs. Many tend to cloud their condition under other ailments, and unless the health care workers ask probing questions, they may never really get to the crux of the problem. The communication skills of health workers are therefore just as important as their medical knowledge. Referral centres need to be provided within reasonable distances for chronic cases.

The public also needs to be educated about the dangers of STIs. At present, many people shy away from presenting themselves for treatment. Some consider STIs a normal part

of growing up, especially men, and do not give it the necessary attention. They resort to self-medication and therefore incomplete or inappropriate treatment. The symptoms may go away but the infection persists and also the possibility of infecting others.

The control of STIs is dependent on partner notification. Many people find it hard to communicate to their partner the fact that they may be infected with an STI, including HIV. This could be due to the fact that they have multiple partners or to the fear of the stigma associated with STIs, including AIDS. Also, in many of our local cultures sexual matters are not a topic for discussion between sexual partners. Men and women discuss such matters among their own sexes. Greater emphasis has to be put on sensitising people to discuss sex-related problems with their sexual partners and to have a more positive attitude to infected people.

The present attempts at sensitisation should be geared to all categories of persons. The prevalence of STIs and HIV in Sierra Leone is not restricted to a certain class of people. In a pilot study conducted by the Society for Women and AIDS in Africa–Sierra Leone branch, in collaboration with Marie Stopes on a sample of commercial sex workers, the prevalence of STIs was found to be low. Many of the commercial sex workers were found to be suffering from ailments related to unclean social conditions such as scabies, and malaria, and only 12 per cent had any signs of an STI. The incidence of STI is, however, high in the country. It appears, therefore, that other classes of persons may be more vulnerable, such as students of tertiary institutions, married persons who consider themselves not be at risk and so on. More research needs to be done by medical personnel to ascertain which are the vulnerable groups.

At present, as a result of misconceptions as to who is most vulnerable, emphasis is being put on the wrong categories of persons.

Present IEC campaigns, especially jingles and posters, do not appear to be properly screened or tested. Many contain incomplete and therefore wrong messages, which could be dangerous. HIV/AIDS is such a serious issue that misleading information that might affect people's perception of their risks should not be allowed.

IEC campaigns should be tested to ensure that they reach the target groups. Many women in rural as well as urban areas do not have access to or make use of modern communication methods such as television, radio or print media. Channels used by these women for communicating, especially information on health and sexual matters, should be used to target them with this important information.

The current civil war, which has plagued us for over 10 years, has also added its own dimension to the problem of STIs including AIDS. Not only has the war seen to the

destruction of many of the health facilities, it has also increased considerably women's vulnerability to STIs.

The war has been characterised by many instances of physical and sexual abuse on women, leading to forced pregnancies, transmission of sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, and extreme mental torture. In the Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE) programme for rape victims, initiated after the 6 January 1999 invasion of Freetown, 2,350 victims were treated between March 1999 and March 2000. Of these 2,085 were between the ages of 0 and 26 years and 165 were over 27 years of age. They came forward for treatment after a sustained sensitisation programme over the radio. Many others have not reported or presented themselves for treatment.

Another serious stumbling block to STI control is the inability of women to control their sexual health. Many, even when aware of their vulnerability to risks, are incapable of doing anything about it. Many women depend on men for their sustenance in exchange for sexual favours. In such unequal relationships they cannot negotiate for safer sex.

Commercial sex workers also report that local persons are willing to pay a higher price for sex without condoms than sex with condoms. The belief is also rife among some men that have never even used condoms, that they reduce their sensitivity.

Men's greater power and influence in all strata of society has reinforced a belief in the inferiority of women. Consequently, even in the struggle for development, many women in high positions barter sexual favours for opportunities, which should otherwise be open to them unconditionally. They increase their vulnerability to STIs, including AIDS, and reinforce male superiority, making it difficult for the cycle to be broken. This cycle puts both men and women at risk, because in sexual relations between such categories of persons, the issue of safer sex is usually far from the agenda, and may even be cause for embarrassment.

Many of our customary laws make it difficult for women to negotiate for safer sex or control their sexual health. In Mende customary law, for example, a man can divorce his wife if she is found to be suffering from an STI. In the case of the reverse, however, the woman cannot divorce the man and is expected to look after him, including providing sexual services. Wife inheritance is also a common practice in our rural communities. The wife is a chattel of the husband, and therefore cannot legally inherit from him. She has to depend on the generosity of the family, which normally means marriage to one of them. This carries risks for STIs, including AIDS.

AIDS should force us to reconsider some of our customs. Women suffering from STIs will usually not disclose their status for fear of the legal repercussions, i.e., being divorced. The fear of being disinherited will also force others into marriages that put

them at risk of infection. The whole question of polygamy increases the problem, putting both men and women at risk.

The war has made many women lose their perception of risk as far as STIs and AIDS is concerned. The fear of death as a result of war is far greater than the threat of death by AIDS, which may be 10 years down the road. But, unfortunately, AIDS-related deaths carry many more to the grave.

In some rural areas the concept of rape has taken on a new meaning. Women have been forced to accept that sexual favours have to be given to those who protect them, be they rebels, soldiers or Civil Defence Forces (CDF). They have lost all rights to the privacy of their bodies and the right to say no to unwanted and possibly unsafe sex. They consider rape as what happens in the bush. This may be one of the greatest evils of our war.

In the urban areas the possibility of early death makes young people oblivious of the dangers of early sex. Many are in hurry to experience life, thus indulging in early and unprotected sex.

The disruptions the war caused in social and academic life caused a breakdown in the social fabric of society. Many people lost control or influence over their families. In situations where men could not support their wives and children, the latter turned to prostitution as a means of survival. This explains the high incidence of STIs in camps and among refugee populations.

It is sad to see many of our young girls engaged in prostitution. Some have been so traumatised by the experiences of the war that they cannot envisage themselves in meaningful relationships. Others have been driven by social circumstances to indulge in the only trade that does not demand many years of unbroken study and high fees that are outside their reach. The answer is not to raid the brothels but to provide them with workable alternatives.

The above problems need to be addressed in postwar Sierra Leone. Many of the problems discussed above are social problems having their roots in the relationship between men and women. Their resolution is also dependent on the present relationship being overhauled, with women and men coming together as partners.

Many of the programmes designed to address AIDS have failed. Any successful programme needs to examine the underlying causes for the spread of the virus and possible obstacles to prevention strategies. These underlying causes and obstacles differ from country to country. Attempts to import successful programmes piecemeal into our context would probably meet with disaster–failure.

The social relations between men and women in our cultural settings would make it impossible for the best STI clinic to achieve its desired goal. Without a change in attitudes that would allow a woman to disclose her STI status and come forward for treatment without fear of reprisals, the provision of such a facility would be a waste of time.

AIDS is giving us an opportunity to address long-standing problems that we have swept under the carpet in the past. The inequalities in the relationship between the two sexes at all levels do not auger well for the control of a virus that demands responsible sexual behaviour of men and women. Our customs and culture have aided male promiscuity and given a woman the responsibility for her sexual health without the power to control it. Women need to work with men to reduce their mutual risk to the virus. Women also need to work with men in designing programmes that will take women's needs into consideration. Male designed and male dominated programmes will not address the constraints on women and will therefore continue to be mere paper documents.

Men dominate the AIDS control programme in this country. It is being designed to meet administrative targets rather than address the real issues determining the pandemic. Gender stereotyping rather than any scientific criterion has determined perceptions as to who constitute high-risk groups, i.e., commercial sex workers.

We will continue to remind the government that the issue of AIDS must be given priority. The AIDS control programme needs to be more gender-sensitive. One of the ways of achieving this is to include women at a high level in the decision-making processes of the programme. Women understand the implications of unsafe blood, the complications of STIs, chief among them infertility, the need for better reproductive health facilities and the need for more effective IEC campaigns.

Reproductive health facilities need to be more accessible to women at all levels of society. The use of condoms must be promoted at village level where the introduction of other family planning methods may not be feasible, as access to regular check-ups will not be possible. The female condom, which is now available, should be introduced at an affordable price to increase women's ability to decide on and insist on safer sex and family planning.

Women and men need to be informed about risk factors. Many adults and young girls engage in sexual activities with little knowledge of the consequences of those activities in the light of AIDS. Adequate sensitisation campaigns need to be embarked on to inform people about the risk of HIV in sexual practices.

The National AIDS Policy that is being developed should provide for the protection of the rights of all, the infected, the affected and the vulnerable. In a country where knowledge of HIV is low, especially among the rural population who have little access to information, policies should be considered that would enable them to make informed choices on whether or not to be tested for HIV when they have been exposed to risk situations such as rape, including gang rape. The current practice of a blanket protection of their right to be tested, which translated in real terms is a right not to be tested, is in my opinion an infringement of their right to sexual health as, in most cases, the so-called exercise of this right is not from an informed position.

There can be only one thing worse than having HIV, and that is having the virus and not knowing that you have it. The subsequent trauma of discovery when it is too late to alter your lifestyle is worse than the knowledge of knowing that you were infected. Current scientific information reveals that early knowledge of infection can enable a person to extend his or her life by adopting healthier lifestyles and so slow down the progression of the virus in the body's immune system.

