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War of words: Bio administration battles with U.S Ambassador

Peace Commission highlights steps taken to addressing discord

Brussel Airline Foundation boosts female inmates



Minister Bah and Ambassador Reimer exchanged friendly fire

By Yusufu S. Bangura

The Julius Maada Bio administration is currently in serious battle with the United States Ambassador to Sierra Leone over the outcome of the June 24th general elections, which many have discredited and described the process as flawed.

While Ambassador David Reimer had noted that the United States Government was concerned about irregularities in the outcome of the June 24 general elections, the Minister of Information and Civic Education, Chernor Abdulai Bah reacted that the statement of the ambassador was merely a personal opinion.

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Report: FGM is a leading cause of death in Africa

Climate action: Africa's ambition is to produce electric vehicles

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PONDER MY THOUGHTS

By Andrew Keili

It is early days yet to find out if this new government will take the private sector rhetoric beyond mere platitudes and move into meaningful action. Many Ministers fail to embrace the private sector, only to return to a vacuous sector when they leave office. I consider it obligatory to make reference to the "long bench", if only because I do not want our new Ministers to repeat the mistakes of the past.

Every government professes to support the private sector, referring to it as the "engine of growth" but normally fails to put oil in the engine. The new Finance Minister in his recent budget speech continued the refrain..... "Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, Government recognizes the important role of the private sector in promoting sustainable growth and job creation. Government will therefore sustain efforts aimed at providing a conducive environment for the private sector to thrive. In this regard, Government is working with development partners to design and implement reforms to stabilize the economy, improve the business regulatory environment, enhance access to finance and provide basic infrastructure to improve the ease of doing business."

President Bio recently delivered the shortest and most focused speech at a State Opening of Parliament in recent memory. No "Rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem in 52 days", or "Parting of the Red Sea" references in his speech, no lambasting of the opposition and no references to "Tok and do". The speech, borrowing heavily from the condensed manifesto went straight to "the heart of the matter" (So, Bo school boys know how to summarise!). First and foremost, he talked about how his government's priority project, "Feed Salone" will ignite agricultural productivity and safeguard food security. "Human Capital Development" will nurture the skills required for the industries of the 21st Century, empowering our workforce for a transformative future. The "Youth Employment Scheme" will provide job opportunities for youth. The "Technology and Infrastructure Initiative" will serve as an engine for sustained economic growth, harnessing the power of innovation and robust infrastructure to propel Sierra Leone to middle-income status. Finally, his government will embark upon "Revamping the Public Service Architecture".

His first four priorities are lofty, but easy-to-grasp ideas that cannot be achieved without oiling the private sector. The private sector is the main engine of job creation and the source of almost 9 of every 10 jobs in the world. The private sector in Africa accounts for over 80 per cent of total production, two thirds of total investment, and three fourths of lending within the economy. If the private sector is going to deliver its full development potential in this regard, then countries need to get the climate right for both domestic and foreign investment. Africa needs to diversify economically and add value through commodity-based industrialization and raise productivity in agricultural and nonagricultural sectors. The continent also needs to promote industrialisation to meet the requirements of private businesses, in particular SMEs that are the backbone of the African private sector. Africa's industrial policies should be coherent with other policies, including trade policies, to promote value addition

NEW MINISTERS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR: BEHOLD THE 'LONG BENCH'

and economic diversification. Mobilizing finance to support the private sector in Africa has also been underscored as a crucial element.

Private investment in Sierra Leone however remains low. It is constrained by a cumbersome regulatory environment, administrative barriers, unstable macroeconomic environment, weak infrastructure, limited access to finance, unskilled labour and corruption. Despite our optimism and the effort of government, Sierra Leone is still a high tax country and the poor state of infrastructure is still a huge barrier to growth.

The Tejan Kabbah government, cognisant of the failures and inefficiencies of the public sector, realized the need to have the private sector play a leading role in the revitalization of the economy and embarked upon privatizing many of the State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), with the setting up of the National Commission for Privatisation (NCP). Several decades later many of the SOEs slated for privatization are still in government hands, with inefficient management teams and high indebtedness. The problems of many of them are compounded by ineffective Boards and considerable interference by government in their operations.

Sadly, this is the situation into which many

of our new Ministers have sleep-walked. A review of the recent budget allocation figures for MDAs indicates that funds are not only grossly inadequate but may not be available in a timely manner for executing their duties. Further increases in the price of fuel, rising inflation and domestic interest rates and contingent liabilities arising from the inefficiencies of the operations of SOEs are bound to exacerbate the problem. Foreign direct investments including public private partnerships would be required to make most sectors tick including the ones on the President's priority agenda.

If this Government is to succeed, Ministers should realise and ensure that the priorities stated by the President are predominantly driven by the private sector, with government serving as an enabler and not putting bureaucratic hurdles in the path of private sector investors and operators. The private sector should drive the food production, youth employment, technological and infrastructure improvements and many other aspects of the government's priorities.

There is a danger however that many new Ministers may not realise this and may be tempted to wallow in the mistake made by some of their predecessors in shutting out the private sector. Many Ministers in previous governments never bothered to engage the private sector meaningfully. They were too preoccupied with "other issues" and could not even countenance the needs of many groups in the private sector.

