

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 Ihekai'beya, 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.