Many of our young girls and women have been raped or forced by circumstances into sexual relations over which they had no control. The vast majority, especially those in the provinces and in refugee camps outside the country, have never had the opportunity of counselling with the option of taking an HIV test. The subsequent trauma of being HIV positive will be more than they will be able to handle.

Our AIDS policy should consider the peculiar nature of our war. If statistics on the HIV status of our armed personnel are accurate, then we are on the threshold of an epidemic. Over 60 per cent of the soldiers tested are reported to be positive. The sexual behaviour of soldiers, both local and foreign, therefore makes them the highest risk group.

The United Nations has declared AIDS to be a security issue, because of the potential of conflicts to create the enabling environment for the spread of AIDS and other STIs. Codes of conduct are being developed to assist UN peacekeepers to become part of the solution rather than channels of the problem. The sexual behaviour of our own soldiers, especially now that a new army is being trained, must be addressed by incorporating an HIV/AIDS component into their training programme. I was privileged to attend the first UNAIDS Steering Committee meeting on HIV/AIDS as a security issue. It is amazing the seriousness with which other countries are approaching the problem of AIDS within their security forces.

As we engage in post-conflict reconstruction, we need to address with honesty the areas of conflict within our society. The government has to make a deliberate effort to

enhance the status of women by recognising their potential to contribute to national development. Women should be given positions of influence at all levels so that women's issues can be considered. Women should be given such responsibilities not as a reward for partisan or other considerations, but out of merit. This will in turn improve the status of women across the board and reduce their vulnerability.

Women in positions of privilege should use this period of reconstruction to push for a change in laws and policies that cause serious disadvantages for women—laws related to succession, illegitimacy, maintenance of children and the status of women in the various forms of marriage in Sierra Leone. These in turn determine to a large extent the relationship between men and women, their perception of sexual responsibility and their own risk factors in such relationships.

Finally, any effective participation of women in post-conflict reconstruction will have to be initiated by women. Gender equality does not mean male or female superiority. It means recognition of the potential of both sexes to contribute to the common good. It means the ineffective participation of either will be detrimental to the common good.

Women need first of all to address the problems that affect them directly, especially health issues, devoid of social and cultural biases. Many of the beliefs we hold are designed to entrench male hegemony over our sexual and reproductive rights. Let us take an honest look at them and find suitable alternatives or abandon them.

We can also empower each other by addressing our health issues, especially STIs and HIV, within our organised communities. We do not have to wait for expensive projects that may not benefit us. I would like to encourage us all with the example of the late Sir Milton Margai, first prime minister of Sierra Leone. Apart from his role in ushering us to independence, he is known all over Sierra Leone by grassroots women as the first to train traditional birth attendants, at a time when there were no expensive workshops or fancy project documents.

Women should advocate for greater participation of women at all levels of decision-making. Women's groups, especially the more privileged, should sensitise the government to include women of merit and substance who can deliver the goods in key positions. Many times, women in pioneering roles have let us down woefully.

As we approach yet another general election, women need to start organising themselves for effective participation. Let us not just make it happen for the men. Let us go where our voices will be heard and where we will have the opportunity to address our concerns.

My final word goes to His Excellency the President, through the Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs. We have been disappointed in the lack of government commitment to AIDS, especially the lack of workable strategies and the marked absence of female participation at a high level. We welcome with caution the new National AIDS Commission set up in your office. We ask that it does not become another lame institution meeting administrative targets. We ask for the inclusion of a high-profile female at the highest level in this Commission to ensure that women's needs are addressed. There are women and men who have worked on the pandemic at high levels in other countries whom we have failed to utilise in our own elusive search for strategies.

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Bricks and tiles making project

Part 7

Gender Issues in Education, Training and Employment



FAWE centre, Grafton Village

Alpha Wurie

Minister of Education, Youth and Sports

Background

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is the arm of government charged with the responsibility of providing education for the people of Sierra Leone.

The 6-3-3-4 system of education was introduced in 1993 together with a Basic Education reform, which is intended, *inter alia*, to ensure the provision of basic education for the majority of the population and to enhance the participation of women and girls in education.

Aims and Objectives of Education

The aim of education in Sierra Leone is the integral development of the individual for the building of:

- ◆ a cohesive, healthy and strong nation with a sustainable and dynamic economy;
- ◆ a free, just and peace-loving society;
- ◆ a democratic and harmonious society;
- ◆ a moral and disciplined society.

The major objectives of education in Sierra Leone include:

- ◆ the development of a broad-based education;
- ◆ increased access to basic education;
- ◆ improving the quality and relevance of education;
- ◆ expansion and upgrading of technical/vocational education;
- ◆ promoting equity in education;
- ◆ developing relevant attitudes, skills and values in children.

Programmes

To achieve the aims and objectives of the 6-3-3-4 system of education, the following structure has been put in place:

Pre-primary education: It consists of the schooling a child usually receives between the ages of 3 and 6. The main objective of this level is to prepare children for primary education.

Primary education: It consists of full-time formal schooling, which children receive for 6 years from ages 6 to 12. It constitutes the first part of the 9-year cycle of formal basic education.

Secondary Education: Under the 6-3-3-4 system, secondary education consists of 3 years Junior Secondary School (JSS), after 6 years of primary education followed by another 3 years of Senior Secondary School (SSS). The JSS is the final part of basic education at the formal level while the SSS completes the Secondary School Course.

Technical/Vocational Education: This is education provided by government-approved educational institutions aimed at developing self-reliance in individuals by providing them with tech/voc training especially in areas of the agricultural, industrial and commercial sectors.

Tertiary/Higher Education: This is provided by the University of Sierra Leone with its constituent colleges, institutes, teachers' colleges, tech/voc institutions, polytechnics and professional schools, e.g., National School of Nursing.

Impact of Conflict

Many children suffered extreme violence as soldiers but even those who remained civilians were also subjected to horrific experiences. Children were tortured as a way of punishing their parents. In the process many lost their lives.

Once recruited the boys had to undergo various degrees of indoctrination, often bordering on the brutal. They were forced to witness or take part in the torture and execution of their own relatives.

Women and girls in particular suffered the added trauma of sexual abuse and rape. Even women and girls who were not raped were coerced into giving sexual favours for food, shelter and physical protection for themselves or their children.

Impact on Women

The effects of the ten-year war on the Sierra Leonean population are far reaching and tremendous. As is usual in any war situation, women, children and the aged are the most vulnerable. In the Sierra Leone situation women played various roles.

In most cases the impact was negative. They were, and still are, being used as spies, sex slaves, combatants and labourers. Women have had to cope with the effects of unplanned pregnancies resulting from being raped and, in some cases, gang raped.

Since medical facilities behind rebel lines are often lacking, maternal death is reported to have been very high.

In many cases men/husbands die in war, so that the society now has a widow population. These unfortunate women often are saddled with many children. The women now become the breadwinners for their families: this can be a very heavy economic burden on their shoulders.

Women suffer a lot of molestation at the hands of unscrupulous men during times of conflict. This can lead to loss of confidence and self-esteem. Women affected by the war are traumatised because they have witnessed torture being inflicted on their persons, family members and close friends. They may have a very negative attitude to society and in some cases even have phobia for men. The children that they produce as a result of being gang raped may not enjoy the loving relationship that normally exists between mother and child, as such children remind them of their horrible experience at the hands of gangs who raped them.

Girls

During this war there have been serious violations of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

According to this Convention, a child is entitled to:

- ◆ social security;
- ◆ a better education and standard of living;
- ◆ protection against abduction and participation in armed conflict;
- ◆ protection against sexual exploitation, torture, harmful labour, drug abuse.

This war has robbed many Sierra Leone children of these rights and has instead exposed them to abduction, conscription into the fighting forces, rudely disrupting their educational pursuits. It has made the girls become sex slaves, early mothers, and prostitutes, some of them thus becoming victims of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

Because the girl is separated from her family she becomes unloved, uncared for and defenceless. In most cases she is unkempt and malnourished. She does not have any accepted moral standards. This girl cannot grow well to become a responsible, independent and reliable adult. In many instances, she dies during pregnancy because of lack of medical facilities.

Boys

The boy during the war has also had his rights also seriously violated. He is, among other ills, forced physically to participate in the war. He becomes a combatant. He is removed from decent society because he is abducted and forced to join the fighting forces. He witnesses killing take place and sometimes takes part in the killing himself. He is introduced to adult life at a very tender age—even forced to sleep with women much older than himself. Therefore he is morally empty. His social values have been turned upside down. Because he is forcefully removed from parental care, he grows up feeling he is a man. He is hard-hearted, hates society and does not show love for anything or anyone. This war has therefore produced a generation of boys who are destructive and not prepared to take up adult responsibilities. Having been introduced to hard drugs at a young age, he becomes hooked and therefore cannot think rationally under normal circumstances.