They could not be bothered about the contractors or consultants who were unfairly not considered for contracts, the contractors who either did not get paid at all or only got paid when the money was almost worthless or the private sector organisations which were facing severe constraints and had to lay off staff or the potential investors who were either too burdened with taxation or unfairly edged out because they were not "connected". When private sector players asked for an audience, they were often kept in their waiting rooms for hours on the proverbial "long bench" without addressing their problems or granting them audience. Sadly, when some of these Ministers leave office and realise they need to survive in the same private sector they had shunned, they have the big climb down of waiting to see their new replacements, who may also be inclined to carry on business as usual, leave them on the "long bench".

Ministers should bequeath an important legacy after they leave office. It behooves our new Ministers to learn from the mistakes of some of their predecessors and leave a good legacy-especially one of embracing private sector growth. I am encouraged by the fact that many of the young new Ministers, including the Chief Minister seem refreshingly open and ready to engage! They have not professed to be able to turn water into wine. May the "long bench" not be their portion in future!

My advice to new Ministers? Embrace the private sector and behold the "long bench".

Ponder my thoughts.

LOCAL NEWS

From Cover

The ambassador had noted the big difference between the ECSL announced results and the parallel vote tabulation, as well as inconsistencies that were analysed by domestic and international observers.

He said they will review all government programmes with the Sierra Leone Government going forward and that they will pay more attention to the aid the U.S Government is providing for the Sierra Leonean people, including health and other areas of intervention.

In his responses, the Minister of Information said, "I don't want people to be confused on what is seen to be like a personal opinion of an outgoing Ambassador because we have a partnership with the US Government that understands the need to strengthen our own democratic institutions and not to undermine them. I just want to make it clear that some of what the US Ambassador said is an opinion statement."

He said Sierra Leone has enjoyed a very strong relationship with the United States based on shared values, mutual respect, commitment to civic and political liberties, governance in the fight against corruption, which the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) stands for. He said the Ambassador is a person that likes to hear his personal views on the media and social media "so we have already known what he would have to say before the interview."

War of words: Bio administration battles with U.S Ambassador



He reiterated that Sierra Leone has a very respectful relationship with the United States which is very productive and will continue based on the principles of democracy.

He said their best performance on the MCC scored card will continue and the high level conversation with the MCC team will continue as well.

He said they were expecting a team from the MCC to visit the country in the not distant future, adding that a few months ago they have completed a feasibility study on the access to energy where the US Government gave Sierra Leone 12 million United States Dollars to complete the study.

While Ambassador Reimer had sounded a slowdown of the disbursement of the Compact Development Fund, Minister Bah said the MCC is a long and complicated process and that there are

times when things go faster or slower.

He said the high level conversation with the MCC team is still on going.

Going further on the issue of the election committee setup by President Bio that will be headed by Vice President, which the US Ambassador said will not be free from bias, Bah said the Government of Sierra Leone does not run based on the personal opinion of an outgoing ambassador.

He assured the public that the National Election System Review Committee will be independent and unbiased.

He said after the committee was set up, development partners and other institutions welcome the establishment of the committee.

"I therefore want the people to know that sometimes we have a personal opinion of an outgoing ambassador that will not be necessarily reflective on the debut, complicity, reality and the bigger relationship we have with the United States. So, we have the ability to include everyone in the committee," he said.

Meanwhile, in his recent tweet, the Chief Minister, Dr. David Moinina Sengh, assured the public that "Sierra Leone and the United States have a deep history of mutual respect and shared aspirations for our people. We're committed to their dreams and hopes, so the relationship between our country and any other state is bigger than any single individual's ego or specific program."



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Climate action: Africa's ambition is to produce electric vehicles

By: Kingsley Ighobor

The Acting Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Mr. Antonio Pedro, attended the High-Level Political Forum at the UN headquarters in New York in July. The forum focused on post-pandemic recovery and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Africa Renewal's Kingsley Ighobor interviewed Mr. Pedro on various aspects of Africa's development.

In Part 1 of the interview, Mr. Pedro discussed strategies to expedite SDG implementation, green industrialization and the vast potential of solar energy and electric vehicle battery precursors on the continent. These are excerpts from the interview:

Many countries are lagging in meeting SDG targets. How can African countries bridge the gap and achieve SDG targets given the current challenges they face?

Well, every country is off track. But we [Africa] are equally saying that there are opportunities to achieve the SDGs and realise Africa's Agenda 2063. Africa possesses abundant natural resources whose value could significantly contribute to the transitions that are key to accomplishing both agendas while advancing towards net-zero climate targets.

We have the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement (AfCFTA), which strengthens the business fundamentals of a large market of 1.4 billion people.

Climate action is critical, and Africa is at the centre of the solutions to achieving net-zero, given our natural resources, opportunities for carbon sequestration, and so on.

So, it is about recognizing that we need a "business unusual" approach to rescue the SDGs, identifying the opportunities, and articulating clear pathways to deliver results.

At the mid-point to 2030, only approximately 12 per cent of the 140 SDG targets are on track, while around 30 per cent have shown no progress, or have regressed below the 2015 baseline. Does Africa stand a chance if the stars were to align?

Absolutely. And it's really about aligning the stars. It is changing the paradigm.

At the UN, we have identified six SDG transformations. Exploring the interlinkages between the SDGs is part of this paradigm shift: moving from a sectorial approach, that is SDG-by-SDG, and instead, looking at the interlinkages where poverty, climate action, and development of sustained livelihoods are part and parcel of the same continuum.

The whole-of-government approach; bringing together different stakeholders — the private sector, civil society organizations, and others— to contribute to those opportunities. It is



Antonio Pedro, Acting Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa

having clarity about the direction, the opportunities, and the system-wide coherence necessary to deliver at the required speed and scale.