Men

The men play the most active part during conflicts. They enter into conflicts either willingly or are conscripted. They inflict torture and sometimes are very seriously tortured themselves. They join in killing people and they too get killed.

When uprooted from their normal habitat they can become callous, brutal and inhuman, particularly to women and girls. They do not have any family values. They are emotionally and sometimes mentally disturbed.

Therefore, the war has left Sierra Leone with a high percentage of men who have lost their sense of living in a decent society, men who no longer believe in working to gain a decent living but must loot, burn down houses and even kill people to get their living. Men who not have respect for themselves and other people.



Young men engaged in construction project

Effects of the War

The war has adversely affected the country as a whole, and the education sector in particular has been the hardest hit, with about 80 per cent of educational infrastructure countrywide destroyed and teaching/learning materials and equipment vandalised.

The war has resulted in the massive displacement of people. Communities, families and social institutions have had to migrate to the relatively safer areas of the country, mostly found in the Western area and in some of the regional headquarter towns. This has resulted in a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Others had to flee to neighbouring countries as refugees.

As migration to safe areas increased, the pressure on education facilities in these areas mounted to the effect that schooling has had to be done in double shifts and in makeshift structures, e.g., Camp Schools.

In spite of these problems, government is very conscious of the fact that no country can develop faster than its educational system. Government has thus, under the constraining effect of the rebel war, embarked on a series of educational policy reforms and systems improvements—initiatives aimed at reducing further decline in the education sector.

The following are among initiatives aimed at improving access:

- ◆ In 1999/2000 government introduced free primary education in classes 1–3 whereby the fees for all students were paid for by government and books and teaching/learning materials also provided for the students. This free education is to be extended to classes 4–6 in the 2001/02 year.
- ◆ The Rapid Response Education Programme (RREP): a new initiative purposely geared towards facilitating the re-entry to the formal school system of school-age children between 10 and 13 years who have lost formal schooling as a result of the rebel war. The programme lasts for 5 months, and enables children who go through it to re-enter the formal school system.
- ◆ The Complimentary Rapid Education for Primary School (CREPS) is aimed at inducing the re-entry of over-aged children into primary school. The 6 years primary school syllabus has been condensed to 3 years, so that children in the CREPS programme are expected to complete the syllabus in 3 years. It is being piloted at the Lungi Area and will shortly be introduced to other areas in the country.

In addition, there are various Non-Formal Primary Education programmes aimed at children without access to formal primary schools because of distance or age. Such programmes are community based and focus on literacy, numeracy and simple vocational skills.

Adult Literacy Centres cater for 18–40 year-old learners, whilst a number of institutions provide skills training for youth as a means of empowering them economically.

With its own resources and with the assistance of partners, government has embarked on numerous rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools projects in accessible areas of the country.

Authorities of schools in inaccessible areas of the country have been encouraged to relocate their institutions in safe areas where they are now operating.

Workshops for guidance counsellors are being held by the Ministry, and schools are encouraged to improve their guidance counselling services.

Constraints

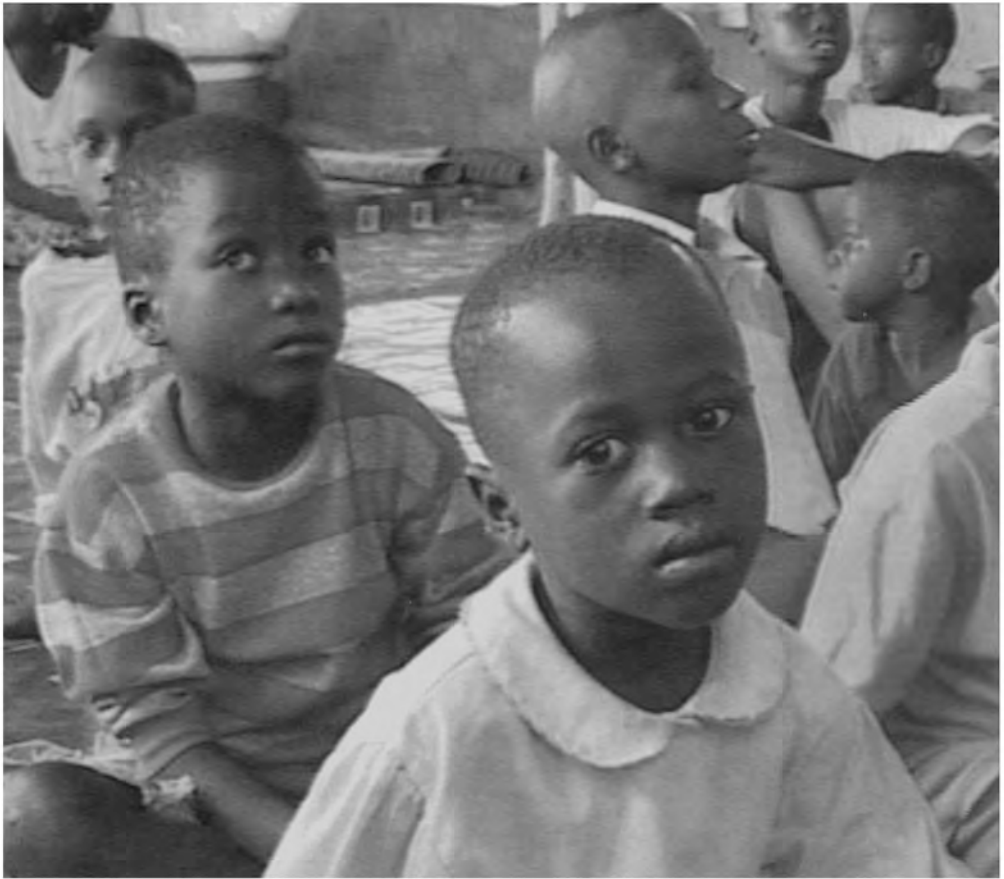
Because of the scale of the destruction caused by war on the educational infrastructure, a great deal of resources are needed to undertake reconstruction and rehabilitation. Money is therefore a major constraint. The funds needed to provide the necessary infrastructure are not available. Hence we continue to have problems of accommodation in the schools. Another major constraint is that of mobility. The war saw most of the Ministry's fleet of vehicles commandeered. This has greatly restricted the movement of personnel for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation.

Security continues to be a problem: many children for security reasons cannot go back to their places of origin. Overcrowding in the schools therefore continues.

Partners

We are very grateful to our friends, both local and international, who are helping us to cope with and find solutions to the problems that have resulted out of this conflict.

The list is not exhaustive, but mention should be made of major partners like UNICEF, UNDP, COOPI, FAWE, PLAN INTERNATIONAL, WFP, UNHCR, NCRRR. These organisations, among many, have been helping to win back the lost souls. They are doing everything to rehabilitate, reunite, trace lost relatives, detraumatise, reintegrate into society, and teach young people to fend for one's living in a decent way.



80 per cent of the schools were destroyed in the war

Part 8

The Role of Young Women and Men in Post-conflict Reconstruction



Steve Mokwena at May consultation, Sierra Leone

The Role of Young People in Post-conflict Reconstruction: Reflections on the South African Experience

Steve Mokwena

Former Chief Executive Officer of the South African Youth Commission in former President Mandela's office

I wish to share the South African experience in relation to the role of young people in society and in particular to the role of young people in post-conflict reconstruction. In 1976 when I was in my second year of school, the townships erupted in flames. It was the first visible sign of youth protest. There was a sense that it was young people who were resisting apartheid education and refusing to be subjugated, and who took to the streets in large numbers. The decade from 1976 to 1986 was marked by considerable conflict and confrontation between young people and the state. Those of you who know something about South African politics would agree that it was also a time when the state (the white government) and the black community were in frequent clashes, but what we understood was that the struggle for power was around race.

But there was another dimension to that struggle. Young people were particularly disadvantaged by the fact that because of their age they were not accepted in society—they did not have the political, economic and social resources to become part of what they then thought was the mainstream of society. By the 1990s, when it was clear that South Africa was going to have a negotiated political settlement, people started talking about the face of an ill-fated generation. Psychologists, media people and community leaders came up with all sorts of names to describe what was happening to young people. The most popular description of all was to talk about young black South Africans, particularly young black South African men, as the ‘lost generation’.

That generation typified everything that was bad about our country. We said that that generation of young people was going to threaten democracy. They were responsible for crime and indeed they were taken and put apart from the rest of society. I was involved in an organisation that was speaking not of young people as being lost but of a nation that would be lost if it did not come to terms with its young people. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan, later echoed these ideas when he argued that a nation, any nation, that cuts off its young people from itself does not deserve its future. In fact, he said, it deserves to bleed to death.

At that time, South Africa was on the verge of separating its young people and saying that they were deserving of punitive top-down measures because they were now outside of the so-called mainstream. We put forward an alternative recommendation, one that I would like to propose as something you may wish to debate. And that is, if you want to understand a society that is experiencing a level of destabilisation, or the nature of poverty or trauma in that society, look at the situation of children and young people—they are often a very good indicator of the level of social decay and deprivation that exists in the society.

I have been privileged this week to be walking around Freetown and the environs and talking to children, young people and those between childhood and adulthood. Some of them don't have jobs, some are amputees, and some are traumatised in one way or another. We are talking about people who do not see themselves as part of the mainstream. The question we have to ask ourselves is—what discussions, mechanisms and structures are we putting in place to make sure that we do not end up with a group of people who have been labelled, who have been stigmatised, as being 'outsiders'?

In South Africa in 1990 it was very clear that we had done just that. We began to talk about a process of 'marginalisation', which is a systematic process through which young people are denied education, they are denied jobs; they are also more importantly and, perhaps more controversially, denied access to power. They do not sit at the tables where things are talked about, where decisions are made, particularly those decisions that affect them more directly. So we looked at the process of exclusion, which is central to understanding why young people would be acting in particular ways in society. And our mission since then over a ten-year period has been to integrate young people to participate actively in the structures of society, particularly in the structures of power.

As a society in conflict at that time, we also had to deal with the many faces of violence and the many faces of trauma. Once we recognised the context of organised resistance to state power, there was a sense of comradeship among young people that allowed them to act positively in the struggle against white power. But once that context of white power was removed, young people were left without a structure, a framework in which to express themselves. And the slide between organised resistance and organised violence against one set of enemies—the slide between that and criminality was very easy.

We went into a post-election period with a very real possibility, a threat even today in South Africa, of young people who continue to centre their efforts in violence because they do not have a legitimate enemy or a legitimate struggle in which to channel that energy. Many young people have remained armed, and some of those who are still armed today are now participating in criminal activity. So one of the questions is that, once you have made a political settlement, you have perhaps found a political solution, but the central contradiction of the exclusion of young people from participation in society, has

not yet been removed. Their frustration, their sense of being vilified and stigmatised, remains. What do we do with that and in what ways do we then bring young people in?

I would like to put forward a few thoughts, which I have not so far heard in the discourse here. When we talk about post-conflict, we are assuming that there is some sort of generally agreed resolution to conflict. In South Africa our transition was highly contested, and I bet there are some people who are still saying that some of the decisions were made in ways that they should not have been. But the central weakness of our solution, which may well be the case here, is that young people's organised structures, or young people in whatever form, were not involved in the processes of dreaming and shaping what kind of society they want to have.

Young people are present or visible in this type of gathering by their absence, because we know that they are a sizeable group, that they can be found if we provide the platforms, the mechanisms to have this kind of conversation, to paint the picture of healing that they are entitled to.

In South Africa we made a fundamental mistake that may not be the case here. We called a national conference on 'marginalised youth'. With hindsight, I argue, be careful what you name things, be careful what you call people because, after we had called the conference, the press picked up the term 'marginalised youth'. People began seeing you in the streets wearing your hair in a particular way or, if you were out of school, or perhaps in trouble with the law, you were a marginalised youth. That was just as bad as calling people 'a lost generation', because then you could not bring them into a very constructive dialogue about what they felt needed to happen in their own country. We had stigmatised young people. So one of the lessons that I have learned is that if we had to do it differently, we would have first called the endeavour something else.

Young people in South Africa had taken up arms and had been very active in a credible struggle against an enemy. But once we started talking about solutions, we started thinking of them as less than they were actually worth. We spoke of them as 'vulnerable', as 'at risk' or 'lost', thereby denying them their power and strength to be social agents of change. We stopped negotiating a partnership with young people after apartheid and started saying to them, 'Go back to school, stay out of trouble, just wait, we, the adults or the government, will find the solutions.' Now we all know that because solutions do not emerge automatically, the frustration of young people becomes heightened as they are repeatedly told: 'When the time is right, you will be consulted.' We know, for a fact, that no solution is an instant one. It is better to include people as partners and core contributors of change, rather than as recipients. The opportunity is still there, the moment is right, young people can come in.

We are now in a position to reflect about things, so we know now that we could have done things differently. And I'll think about some of the positive elements too.

I'd like to come back to the point about the many faces of trauma and how it plays itself out. In South Africa we assumed that because young people had been exposed to trauma and violence and were affected negatively, that they had no developmental capacity. We assumed in our policies that what we had to do was 'fix' young people before we could 'develop' them. With hindsight now, working with young people, we learned that once you bring young people into the process of seeking solutions, and imagining and dreaming an alternative vision, the process itself has a healing, redemptive, restorative capacity. So you speak of development and the qualities you want in young people and communities, and you don't just speak of the fact that you're trying to improve literacy, or to eradicate violence, or to prevent HIV/AIDS.

You need to challenge yourself to ask, what is it you are trying to build? We know what we are trying to eradicate, but what is the vision of this society for its young people? For all of its young people? One of the better things that I have seen over the past 12 years of working with young people is work around youth policies. Now youth policies are often drawn up as a positive statement that commits a country and its people to a developmental vision for young people. But it often takes the form of a sub-ministry or a group of activities that happen away from the central corridors of power. In its most positive forms, it is the institutions and structures that allow young people to be sitting at the table making decisions about post-conflict reconstruction. Because young people's issues are everybody's issues, young people are concerned about health, about peace, about security, young people have something to say about rehabilitation, about the process of resettling people back into their communities, about the allocation of resources for children in education. Young people have everything to say about how the police should act or not act. Young people know that particularly, because they themselves are victims of such actions and processes. So I hope that we can review the policies that affect young people, and the administrative structures that are in place, and ask ourselves, are these strong enough to make sure that the voice of young people is found in decisions on issues that affect us?

People, not just young people, women, disabled people who have been affected by war, do not live in or are not the subjects of projects and programmes—so we cannot say, for example, that programme X or project Y is from a community. People live in homes, they grow up in social networks and they are part of communities. We cannot talk of the development and restoration of young people in the absence of the development of their communities. Those two things are inextricably intertwined. And within that, we cannot talk about the development of young people purely as the recipient of services, because young people have the intellectual, emotional and spiritual wherewithal to be redeemed within their own communities. So in taking a community perspective, it

begins to unleash a new set of resources, and it begins to allow people to be there in development not through their victimhood. People are not counted because they are targets of one programme or another. People count because of what they can contribute to a new and positive situation.

This is linked to young people's organisations. I find that young people, when asked to do something, or when given a chance to do something, when they find they are rated high enough, they can actually do what needs to be done. Young people's organisations come in different shapes and forms: sports organisations, drama groups, political debating organisations. These organisations are out there in their thousands and they don't require awards to exist, nor do they require the permission of governments to flourish. But with the support of society, with additional resources, they actually create a strong safety net that allows them to flourish.

The final point I want to make has to do with the issue of gender. What we have been looking at mostly, when people talk about or conjure up the word youth, in any context, what images come to mind? People think of roving bands of young men engaged in one thing or another. The word youth itself is such a strongly gendered term that it hides the experience of young women within it. When young women come up in the discussion, they often come up as victims, particularly as victims of young men, of violence, of aggression. There are many programmes, and some of them we have seen here ourselves, which bring together a combination of opportunities and expectations for young women that allow them to begin to acquire the skills and the resources that they need to flourish. We were looking at some of these very good programmes that just went ahead and did a good thing. We visited a programme working with young mothers who had been traumatised and brutalised, who were being taught new skills in order to move forward, and we heard countless stories of what they had seen and faced.

And I kept asking myself, who is doing work with young men? The type of work that makes them question their role in society, the kind of work that makes it possible for young men to also find healing and a place in society in ways that do not assume their supposedly powerful or dominant role over their female counterparts. We haven't quite yet seen the entire country, but I know from my experience in South Africa that not much has been done to confront the media images of males by males, that are actually sometimes at the centre of the problem when we talk about violence in society.

The key question is that there can be no reconstruction, there can be no post-conflict situation unless the central contradiction between youth and society is addressed. And therein lies the issue of power. Do we truly believe that if we sit at a gathering to talk peace, and change, and have not invited young people around the table, we will actually find peace? I think not.



Many lost their homes

Part 9

Capacity-building, Coordination and Networking



Putting a shoulder to the recovery effort

Iyesha Josiah

Director, Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (SLANGO)

Introduction

I wish to give some thought to the concept of capacity-building in depth because it relates to coordination and networking.

What is Capacity-building?

It is concerned with social and political relationships. Implicit in this is the fact that it must be viewed within the wider social, economic and political environment. For example governments, markets, private sector, CBOs, NGOs and so on.

Capacity-building is an approach or a response to development, which in turn has to do with the multidimensional processes of change. This means that the most appropriate intervention would reflect group/organisational diversities within some specific settings. At the end of the day people are able to organise, communicate, strategise and question. Sometimes capacity-building is perceived as simply enabling institutions be more effective in implementing development projects. Here organisations are either strengthened to perform specified activities or primary stakeholders are strengthened to implement defined activities.

Another view about capacity-building stresses the democratisation role of CBOs and NGOs in civil society. Hence the emphasis on support for organisations wherein capacity building could be referred to as a means to an end. This implies focus on improving links between structures, processes and activities in the organisation so that there is a level of concentration on impact/effectiveness at the local level. An NGO would therefore need to be strengthened in order to survive and fulfil its mission as defined by the organisation's structure.