To what extent are SDGs ingrained in the development agendas of national governments on the continent?

There's work to be done to mainstream the SDGs in national plans and development strategies, and to effectively monitor implementation. It is equally important to ensure the alignment of national development plans and strategies with Agenda 2063. Fortunately, there are instruments to achieve that.

At the UNECA, we have developed an integrated planning and reporting tool that enables member states to achieve those two objectives. [The tool - IPRT - is a web application helping African countries to simultaneously adopt and integrate both the SDGs and Agenda 2063 into their national development and enable them to report their progress in a harmonized way].

How would you respond to those who argue against the idea of Africa pursuing rapid green industrialization? We have the assets to pursue a green industrialization strategy.

First, we are starting from a baseline where we are not industrialized, making the catch-up exercise and the pursuit of an industrial 4.0, 4.4, or 5.0 a natural pathway for us.

Second, unlike other jurisdictions burdened with carbon-intensive production systems, we don't have such issues. So, we can start afresh from a clean slate and utilize our resources in an environmentally conscious manner.

We have the endowments for green industrialization. For example, our major rivers—from the Congo to the Nile, Zambezi, Limpopo, and others—hold tremendous potential for generating significant amounts of clean energy.

We have 60 per cent or so—of course, we need to evaluate this better—of the radiation potential in the world. Currently, we only capture about 2.5 per cent of our renewable energy potential. The pursuit of massive

deployment of solar energy is possible. Furthermore, our reserves of hydrogen which, as you know, is an alternative energy source for the aviation sector, offer a sustainable solution for the future.

We have the critical green minerals for electrifying transport systems and facilitating the massive deployment of solar and wind energy. Gone should be the days of small-scale boutique solar projects; we can now have solar power plants in excess of 2,000 megawatts, which can power cities and industries. So, the scale and ambition therefore can be much higher.

But we need to mobilize financing accordingly.

We often hear about the abundant natural resources that Africa possesses. However, we have struggled to fully exploit them to the extent that they substantially benefit countries on the continent. Is there a paradigm shift this time?

Absolutely. In 2009, we adopted the Africa Mining Vision (AMV) as the blueprint for the extractive sector, which has been underpinned by the effort to promote greater value addition, resource-based industrialization, and linkages between the extractive sector and the rest of the economy.

The extractive sector in Africa is an enclave without those linkages. But since the adoption of the AMV, there's been progress, although not significant progress because the share of tradables in our total exports remains minimal. We essentially continue to export raw materials.

In November 2021, we organized the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) –Africa Business Forum to articulate the pathways for developing the battery and electric vehicle value chain. A BloombergNef study demonstrated that the production of battery precursors, the chemicals used in batteries, was three times cheaper in the DRC than in China and India, and two times cheaper than in Poland. And with very positive emission scores.

Since then, a pre-feasibility study is set to be completed in August this year [2023], which will enable us to transition

from a market valued at \$11 billion, which is mining, to a market of \$271 billion, which is the battery precursors production.

The ambition, of course, is to produce electric vehicles on the continent, tapping into a global market projected to be \$7.7 trillion by 2025 and \$46 trillion by 2050. Our multilateral development banks are supporting this initiative through the DRC- Zambia transboundary Special Economic Zone.

Within this zone, there is a plan to establish battery plants, solar panel plants, and other essential components, creating a complete ecosystem. The batteries will enable further deployment of solar energy on the continent to power the green industrialization point mentioned earlier.

Is there a concern that the low-carbon transition in developed countries could potentially harm Least Developed Countries (LDCs), of which 33 are in Africa, due to big companies in the West gradually depending less on Africa's primary products as they shift to low-carbon practices?

The road to achieving net-zero targets is going to be resource intensive. For certain minerals, we will need 500 times more than we are currently producing.

However, we should never anchor our development trajectory on the export of raw materials. Instead, we must focus on projects like the one in DRC and Zambia, which, by the way, will not only benefit the DRC and Zambia, because you need other minerals to be able to have a functional battery and electric vehicle value chain.

You need graphite from Mozambique, Tanzania, and Madagascar. You need the nickel from South Africa, Botswana, and Madagascar. You need the manganese from Gabon and South Africa. You need phosphate from Morocco. You need copper from Zambia and DRC.

So, it is an African-wide regional value chain.

Our study suggests we will need about \$500 billion of investments in transport and service infrastructure, including the acquisition of about 2 million trucks to facilitate the flow of goods and services under the AfCFTA framework.

Therefore, we've gone beyond our initial objective, which was to localize the battery precursors' value chain. Now, our ambition is to produce electric vehicles on the continent, starting with the introduction of mini-buses for our public transport systems.

If we electrify our transport systems, we'll be contributing to reducing emissions and advancing our net-zero targets. It will also reduce the continent's excessive dependence on the export of raw materials.

This article was first published in: www.un.org/africarenewal/

LOCAL NEWS

By Alhaji Haruna Sani

Nin order to help build their capacity, the Brussel Airline Foundation in Belgium has donated five brand new classic ultramodern sewing machines including electric irons to the female correctional inmates in the Sierra Leone Correctional Service in Freetown.

The donation which the inmates received with much excitement was done by Charles Brichet and Estelle Van Eeckhout of Brussel Foundation at the newly built Football for Reform Training and Skills Centre on Wednesday, 17th August.

In her welcome statements, Arina Zainab Sesay, Commanding Officer of Female Correctional Service in Sierra Leone, thanked the visitors and expressed appreciation for their timely and skills building provision.