Capacity-building is also an end in itself because the quality of representation and decision-making in different civil society organisations is strengthened and involvement in sociopolitical processes improved. In this vein the purpose and contextual analysis must be void of ambiguity in terms of appropriateness, coherence and fulfilment of the organisation's mission. Consequently there must be processes that relate to reflection, leadership, inspiration, adaptation and search for greater coherence between NGO mission, structure and activities.

In view of the above, one would be tempted to ask the following questions:

Should capacity building focus on strengthening primary stakeholders for implementing activities alone? Or fostering communication through processes of debate, relationship-building, conflict resolution or enhancing ability to deal with differences? Or should it be geared towards strengthening the capacity of stakeholders to participate in the political and socio-economic arena according to defined objectives?

It must be noted that capacity-building goes beyond financial sustainability and does not in any way mean weakening the state and is not a separate activity.

Capacity-building demands making links or networks or partnerships because composite responses are sometimes needed. Being multifaceted, a range of inputs would be required. For example, one single organisation may require a whole range of interventions, demanding resources from several sources when the context of the environment changes. Hence agencies should be flexible with their capacity-building initiatives because it could mean taking several steps behind what should obtain as a way of avoiding resistance to change. Sustainability in capacity-building therefore needs patience and flexibility, as it is not a short cut to development.

Capacity-building should be a continuous process because growth and learning have been found to be intrinsic to development. Hence Rawlands (1977) argued:

These people have become sufficiently confident and equipped to do things that they could not have done before; but that does not mean that they could not become even more empowered or capacitated nor does it mean that people's sense of empowerment is diminished if they are unable to achieve their goals.

Donors and development agencies must see this as their challenge even as they are seeking concrete outcomes within predetermined time frames. For effectiveness in capacity-building it is very critical to do some self-appraisal and self-monitoring, because:

[It] does not help to train individuals when the organisational vision is unclear, organisational culture is unhelpful, and structure confusing or obtuse. It does not help to secure resources when the organisation is not equipped to carry out its tasks. It does not help to develop information management systems when the basic organisational attitude is one which rejects learning through monitoring and evaluation in favour of frantic activity (CDRA, 1995: 9) ... development practitioners and funders need to pay close attention to the process and understand

what they are seeing. If capacity-building occurs through the development of long-term relationships which are marked by shifts in strategy and attitudes, those wishing to build capacity need to continually be observing, reflecting, changing and improving those relationships (CDRA, 1995: 15).

Models of Capacity-building

There are seven models in use generally based on the NGOs' analysis of the macro-policy environment, nature of the state, economic and production systems, role and nature of domestic market relations, society and social relations. A combination of the seven models of capacity-building could effect favourable change for the poorest sectors of society.

Model 1: Working through intermediaries

Local NGOs or CBOs work with some international organisations as implementing partners. The relationship is mediated through the provision of grant funds for a specific purpose. It involves campaigning, lobbying and networking.

Model 2: Generating synergies

An NGO works in combination of partnerships to effect change at various levels. The essence here is to create impact and become a strategic player using informed planning and flexibility approach rather than a high quantum of resources.

Model 3: Promoting representative organisations

Facilitating the emergence into organisations of federated CBOs, such as farmers, unions, NGO alliances, trade union federations and so on. They are founded on support for capacity-building processes and organisational development alongside technical assistance in special areas such as credit, training, etc., e.g., SLANGO.

Model 4: Generating independent organisations

Projects—originally NGO projects—which transform into independent organisations.

Model 5: Government and non-government structures in parallel

Working through state structures such as the government line ministries. Funding government run programmes which could be linked with influencing polity through provision for training and exchange visits.

Model 6: Non-operational emergency programmes

Using strong local organisations to implement programmes.

Model 7: Operational emergency relief programmes

If local organisations are weak, NGOs can implement operational programmes coordinated by an international body such as UNHCR.

The above issues about capacity building are a pointer to the fact that the context/environment can be very complex. Such complexity connotes that individual organisations cannot necessarily cope even with no problems at hand. Hence the need for partnerships based on equality, mutuality and trust. It is worth noting that some of these partnership relationships, especially between northern funders and southern recipients, are often lacking in terms of sincerity because there is lack of trust and plenty of inequality, so that southern partners are subjected to rigid reporting methods, and continuously seeking approval for projects which will only come if the needs of the northern partner are met.

Cooperating in such circumstances is often difficult but southern counterparts are indispensable because of their networks, indigenous knowledge and their experience on the ground, which capacitate them in providing the needed opinion for the context within which the northern counterpart would be operating. This is a problem that is common, and even in Sierra Leone it has not been easy trying to facilitate mutuality between national NGOs and their international counterparts—the excuse is always lack of capacity. But who lacks capacity? In what area? The relationship between the two should not be fudged because there needs to be honest negotiation, and such should not be compromised—otherwise the essence of capacity-building would be lost.

Why Capacity-building?

The right to live is a fundamental right and living implies participation in a process within a context. People therefore need capacity to mobilise, to influence social, economic and political change. This can be most effectively done if people are strengthened so they would be able to create or maintain organisations that can represent and be accountable to them—the NGOs in Sierra Leone created SLANGO in 1994 for this purpose. There are other forms of organisations concerned with varied issues at micro-level ranging from the shaping of public policy (for example, Campaign for Good Governance) on tackling the direct issues of vulnerability. Hence there are many NGOs in relief, rehabilitation and resettlement, poverty reduction strategies, conflict resolution and peace-building, all with a culture, mission and peer support. We therefore have groups/organisations that serve as a channel for action—the advocacy groups on issues such as domestic violence, human rights and so on. Others are concerned with awareness-raising and have more fluid terms of membership, such as some civil society organisations, while others have traditional bases that hinge on

religion or sex where membership is largely part of social identity than voluntary—the church/mosque NGOs. There is a tendency to exclude here, but such exclusion is indirect, as it is based on things like upbringing or religious faith. It is therefore in this vein that Goetz (1996) argued that these forms of exclusion are embedded in and reflect the context of the societies' constitutions. NGOs tend to reproduce these prejudices in the norms and practices that they seek to challenge. NGOs therefore need to understand their own roles and objectives as organisations before deciding on whether to build capacity, how to build capacity and for what purpose.

In the past, northern donors have had problems channelling funds through states/government, so they changed to non-political actors (NGOs and CBOs). This arrangement came at a time when the trend in the economic performance of states was also declining, indicated by high levels of unemployment, an increase in poverty and the incidence of conflict. The result was an increase in non-political actors with incapacities in good practical, analytical and managerial skills to function effectively and democratically. With a war at hand in Sierra Leone, the problem was compounded, leading to the emergence of all types of organisations. The number of NGOs registered with government was over 400; a situation that posed problems of transparency, accountability and effectiveness. The need to coordinate gave rise to the creation of SLANGO in 1994 by the NGOs themselves to complement the efforts of government in that area. In that vein SLANGO has always engaged in training as a capacity-building measure to enable organisations understand their structure and assess their participation in monitoring and evaluation.

Coordination therefore connotes capacity-building, which in turn cannot be done in isolation. Different mechanisms should be employed to foster organisational development that would make for effectiveness. Hence the need for shared learning from field experience networking. Networks are important in capacity-building and coordination for two reasons:

- ◆ to share new ideas and information;
- ◆ to pool experiences and energy for individual and collective impact creation.

By the creation of linkages locally and globally, networks help in facilitating the practical actions of people and organisations through the provision of hope for securing rights enhancing development and ending poverty.

Networks such as SLANGO do not necessarily bring tangible gains for members at all times, but making information links build capacity, depending on how members make use of the network. In this regard, networks can build confidence, strengthen NGOs and CBOs, give weight to advocacy and lobbying, reduce duplication and increase

cooperation among other things if their objectives are clear, and if they are not dominated by certain groups competing or duplicating what other networks are doing.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the following measures are being take to enhance capacity-building, coordination and networking:

- ◆ At the level of government a new policy has been put in place as a measure of assessing organisations and helping them to understand their structures and cultures for better accountability and transparency. This measure should build the capacity of organisations making them credible partners in development.
- ◆ A Gender, Social Welfare and Children's Affairs Ministry has been set up to foster effective gender mainstreaming in policy matters. This kind of capacity building measure helps in overcoming discriminatory practices that limit people's life chances. Secondly, a Women's Forum has been set up to complement government's efforts in this area.
- ◆ Efforts are being made to develop inclusive policies and actions for marginalised groups such as young people—the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is in the process of setting up a National Education for All Forum with all stakeholders represented.
- ◆ For coordinating emergency issues, the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR) was created and works in partnership with NGOs in responding to vulnerability, peace-building, rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration.
- ◆ At the UN level, the UNOCHA office was opened in Sierra Leone to coordinate humanitarian aid. This organ also works with other UN organs, government and NGOs.
- ◆ The Ministry of Development and Economic Planning (MODEP) now has a capacity-building project that focuses on institutions.
- ◆ NGO networks/coalitions provide channels for dialogue, participation and negotiation in a bid to meet basic needs, leading to a more peaceful coexistence.