Estelle Van Eeckhout, Member of the donating team said the gift is just a start, as any big venture has a small beginning.

"I am confident that you will make good use of those machines so that you will be well capacitated in starting a new perspective. I have received a whole lot of energy from you and I am always very impressed by the energy you gave me and provide for me," she said

On behalf of the Fashion for Change,

Brussel Airline Foundation boosts female inmates



Jenneh Amara-Bangali thanked the benefactors and welcome them to the centre which she said became a reality due to the dedication of two strong women; Mrs. Isha Johansen, FIFA council member and Mrs. Fatma Samoura FIFA Secretary General. Madam Jenneh Amara-Bangali said

the two women visited the Correctional Centre a couple of years ago and promised to do something to help the inmates and they kept to their word.

"Fashion for Change was initiated by four designers including Musa Sanusie Frederica Williams, Hannah Fullah and myself; Jenneh Amara Bangali. We put together a fashion event to help raise funds to kick start aiding inmates in getting legal representation and also release from detention centres. Due to all our efforts we now have special friends who are being supportive in their own way," she said.

She appreciated the benefactors and assured them that machines will be put into good use by the female inmates to help empower themselves in different sewing skills and make them self-

sufficient upon their release into society.

Jenneh Amara-Bangali said Designers of Fashion for Change will come together and see how they can help in their own way in Design skills by mentoring divers sewing skills.

"We hope you will look after these machines well and make the Brussel Foundation Proud when next they visit the CENTER," she concluded.

In his remark, on behalf of the Director General of the Sierra Leone Correctional Services, Colonel Sahr Thomas Nguajah started by thanking the Football for Reform and Fashion for Change for building the training facility. He said the centre is creating an indelible impact not only on the lives of the inmates but also the Correctional Service officers and military personnel.

He said the centre has recently been used to undertake exceptional trainings on different kinds of cassava processing. He disclosed that Football for Reforms intend to soon construct a mini-stadium for the female inmates.

While donating the machines to the management of the correctional service, Charles Brichet encouraged the inmates to judiciously use the machines so that it would benefit them and other Sierra Leoneans as well.

He said in due time other six brand new machines will be added to five donated machines.

One of the inmates thanked the benefactors on behalf of her colleagues. She assured that they are determined to make good use of the machines provided for them.

"Most of us are here because we were because we were over reliant on our husbands and male counterparts. But with these machines couple with the skills training we have been receiving, we are going to be a different people when regain our freedom," she stated.

Peace Commission highlights steps taken to addressing discord

By Yusufu S. Bangura

The Deputy Executive Secretary, Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion (ICPNC), Moses Margao, has highlighted steps they have taken to promoting peace and national cohesion in the country between the main opposition and the government.

The commission was established by an Act of Parliament and their primary mandate is to promote peace and national cohesion in the country.

He underscored that after the elections, they learnt about confusion among Sierra Leoneans regarding the outcome of the election.

He said the commission has outlined some of their post electoral activities by engaging different institutions for them to know how they should dialogue, reconcile some of the furies between Sierra Leoneans and how they should promote national cohesion in Sierra Leone.

He went on to say that most people would want to know what role they have played in terms of the political conflict among political parties, adding that as part of their dialogue and peace promotion, they have also engaged

political parties especially the two main parties-the ruling Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) and the main opposition All People's Congress (APC).

He said during their engagement with the executive of the ruling SLPP, they made them understood that elections are over and that they should try and map out a possible partway to enhancing the peace and national cohesion of the nation.

He continued that on Tuesday, they also engaged the main opposition APC to see how the two can map out a possible solution to upholding the peace and national cohesion, adding that both parties were very much receptive to the peace commission's enhancement a national dialogue.

He cited that they also engaged the CSOs as to how they should promote peace and national cohesion in the country because they believed that CSOs have an eminent role to play to foster and render checks and balances on government.

Margao concluded that they have also engaged the media both prints and electronics media because prior to the elections, the media played both productive and constructive roles to uphold the peace of the country.

Police demolish drug cartels in Bo

By Ishmael Dumbuya

In a statement issued by the Regional Police Commander South, AIG Brima Kanneh, police have demolished several drug cartels identified in the Area Of Responsibility.

According to the statement, on Monday, a team of policemen under the Bo West Division, while on operation patrols, arrested six (6) drug peddlers from various cartels who were taken to the station (TOCU) for investigations.

The team lead, ASP Ganda ordered his team to be vigilant and make more arrests and conduct discreet investigations to get a peaceful Bo City.

According to ASP Ganda, positive results of that police action led to the level of lawlessness and crimes in

societies.

ASP Ganda has strongly and repeatedly warned that criminals will no longer be having a hiding place in the City of Bo except if they either repent or leave the South completely, adding that command team would be embarking on rigorous patrols, raids of criminal hideouts, and areas that are associated with crimes in the City. The statement solicited supports from local residents to volunteer in providing credible information that could aid in apprehending criminals in Bo.

It should be noted that the current spate of drug intake and prevalence has gripped the nation, leading to riotous conducts, mental distortion, and most times theft among locals in the community.



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LOCAL NEWS

By Hassan Gbassay Koroma

The Georga Land Masonic Temple, has on August 16, donated cash of NLe50,000 to the fight against prostate cancer in Sierra Leone and NLe20,000 to the King George's Home for the Aged.

Speaking during the donation ceremony at their Temple on 24 Lightfoot Boston Street in Freetown, the District Grand Master in Sierra Leone, Chrispin Deigh said they used to donate without drawing public attention, but this time they decided to do so because they wanted the public to know that members of the Temple are not that conservative.

He further noted that the donation they were doing was an emulation of their parents, the Grand Lodge of Scotland who are heavily involved in charity.

He said last year Scotland donated over one million Pounds Sterling to the main charity of prostate cancer, stating that following their footsteps they also in Sierra Leone reached out into their pockets and decided to donate to the fight against prostate cancer in Sierra Leone and also to the King George's Home for the Aged.

He said they have over the years, the District and daughter lodges have at all times exercised the cardinal virtue of their fraternity, which is to give relief to those in need and have regularly provided relief to institutions, organisations, brethren, individuals, religious organisations and other deserving causes.

He highlighted that in the recent past, as part of the response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, with matching funds from the Grand Lodge of Scotland Covid-19 Challenge Fund District Grand Lodge made a presentation of medical supplies to the 34 Military Hospital to the tune of

Georga Land Masonic Temple boosts fight against prostate cancer



Grand Master Mason of Scotland William Ramsay Mason presenting the cheque to Cancer UK Sierra Leone.

£2,800 on 30th September 2020.

He further highlighted that, they also donated food items, materials and supplies to Makambo Village, Makeni, Northern Sierra Leone and others.

Also speaking, Most Worshipful Grand Master Mason of Scotland William Ramsay Mason who is on visit in Sierra Leone, said they were very grateful to witnessing the donation ceremony and it was a honour for them to donate towards the fight against prostate cancer in the country.

He said on behalf of all the temples they donated over 1,125,000 pounds to the fight against cancer and prostate cancer.

He said much of the money that was donated will be used on research and that the result of the research will help men to overcome the fight against prostate cancer in the world.

Receiving the donation, Home Manager of King George's Home for the Aged, Makalay Mansaray said they were grateful for the donation, which she said will help them to address some of the home's problem for a while. She extended invitation to the membership of the temple to always visit and celebrate their birthdays with the aged.

Representative of Cancer UK Sierra Leone, Dr. Len Gordon-Harris, said Cancer UK Sierra

Leone is a charity organisation that is registered both in the United Kingdom and in Sierra Leone, stating their main focus for this year and the following year is on prostate cancer.

He thanked the temple for the donation and promised that they are not going to relent in educating the public about prostate cancer in the country.

Njala University West African One Health Project begins three-day workshop

By Ayuba Koroma



The Njala University West African One Health Research Project has Wednesday, 16th August 2023 commenced its three-day One Health Convening, scheduled to take place from August 16th to August 18th, 2023, at the De Wizzard Enterprises Conference Hall located at 62 Dambala Road in Bo.

The conference's purpose, as articulated by Project Lead Professor Rashid Ansumana, who also serves as the Dean of the School of Community Health Sciences, is to convene a diverse group of professionals and stakeholders from various fields to discuss the initial outcomes of the project, while concurrently delving into the intricate web of interconnectedness of humans, animals and environmental health.

The three-day event will include plenary sessions featuring esteemed experts delivering keynotes and presentations on a range of critical topics. These topics will include zoonotic disease surveillance, ecosystem health, policy integration, and illustrative One Health case studies. The program will also encompass interactive workshops designed to facilitate hands-on experiences in various areas. These workshops will cover themes such as community action networks, socio-ecology, gender's role in One Health, the impact of land-use changes, effective leadership and time management, and strategic communication strategies.

Moreover, the event will comprise engaging panel discussions, dynamic PowerPoint presentations, and a comprehensive Policy Roundtable discussion. This multifaceted approach will ensure a holistic exploration of the One Health framework and its implications.

The three-day conference is anticipated to: increase understanding of the West African One Health approach among various stakeholders; strengthen collaborative networks, promoting ongoing partnerships and resource sharing;

influences women's marriage opportunities in Western Africa - due to patriarchal culture and institutions.

"Our research suggests that decisions about FGM may reflect trade-offs between perceived disadvantages of FGM, such as pain and

present policy recommendations based on evidence-based research and shared expertise aimed at incorporating One Health into regional and national strategies; and enhance capacity building and empowerment of professionals to implement effective One Health practices in their respective sectors.

Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Njala University, who also doubles as the Chairman of the conference, noted in his opening statement provided valuable insights to stakeholders regarding the current status of the project.

He noted Njala University's commitment to research and community outreach and happy to be at the forefront of the project. He added that the convening signifies the convergence of diverse disciplines, nations and ideas with the shared vision of integrating human, animal and environmental health.

"We are nestled within Sierra Leone's verdant landscapes, a testament to the intricate tapestry of life we are committed to preserving. And as we stand at this crossroads, we are reminded of the interconnectedness of our destinies. The challenges of today, from emerging zoonotic diseases to the relentless march of climate change, do not respect borders or silos of knowledge. They demand our collective action and integrated solutions," Professor Koroma mentioned.

West African One Health Project is designed primarily for understanding, preventing and mitigating outbreaks. The project is conducted in Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Nigeria by an international and multidisciplinary consortium led by Njala University, Sierra Leone with support from International Partners at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom, Royal Veterinary College, University of London, United Kingdom and Australian National University, Australia. The Project is funded by the International Development Research Center (IDRC) Canada.

illegality, and expected benefits such reduced social sanctions and a higher bride-price - people may factor in an increased risk of death as part of that calculation," added Professor Rockey.

Report: FGM is a leading cause of death in Africa

By Ishmael Dumbuya

According to a research from the Universities of Birmingham and Exeter, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a leading cause of death in the countries where it is practised, with over 44,000 additional women and young girls dying each year.