Networks provide services and information to members, for example, through the various newsletters. Activities include workshops and conferences that take people's capacities into account so as not to undermine the process and enhance dependency.

How these Arrangements would Impact on Sustainable Peace in Post-war Sierra Leone

Issues concerned with incapacities emerged as the root causes of the conflict among others. Those who were not empowered became easy prey for involvement in the conflict as fighters because they lacked the capacity to question. People nurtured a culture of silence with serious consequences during the war due to lack of capacity and networking.

Sierra Leone was and still is one of the poorest countries in the world in terms of parallel indicators such as high illiteracy, high infertility, and short life expectancy, especially among women. Capacity-building should empower people and enhance development, while increasing people's ability to participate in their own improvement. In this vein, efforts must be made to improve the living standards of people by providing education for life in the form of literacy programmes and training of varying types. No single organisation can do this, so a multifaceted approach is crucial, using a well coordinated capacity-building approach with effective networks.

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Commonwealth countries are assisting in post-conflict reconstruction

Annex A

Tables

Table 1.1: Gender empowerment measure

Sex	Share of parliamentary seats %	Share of administrative & managerial positions %	Share professional & technical position %	Share of economically active population %	Share of total population %	Gender empowerment measure
Female	7.8	25	26	68	51	0.3483
Male	92.2	75	74	32	49	

Source: Sierra Leone Human Development Report

Note: The percentage of female share of parliamentary seats has increased to 8% mainly due to the proportional representation system.

Table 5.1: GDP sectoral breakdown- value (million leones) + percentage by industrial origin at constant 1990/91 prices (1990–1999)

	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	Revises				Projection
						1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	82,602	58,4	57,874	64,067	66,245	67,570	69,664	69,724	65,393	65,733
%	45.5	36.3	38	39.8	43.1	48.7	47.9	59.8	55.7	58.4
Industry	34,887	57,003	45,245	50,988	39,625	30,912	32,480	17,431	19,851	18,712
%	19.2	35.4	29.7	31.7	25.5	22.3	22.3	14.9	16.9	16.6
Mining and Quarring	20,271	40,157	28,873	33,377	20,493	12,983	14,040	11,641	10,204	7,776
%	11.2	25	19	20.8	13.3	9.4	13.1	10	8	6.9
Manufacturing and Handicrafts	11,603	12,589	14,050	13,698	13,945	13,152	10,080	3,859	8,572	6,517
%	6.4	9.8	9.2	8.5	9.1	9.5	6.9	3.3	5.6	5.8
Electricity and Water Supply	407	311	196	108	683	708	1,120	701	968	1,311
%	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.8	1.2
Construction	2,606	3,945	2,127	3,805	4,143	4,059	2,240	1,230	2,107	3,107
%	1.4	2.5	1.4	2.4	2.7	2.9	1.5	1.1	1.8	2.8
Services	59	40,665	43,121	38,858	41,368	33,354	35,647	24,352	27,082	24,638
%	32.6	25.3	28.3	24.7	26.9	24.1	24.5	20.9	23.1	21.9
Trade and Tourism	29,165	21,507	24,540	22,103	23,694	16,727	16,406	10,305	11,329	10,042
%	16.1	13.4	16.1	13.7	15.4	12.1	11.3	8.8	9.6	8.9
Transport Storage & Communication	16,419	9,802	9,498	8,254	7,354	5,293	9,871	7,976	8,193	6,329
%	9.0	6.1	6.2	5.1	4.8	3.8	6.8	6.8	7	5.6
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	5,801	2,001	2,107	2,257	4,381	4,789	3,244	1,878	1,936	2,008
%	3.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	2.8	3.5	2.2	1.6	1.6	1.8
Government Services	6,123	6,637	5,814	5,233	5,065	5,047	3,742	2,586	3,396	3,271
%	0.9	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.6	1.1	1.6	1.4	1.9	2.9
Other Services	1,649	717	1,161	1,011	873	1,498	2,324	1,607	2,229	3,027
%	0.9	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.6	1.1	1.6	1.4	1.9	2.7
Less Imported Financial Charges	1,673	1,580	1,229	1,185	966	973	644	586	652	824
%	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7
GDP	181,624	160,859	152,332	160,332	153,849	138,680	145,549	116,656	117,487	112,485
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Deflated by Official Exchange rate (period average mid-rate)	1227.19	547.14	305.28	280.8	253.88	183.93	158.04	118.8	75.17	61.88

Source: C.S.O., BSL and ADB

Table 5.2: Inflation, money, credit and interest rate 1990/91–1999

	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Inflation (%)										
Period (annual/year-on-year)	102.9	117.1	34.5	15.1	22.3	34.5	6.4	66.9	-5.6	36.7
12 Month Average (1)	-	-	-	18	24.2	25.5	23.1	15	35.6	29.3
3 Months on Annual Basis (2)		29	9.6	22.9	-7.9	142	5.6	95.8		
Money and Credit										
Broad Money (Le M)	17.818	31.398	41.834	48.9724	53.751	63.868	82.335	126.634	140.899	194.158
Reserve Money (Le M)	12.395	20.758	24.095	24.995	31.352	36.375	41.903	84.341	71.045	87.852
Net Domestic Credit	35.682	24.139	21.076	18.752	22.000	426.58	431.68	501.145	537.572	604.813
		4	3							
O/W Credit to Govt.	32.42	15.974	10.657	3.754	6.062	408.56	429.69	473.524	506.752	577.433
						3	7			
Money Multiplication	1.4	1.5	1.7	2	1.7	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5
Interest Rate (%)										
Commercial Bank's Prime Rate (End Period)	27	35	57	39	28	30	29.0	25.8	32.0	33.0
3 Month deposit rate (period average)	(-)	58	43	18	6.7	7.3	13.0	9.9	7.0	9.4
12 month deposit rate (period average)	23	25	46	21	8.0	11.0	18.5	13.9	10.3	12.2
Treasury Bills (effective yield) (period average)	21.4	70.6	43.8	20.3	8.4	27.9	27.8	12.7	22.4	32.4

Source: Ministry of Finance, Dev. & Economic Planning, BSL, CSO

Note: 1. Calculated as the change in the average index for the latest 12 months over the preceding 12 months

2. The change in the average index of the latest 3 months over the preceding 3 months annualised

Table 5.3: Recurrent budget estimates (million leones) expenditure classification (selected years)

PARTICULARS	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1998**	2000
Total recurrent Expenditure (as budgeted) *	66,269	74,174	83,032		81,171	257,281
Health	2341	4591	5173	6190	6518	15235
% of Total.	3.5%	6.2%	6.2%	7.0%	8.0%	5.9%
% of GDP	0.5%	0.9%	0.5%	0.8%	0.6%	0.1%
Education	9209	9715	12002	12386	11349	46985
% of Total	13.9%	13.1%	14.5%	14.1%	14.0%	18.3%
% of GDP	2.1%	1.8%	1.9%	1.6%	1.1%	3.3%
Foreign Interest	15751	14555	10919	3126		37713
% of Total	23.8%	19.6%	13.2%	3.6%		14.7%
% of GDP	3.6%	2.7%	1.8%	0.4%	2.6%	2.6%
Defence ***	10028	12987	19603	22931	NA ***	20190
% of Total	15.1%	17.5%	23.6%	26.1%		7.8%
% of GDP	2.3%	2.4%	3.1%	3.0%		1.4%

Source: Sierra Leone Government: Recurrent and Development estimate (various years)

Notes: * Incidental charges

** July and December 1998 only

*** Referencies, allocation to Ministry of Defence, the Military, Ecomog, and Emergency Defence

Table 5.4: Government finance (million leones) – (1990/91–99)

	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Domestic Revenue	7,835	18,231	35,385	54,543	67,448	62,393	87,334	45,333	76,578	85,819
Expenditure	17,801	33,759	61,845	81,144	97,845	126,783	148,664	1,002,222	185,011	265,604
Overall Fiscal Balance (on commitment basis)	9,966	15,528	26,460	-26,601	-30,397	-64,391	-61,330	-56,889	108,433	-179,785
Domestic Financing (net in Million Leones, end period basis)	10,641	16,142	16,612	18,173	24,706	26,003	38,482	80,621	1,182,233	88,807