The study indicates that FGM accounts for more deaths in those countries than any cause other than enteric infections - usually resulting from consuming contaminated food or water - respiratory infections, or malaria and remains legal in five of the 28 countries where it is most practiced.

Researchers are calling for FGM to be made illegal in Mali, Malawi, Chad, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, given that legal change can lead to cultural change. They also say that efforts must be stepped up to eliminate FGM in countries where it is practiced.

The study went on to state that there are significant numbers of girls subjected to FGM in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania.

They discovered that a 50% increase in the number of girls undergoing FGM increases their five-year mortality rate and leads to estimated 44,320 excess deaths per year across countries where the practice takes place.

James Rockey, Co-author from the University

of Birmingham, commented that their findings showed that FGM is a leading cause of death amongst girls and young women in countries where it is practised, but lasting change requires changing attitudes towards FGM in these communities.

"There is cause for optimism, as work on non-communicable diseases shows effective interventions are possible, but change in patriarchal attitudes often lags other societal change - an important first step would be for FGM to be made illegal in the countries where it is within the law, given that legal change can lead to cultural change," he mentioned.

Globally, over 200 million women and girls have been subjected to FGM - a practice which often happens in unsanitary conditions and without clinical supervision with consequent severe pain, bleeding, and infection. It is known to lead to obstetric complications, reductions in sexual function, and other long-term physical health problems, as well as mental health problems.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates the aggregate cost of medical treatment for girls and women after FGM was \$1.4 billion in 2018. However, until now, there has been no systematic evidence about the role of FGM in the global epidemiology of child mortality - reflecting difficulties in measuring the practice.

A key social dimension of FGM is how it impacts on marriage, for example, the practice

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Invitation for Bids

Sierra Leone
August, 2023

Title Construction of Grain Stores and other Ancillary Facilities
No. SLE-2000001544-0010-W-ICB

- The Government of Sierra Leone has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Adaption Fund (AF), OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) and Toni Blair Institute (TBI), the financing of which is being administered by IFAD towards the cost of Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (AVDP) and intends to apply part of the financing for the purchase of these goods. The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project
- The goal of AVDP is livelihoods and climate change resilience of rural farming households in Sierra Leone improved, while the project development objective (PDO) is to promote agriculture as a business for enhanced incomes and reduced rural poverty, among 42,985 rural households. The AVDP will be implemented nationwide over a six-year period. A value chain development approach will drive the implementation process, supported by the application of a robust targeting strategy to ensure the inclusion of the rural poor in both the implementation of project activities and the sharing of the benefits and priority attention to enhancing climate resilience among the project beneficiaries.
- The employer now invites sealed bids from eligible entities ("bidders") for the execution and completion of Construction of Grain Stores and Ancillary Facilities which are being bid as a unit price contract based on the bill of quantities.
- This IFB is open to all eligible bidders who wish to participate. Subject to the restrictions stipulated in the bidding document, eligible bidders may associate with other bidders to enhance their capacity to successfully carry out the works.
- The works, and the contract/s expected to be awarded, are divided into four lots as follows:

LOT NO	Lot Description	District	Chiefdom	Village	Lot ID
1	Construction of Grain Stores and other Ancillary Facilities in Kenema and Kono Districts	Kenema	Niawa	Sendumie	SLE-2000001544-0010-W-ICB-A
		Kenema	Nongowa	Burma Ili	
		Kenema	Nongowa	Kambuwbabu	
		Kenema	Nongowa	Foindu	
		Kono	Tankoro	Tongoro	
		Kono	Fama	Moidema	
2	Construction of Grain Stores and other Ancillary Facilities in Bo and Pujehun Districts	Bo	Bongor	Bendu	SLE-2000001544-0010-W-ICB-B
		Bo	Jaiama	Konbondo	
		Bo	Boama	Yamandu	
		Pujehun	Galliness	Blama Massaquoi	
		Pujehun	Kpanga	Gombu	
3	Construction of Grain Stores and other Ancillary Facilities in Bonthe and Moyamba Districts	Bonthe	Sogbini	Naijeh	SLE-2000001544-0010-W-ICB-C
		Bonthe	Jong	Mattru Jong	
		Bonthe	Jong	Moyowa	
		Moyamba	Fakunya	Moyamba Town	
		Moyamba	Fakunya	Falaba	
		Moyamba	Fakunya	moyamba junction	
4	Construction of Grain Stores and other Ancillary Facilities in Kenema and Kono Districts	Kailahun	Kissi Tongi	Plotou	SLE-2000001544-0010-W-ICB-D
		Kailahun	Luawa	Nyandahun	
		Kailahun	Luawa	Mambabu	
		Kailahun	Kissi Tongi	Bayama/Fenesu	

Bidders have the option to bid for one or more lots; but they will only be contracted for one. However, in the event that a bidder wins more than one lot, the lot with the higher price will be awarded to the bidder; if the lots are of the same value, any one of the lots will be awarded to the bidder.

- A contractor will be selected using the international competitive bidding (ICB) method in accordance with the IFAD Procurement Handbook accessible at www.ifad.org/project-procurement. The ICB process will include a review and verification of qualifications and past performance, including a reference check, prior to the contract award.