Source: EPRU, Ministry of Finance

Table 5.5: Balance of payments (million leones)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Goods and Services (net)	-8371	1638	-6392	-42651	-79612	115021	217408	83697
Exports F.O.B.	21175	44156	75104	67112	66056	-31318	43070	15428
Imports F.O.B.	21269	-40921	-69432	-106175	-110739	126978	208543	10605
Trade Balance	-94	3235	5672	39063	-42684	95660	165273	55177
Services (net)	-8465	-1597	-12064	-3587	-39928	19361	51935	28520
Transfers								
Private	10	787	1991	1740	628	18280	23747	-5994
Official	1026	2104	1664	7825	26694	14351	-55087	18654
Current Account Balance	-7325	4529	-2737	-33086	-52290	82390	138674	59.049
Capital Account Balance	-3077	-7607	-8307	-740	-219	36498	23019	14869
Private	2691	3850	-13612	-5889	-4768	-4479	-3756	-511
Official (net)	-5768	-11457	5304	5148	4550	40977	26776	14869
Receipts	3628	1043	16965	79545	66447	93115	62695	30892
Payments	9396	12500	11660	74397	61899	-52139	-35919	-16534
Surplus (+) Deficit (-) on current capital	-10402	-3077	-11044	-33827	52508	45892	-115534	-44180
Errors and Omission	-390	-2895	8643	22748	7403	29766	43728	394
Arrears and Refinancing	8479	7962	1512	22464	55348	30041	56284	73185
Monetary Institutions	2313	-1990	889	-11385	-10224	13918	15541	-29399
Memo: Current account (as % of GDP)	-4	1.5	-0.7	-6.9	-8.9	-12.5	-15.9	-6.3

Source: Bank of Sierra Leone

Table 5.6: Exchange rates (LE/US\$) and reserves (US\$) (1990–1999)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Official Exchange rate (period average, mid-rate)	148	294	499	571	606	754	921	982	1,563	1,818.1
Parallel Exchange rate (Period average)	180	348	535	590	589	852	957	1,221	1,838	2,399.8
Gross International Reserves	4.8	3.4	19	26.6	40.6	35	26.8	38.4	45.04	37.6
Gross International Reserves (in months of imports)	0.3	0.2	1.5	2.4	3.3	3.6	1.7	5.7	(-)	5.7

Source: EPRU, Ministry of Finance

Table 5.7: Public debt and debt service (1990–1999)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total External Debt (US\$M)	1,192	1,249	1,265	1,346	1,392	1,124	1,152	1,147	1,142	1,211.0
Stock of Domestic Public Debt (LeM)	10,642	16,140	16,508	18,164	24,311	26,007	43,500	82,597	118,223	231,66
External Debt Services (US\$M)		36.5	49.9	22	90.3	62.9	58.4	14.4	22.4	
	6.3	18.6	9.7	58.2	54.6	29.8	36.2	8.6		

Table 5.8: Memorandum items (1990–1999)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
GDP - Current Market Price	181,624	295,259	395,056	480,113	586,925	658,518	869,214	932,562	1,058,083	1,226,670
Real GDP (annual growth rate in %)	-2.2	-11.4	-5.3	5.6	5.6	-9.9	5.0	-19.9	0.7	-8.12
Total Expenditure (% of GDP)	9.80	11.43	15.65	16.90	16.9	19.3	17.1	11.0	17.4	21.7
Fiscal deficit on commitment basis	4.31	6.17	8.96	1.36	11.49	9.5	10.0	4.9	7.2	7.0
Current Account Balance (% of GDP)	(-5.5)	(-5.3)	(-6.7)	(-5.5)	(-5.2)	-9.8	-7.1	-6.1	-10.2	-9.3
Domestic Debt Fiscal Revenue (%)	(-7.7)	-8.4	11.7	11.4	(-6.2)	-10.0	-11.2	-1.9		
	135.8	88.5	46.7	33.3	36.0	42	50	182	154	153
Debt Service/ Merchandise Export (%)	59.1	31.3	35.8	19.3	74.5	97.3	60.0	66.4		357
Total External Debt/ GDP (%)	97.4	124.2	159.8	160.1	143.7	129	122	121	168	182

Source: EPRU/MOF/BSL/CSO

Up to 1994, reference year is fiscal year starting July, calendar year therefore. Denominator does not include services.

Table 5.9: Net official development assistance (US\$M)

DESCRIPTION	1990	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Net ODA 1, 2	62.82	207.73	275.42	206.23	184.02	118.62	106.28
Nat Financial Flows 1, 3	66.28	221.43	258.48	211.28	197.38	130.84	69.66
ODA/GDP (%)	5.1%	24.7%	28.5%	23.6%	19.5%	12.5%	15.6%
ODA/Population (US\$)	15.71	48.3	62.6	45.7	42.8	26.8	23.4

1. Source: African development Bank, selected Statistics on African countries 2000

Notes: 2. ODA relates to grants or concessional loans undertaken by the Government to promote development or welfare.

3. Refer to gross disbursement of ODA, other financial flows and private flows less any repayments of loan principal.

Table 5.10: External assistance disbursement by type (US\$ '000)

Type of Assistance	1992	1993	1994	1995	Average	% of Total
Free-standing technical cooperation	21,948	27,706	30,414	29,918	27,247	17.94
Investment-related technical cooperation	4,613	3,691	18,557	13,716	10,144	6.68
Investment Project assistance	53,411	59,343	45,784	55,387	53,481	35.21
Budgetary and/Balance of payments support	5,092	20,604	23,762	21,501	17,740	11.68
Food	5,408	3,623	4,573	2,280	3,971	2.62
Emergency and relief assistance	31,178	37,445	45,355	43,170	39,287	25.89
Grand Total	121,650	152,412	168,445	164,972	151,870	100.00

Source: Compiled from UNDP Development Cooperation Report (Sierra Leone)

Table 5.11: Poverty indices for selected years

Indicators	1994/95	1995/6	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	2000
Infant mortality	133.2	132.0	169.0	164.0	164.0	170.0
Maternal mortality	7.0	18.0	18.0	17.0	17.0	18.0
Adult literacy rate	34.11	33.00	31.89	31.50	31.50	30.0
Life expectancy	40.3	40.3	40.3	38.0	38.0	38.0
GDP per capita	790.0	717.0	643.0	643.0	641.0	...

Source: UNDP, Human Development Report, Various Issues.

Table 5.12: Distribution of poverty by area, 1990 (per cent)

Area	Share of total population	Poverty incidence	Share of total number of poor people
Rural	59.0	82.9	52.8
Small town	30.1	59.5	21.4
Large town	10.9	72.9	25.8
National	100.0	75.3	100.0

Source: Government of Sierra Leone. Central Statistics Office (CSO), 1995

Table 5.12 above shows that the rural areas are poorer than the urban areas. Small townships, however, are relatively better off with a little over half of their populations categorised as poor. This is in contrast to the rural areas with over four-fifths of their population in that category.

Table 5.13: Poverty indices by gender of head of household, 1989/90

Gender of head of household	Share of population (per cent)	All poor			Contribution to poverty		
		P0	P1	P2	P0	P1	P2
Male headed	97.7	0.817	0.587	0.489	97.8	98.0	97.9
Female headed	2.3	0.761	0.551	0.459	2.2	2.0	2.1
All	100.0	0.816	0.586	0.489	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: CSO (SHEHEA, 1989/90).

P0 = Headcount P1 = Depth of Poverty P2 = Severity Index of Poverty

Table 5.14: Poverty indices by occupation of household members

Table 5.14/5.15

Main occupation	All poor			Contribution to poverty		
	P0	P1	P2	P0	P1	P2
Not applicable	0.827	0.594	0.498	55.5	56.3	56.6
Professional/technical	0.851	0.660	0.569	2.4	2.7	2.8
Administrative manager	0.831	0.592	0.499	0.3	0.3	0.3
Clerical related	0.802	0.577	0.486	1.2	1.2	1.2
Sales workers	0.827	0.622	0.534	13.5	14.3	14.7
Service workers	0.802	0.617	0.531	2.5	2.7	2.8
Agriculture/forestry	0.785	0.535	1.426	20.4	18.7	17.8
Production/transportation	0.776	0.529	0.442	3.9	3.5	3.5
Unclassified	0.780	0.610	0.537	0.2	0.3	0.3
All Sierra Leone	0.816	0.586	0.489	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: CSO (SHEHEA, 1989/90).

NB. Rows 1-6 have a headcount of over 80 per cent. Others have a headcount of over 70 per cent.

P0 = Headcount P1 = Depth of Poverty P2 = Severity Index of Poverty

Table 5.15: Estimates of selected support to the NRRP by institution and project

Institution	Programme/Project	US\$(000)
IDA	ERSF and elated Institutional Support	17.5
	TEP and Related Institutional Support	7.5
AfDB	Emergency Project (ERSF and related support)	12.24
	SAPA	6.5
EC	Resettlement and Rehabilitation Programme	11.5
	Emergency Agriculture Recovery	2.2
	Refugee Assistance	6.8
US Govt.	Food Aid (for Agriculture, Rehab and Nutrition)	16.4
	Non-food Aid (seeds, tools, etc.)	14.5
	OTI (Reconciliation and reintegration)	2.0
	African Bureau (child tracing and networking)	1.5
UN	UNDP (Trust Fund/Support to DDR)	0.6
	UNDP (Preventive Development Project)	2.5
	UNDP (Support to NCRRR)	0.75
	UNICEF (with VSG)	4.2
	WFP (Non-UNG Food Aid alone)	8.0
UK/DfID	Demobilisation and Reintegration	13.3
	Emergency Recovery	2.0
IDB	Emergency Recovery Programme	2.75
GOSL	Support to RRR	0.10
	RRR Sub Projects	0.25

Source: CRRP Project Documents

Table 5.16 Table 5.16: Sierra Leone budget game results on policy priorities

	Western Area	Northern Province	Southern Province	Eastern Province	All Results
Security	31.43	28.20	28.12	31.21	29.74
Good governance	22.77	21.40	23.36	24.29	22.95
Education	20.14	17.90	23.36	15.64	18.04
Agriculture	13.68	14.63	18.48	15.63	15.61
Health	11.98	17.87	11.56	3.22	13.66
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: SPP Study, 2000.

Annex B

List of Participants

Abu, M.H.K.	Councillor, Pujehun District
Ade-Williams, Selina	NEWMAP
Allie-Fobie, Asan	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
Anthen, Delips S.	CARE
Baksh-Soodeen, Rawwida	Gender Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat
Bah, Harun A.	Ministry of Parliamentary and Political Affairs
Bah, Umaru	Inspectorate Office, Port Loko
Bako, Marian	FBC Education Department
Banga, Sister Theresa	Ministry of Health, Kenema
Bangura, Abdul O.	Port Loko Teachers' College
Bangura, Hamiratu	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
Bangura, Mohamed	NMJD
Bangura, Patrick	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
Bangura, William M.	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
Banya, Theresa M.	Women's Forum, Kenema
Barlay, Kenyeh	SAPA/NCRRR
Beckley, Josie A.	University Planning Officer, USL
Bendu, F.S.	Credit Officer
Blake, Margaret	Gbotima Women's Organisation
Bondu, Franklin	SAPA
Braima, Elizabeth	Women's Forum
Braima, Samuel	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
Branche, Gladys	SLLC
Brewah, Kumba	Radio UNAMSIL, FM103
Brima, Doris J.	FAWA Civil Society Movement Kenema
Brima, Elizabeth	Civil Society Movement Kenema
Buck, Fred C.	CARE
Buteywa, Florence	UNIFEM – West Africa
Campbell, Vivian	Civil Society, Bonthe
Carrol, Gladys	UNDP
Caulker, Mamie	Anti-Corruption Commission
Caulker, Willie	ADRA (Eastern Province)
Coker, Dr Eugenia	GRADOC Rapporteur

List of Participants

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Conteh, Kadiatu	Youth to Youth Network
Conteh, Kai	CSM, Kenema
Conteh, M.S.	Town Clerk, Town Council, KTC
Coomber, D.E.	MSWGCA
Creighton-Randall, O.	Campaign for Good Governance
Dabor, Margaret C.	NCDHR
Davis, Pamela	GRADOC
de Marke, Georgette	PPASL/NEWMAP
Decker, Cecilia	Grassroots Gender Empowerment
Dixon, Christiana	Civil Society Movement
Dumbuya, Lavina	Campaign for Good Governance
During, Edwina A.	SLANGO
Elliot, Violette	Ministry of Trade
Fillie-Faboe, S.R.	Ministry of State, East Kenema
Fobie, Asan Allele	Ministry of Social Welfare
Fofanah, Ahmid	CORD, SL
Fornah, Adisatu K.	FAWE North
Fornah, Rev. Usman J.	Inter-Religious Council, Sierra Leone
Forster, Jebbeh	SWAASL
Gamanga, Madam Mamie	Paramount Chief, Kenema District
Gamanga, Maybelle	Ministry of Youth, Education and Sports
Ganda, Juliana B.	National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights (NCDHR)
Gbadawa, Amy	Women's Forum
Gbenjen, David	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Gbujama, Shirley	Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
Gendemeh, P.C. Sally	Member of Parliament, Kenema
George, A.O.D.	Member of Parliament
Gondoe, Mohamed	Ministry of Finance
Hamid, Z.R.	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
Harding, Jeanne B.	GRADOC, USL
Hazeley, Florella	CCSL
Jah, Kula F.	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
Jalloh, Nafisatu	UNHCR
Jenkins Johnston, J.B.	Barrister
Joaque, Mohamed A.	Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce
Joe, Emerick	NEYO
John, Lynda B.	Sierra Leone Youth Empowerment Organisation
John-Sao, Mary P.	Women's Forum, East

Johnson, Joyce	SHARE
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Joof, Isar O.	GRADOC
Josiah, Iyesha	Director, SLANGO
Kabbakeh, Noah	Sierra Leone Union on Disability Issues
Kabia, Anita	Awoko Newspaper
Kabu, Mban	Sierra Leone Labour Congress
Kai-Conteh	Civil Society Movement
Kain, Lahai S.	Ministry of Development and Economic Planning (MODEP)
Kai-Samba, Haja Massa	Traditional Head, Kenema
Kallon, C.P.J.	Ministry of Internal Affairs
Kallon, John	CARE
Kallon, Sheku M.	Ministry of Social Welfare, Bo
Kamara, Abdul P.	CCSL
Kamara, Catherine	Member of Parliament
Kamara, Dauda	Member of Parliament
Kamara, Diana T.S.	Indigenous Women's Development Association
Kamara, Fatmata	Sierra Leone Police
Kamara, J.B.A.	Senior District Officer, Kono
Kamara, John S.	MLHCP & E (Environment Department)
Kamara, Sid M.	MAF and MR, Port Loko
Kamara, Solomon A.T	YUFORD
Kandeh, Musu	Member of Parliament
Kargbo, Fatou Y.	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
Kawa, Sandy R.	Ministry of Tourism and Culture
Kebbie, B.V.S.	Traditional Ruler and Member of Parliament
Khoute, Elizabeth	Energy and Power
Kondoh, F.	Project Officer
Konneh, Joan M.	Ministry of Youth, Education and Sports, Bo
Konteh, Dr Richard	Catholic Relief Services
Koroma, Abdulai	Ministry of Public Affairs
Koroma, Agnes V.	Education, Kenema
Koroma, Angela	Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government
Koroma, John	Center for Human Rights and Peace Education
Koroma, K.C.	Ministry of Development and Economic Planning
Koroma, Konah C.	MODEP
Koroma, L.B.	Deputy Secretary
Koroma, Lansana B.	Ministry of Mineral Resources

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Koroma, M.S.	Senior District Officer, Kenema
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Koroma, Salamu	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
Koroma, Sulaiman Sengu	District Administration, Kenema
Kpakiwa, K.M.	Provincial Secretary, East Kenema
Kpolie, Elizabeth	Home Economics, NUC
Kuna, Christie	Gender Specialist, NNAMS
Lahai, Samuel	OXFAM
Lamptey, Comfort	UNHCR
Lavallie, Elizabeth	Member of Parliament and member of NEWMAP
Lebbie, John N.	Member of Parliament
Lebbie, Victoria V.	MAF and MR—Women in Agriculture
Lewis, R.P.J.	MIB
Lewis, S.A.A.	MFAIC
Macauley, Blanche	FBC Education Department
Macauley, Patricia	NEWMAP
Madam, P.C.	Paramount Chief
Malcolm-Parker, B.	Coordinator, Women's Forum
Mallo, Joseph U.M.	CDC, Civil Society, Bonthé
Mangeh, Bondu	Women's Forum—South
Mansaray, Ansumana	ADO, Moyamba
Mansaray, Nancy	R.H. Programme, MOHS
Mansaray, Patricia	PSDO North
Mansaray, Yirah	CDU, Freetown Secretariat
Manye, Bandu	Women's Forum (Grace Land)
Marah, Josephine	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Massallay, Joe	INSTADEX
Max-Kyne, Sao Kpato	NCRRR
May Parker, Ibi	Institute of Development (IOD)
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Mokwena, Steve	South African Youth Commission
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Mustapha, Anne Marie	Plan International
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'There can be no peace without gender equality and no development without both peace and equality ... I wish to pay tribute to all the women of Sierra Leone who, in very trying conditions, continue to be at the forefront of the national struggle to rebuild society.'

Angela King, UN Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, May 2001.

Following a decade of armed conflict that led to the virtual collapse of the country's social, economic, legal and political fabric, the Sierra Leone National Consultation on **Women and Men in Partnership for Post-Conflict Reconstruction**, held in Freetown on 21-24 May 2001, brought together 250 people from governmental and non-governmental organisations to discuss ways in which the war has impacted differently on women, children and men and how best to ensure gender equality in all reconstruction efforts.

The papers contained within this report examine the following issues from a gender perspective:

- ◆ political and public decision-making
- ◆ security and peace-building
- ◆ legal reform
- ◆ violence and other crimes against women and children
- ◆ poverty, economic recovery and empowerment
- ◆ health, HIV/AIDS and STIs
- ◆ resettlement of displaced persons and rehabilitation of ex-combatants
- ◆ the role of young people in post-conflict reconstruction

By gathering together into thematic workshops representatives from community-based organisations, government, the judiciary, the police, district councils, women's and youth groups and regional and international NGOs, the consultation provided a national platform for Sierra Leoneans to share their experiences and views, and define their own solutions, so that women, men and young people can work together to create a more equitable, stable and prosperous future.



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