1. Please note that a pre-bid conference will not be held

2. Bidders interested in submitting a bid shall purchase the bidding document against payment of a non-refundable fee of **SLE500 or 25 USD**. Payment shall be made to the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project through Western Union Money Transfer, RIA, MoneyGram (Attention Debora F. Bangura) or in the following account:

Account Name: Agriculture Value Chain Development Project

Account No: 014-001-107-861-136-462

Bank: Commerce and Mortgage Bank

3. Bidding documents can be obtained by sending an e-mail with a copy of the payment slip, giving full contact details of the bidder and the subject of procurement, to avdpmmu@gmail.com. This will also ensure that the bidders receive the bidding document by email or hard copy (at the following address), as well as any updates regarding the bidding document

4. Bids must be delivered electronically to the PMU via the following link and in the manner specified in the bid data sheet – instructions to bidders 23.2, no later than 21st September, 2023 at 12:00 GMT.

Link: <https://bit.ly/BidSubStore>

5. Bidders should be aware that late bids will not be accepted under any circumstance.

6. Bid security in the form of a Bank Guarantee. The amount and currency of the Bid Security shall be \$9000 per Lot and shall be expressed in lots. Bid Security from community and village banks and Bid Bond from insurance companies are not acceptable

7. There will be a virtual bid opening via ZOOM on 31st September, 2023 at 12:30 GMT.

Link to join Bid Opening: <https://bit.ly/BidOpenStores>

7. For any further clarification, please contact the above email address:



Guild of Editors - Sierra Leone

C/O MRCG 145 Circular Road, Freetown.

Email: editorsguild94@gmail.com Mob: +23276653596

Public Notice

Increase in Advert Pricing for Newspapers

24th March, 2023.

The general public is hereby informed that the Guild of Newspaper Editors - Sierra Leone (GoNE-SL) has reviewed the advert pricing for newspapers as follows:

Black & White

No.	Description	Old Price (NLe)	New Price (NLe)
1	Quarter Page (¼)	700	800
2	Half (½)	800	1,200
3	Full Page	1,000	1,500
4	Centre Spread	2,000	3,000

Coloured

No.	Description	Old Price (NLe)	New Price (NLe)
1	Full Page	2,500	3,000
2	Centre Spread	5,000	6,000

The cover price remains the same.

Please note that the new pricing takes effect on Monday, 3rd April, 2023.

Your cooperation is highly solicited.

Signed:

Donald Theo-Harding

Chairman, GoNE-SL.

Bankers: Union Trust Bank A/C No: 01-210-25968-01

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GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE
Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education

Request for Expression of Interest (REIO)
HIRING OF A CONSULTANCY FIRM TO CONDUCT
INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GENDER
AUDITING AND EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF THE
FREE EDUCATION PROJECT ACTIVITIES

UNDER THE SIERRA LEONE FREE EDUCATION PROJECT
(FIRM Selection)

Country: Republic of Sierra Leone
Name of Project: Sierra Leone Free Education Project (SLFEP)
Grant Number: P16789

Assignment Title: HIRING OF A CONSULTANCY FIRM TO CONDUCT INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GENDER AUDITING AND EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF THE FREE EDUCATION PROJECT ACTIVITIES
Reference No. SL-MBSSE-364661-CS-QBS
Date of Issuance: July 28th 2023

1.0 Source of Funds

The Government of Sierra Leone has received a grant from a Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) for the implementation of the Sierra Leone Free Education Project (FREE). The Free Education Project is worth US\$72.82 million (US\$50 million from IDA (World Bank) and US\$15.97 from Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTF) supported by DFID, now FCDO, EU and Irish Aid), and (US\$6.85M) towards Covid-19 Response from the Global Partnership for Education-GPE). The project has been well aligned with the main objectives and focus of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2019-2023, as well as the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2018-2020, which also reflects the Government's and Development Partners' (DPs) priorities and strategies. These documents are geared towards addressing education sector challenges and transforming the education system over the long term. Specifically, the project was designed in close collaboration with the Government and its Development Partners, especially to support the Government's flagship Free Quality School Education (FQSE) Program—with the aim of ensuring that free quality education is provided to all school age children from pre-primary to secondary school.

This project is implemented by the Ministry of Basic Education and Senior Education (MBSSE) and coordinated by the Free Education Project Secretariat (FEPS). The project became effective in August 2020 and will continue to be implemented for a period of five years across all sixteen districts in Sierra Leone. The Project's Development Objectives are to improve the management of the education system, teaching practices and learning conditions with six major components:

- I. Policy, Governance, Accountability and Systems Administrations
- II. Teacher Management and Professional Development
- III. School Level Development
- IV. Project Management and Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation
- V. Contingency Emergency Response
- VI. COVID-19 Response.

About the Free Education Project Secretariat (FEPS)

The FEPS is tasked with coordinating all relevant institutions to implement the Free Education project and serves as liaison between the donors (MDTF) and the implementation agencies. It ensures that donors' regulations and policies are followed and stakeholders' expectations are met. It also serves as a major source of information and communication between the MBSSE, the Government and the public.

The overall environmental and social risk rating of FREE is classified as moderately satisfactory. This risk rating takes into consideration the tendency for the project to conduct an independent environmental, social and gender evaluation and monitoring of the project activities. In this regard, the Free Education Project Secretariat intends to engage an independent consulting firm to conduct a comprehensive evaluation and monitoring of the project's environmental, social and gender activities.

Background / Introduction

A consultancy firm is required to conduct an environmental and social evaluation and monitoring for the Free Education project school construction and renovation in certain communities in Sierra Leone. The school construction and renovation project is aimed at building modern school structures and improve others that will provide conducive learning environments for students in various communities in Sierra Leone. The project will cover various aspects such as the construction of new schools, renovation of existing schools, provision of furniture, and construction of toilets, among others.

Objective of the assignment

The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) through the Free Education Project Secretariat requires the services of an independent consulting firm to conduct a comprehensive evaluation and monitoring of the project's environmental, social and gender activities for the Project Implementation team to ensure the project maintains compliance with the World Bank's safeguards policies and relevant Government of Sierra Leone policies and laws.

Scope of Work

The consultancy firm will be required to conduct an environmental and social evaluation and monitoring of the ongoing school construction project in the country. The evaluation and monitoring will cover the following areas:

Environmental Evaluation:

Conduct regular environmental assessments to identify and assess the potential environmental impacts of the project on the air, water, and soil quality, biodiversity, and other related areas.
Evaluate the effectiveness of the environmental management plan (EMP) implemented by the project team.
Identify and assess the potential risks associated with the project, including the risks of pollution, soil erosion, and water contamination and climate change.
Propose measures to mitigate any potential risks and enhance the positive environmental impacts of the project.
Provide training to the project team on the importance of environmental sustainability and the need to comply with relevant laws and regulations.

Social Evaluation:

Conduct regular social assessments to identify and assess the potential social impacts of the project on the local communities, including their livelihoods, health, and well-being.
Evaluate the effectiveness of the Grievance Redress mechanism (GRM) implemented by the project team.
Identify and assess the potential risks associated with the project, including the risks of displacement, social conflict, and marginalization.
Propose measures to mitigate any potential risks and enhance the positive social impacts of the project.
Provide training to the project team on the importance of social sustainability and the need to comply with relevant laws and regulations.
The consultancy firm will be required to conduct a gender evaluation of the ongoing school construction project in Sierra Leone. The evaluation will cover the following areas:

Gender Analysis:

Conduct a gender analysis to identify and assess the potential gender-related issues associated with the project.
Assess the current gender dynamics and the status of gender equality in the project area.
Identify any potential barriers to gender equality, including social norms, cultural practices, and other related factors.
Propose measures to promote gender equality in all aspects of the project.
Participation and Empowerment:
Evaluate the level of participation and empowerment of women in the project activities, including decision-making processes and access to project resources.
Identify any potential barriers to women's participation and empowerment and propose measures to promote their involvement in all aspects of the project.

Access to Services:

Assess the access of women and girls to project services, including school infrastructure, sanitation facilities, and other related services.
Identify any potential barriers to their access and propose measures to enhance their access to project services.

Capacity Building:

Identify the capacity-building needs of women and girls in the project area, including their access to education and training opportunities.
Propose measures to enhance their capacity and empower them to participate in the project activities and decision-making processes.

Monitoring and Reporting:

Develop a monitoring and reporting plan to ensure that the project's environmental, social and gender performance is regularly evaluated and reported.
Conduct regular site visits to monitor the project's compliance with environmental, social gender standards and regulations.
Provide regular progress reports to the project team and the project manager, detailing the project's environmental, social and performance, potential risks, and proposed measures to mitigate them.
Prepare a final report summarizing the findings of the environmental, social and evaluation and monitoring, including recommendations for improvement.
Provide regular progress reports to the project team and the project coordinator, detailing the project's gender-sensitive performance, potential gender-related issues, and proposed measures to mitigate them.

The Government of Sierra Leone, through MBSSE, now invites eligible ("Consultant") to indicate their interest in providing the Services.

2.0 Brief Description of the Assignment

The purpose of this consultancy is to engage a consultant to conduct a water quality and pumping test for a school WASH project. The consultant will be responsible for conducting a comprehensive study of the water quality and quantity at the school site and providing recommendations for the implementation of the WASH project.

3.0 Deliverables

The following deliverables will be expected from the consultancy firm:
A comprehensive report detailing the findings of the environmental, social and gender performance of the project

A comprehensive report detailing the findings of the environmental, social and gender evaluation and monitoring, including the potential impacts of the project and proposed measures to mitigate them.

A monitoring and reporting plan outlining the measures to be taken to ensure that the project's environmental, social and gender performance is regularly evaluated and reported.

Regular progress reports detailing the project's environmental, social and gender performance, potential risks, and proposed measures to mitigate them.

A final report summarizing the findings of the environmental, social and evaluation and monitoring, including recommendations for improvement.

Note: All of the above-mentioned deliverables must be informed by relevant stakeholders' contribution through accepted methods of strategic plan development.

4.0 Qualification and Experience of the Consultant.

Academic Qualification

Team qualification and requirements. The should have the following key staff, team lead (environmental specialist, Gender specialist and social safeguards specialist)

Environmental and Social Evaluator Team lead

To qualify as an Environmental Team Lead for conducting E&S (Environmental and Social) auditing for school construction and renovation, should possess a combination of education, experience, and relevant skills. Key requirements

Five years' specific experience in Environmental and social safeguarding.

Education: A bachelor's or master's degree in environmental science, environmental engineering, sustainability, or a related field would be advantageous. The degree should cover topics such as environmental impact assessment, environmental management systems, environmental regulations, and sustainable development.

Experience: Prior experience in conducting environmental audits, preferably in the construction or infrastructure sector, is highly valuable. Experience in the education sector or with school construction and renovation projects would be an added advantage. The individual should have a strong understanding of environmental issues related to construction activities, waste management, energy efficiency, water conservation, and indoor air quality.

Knowledge of Regulations: must be familiar with national environmental regulations, policies, and standards is crucial. This includes understanding the EPA and world bank E&S standards related to construction activities, waste management, air and water quality, hazardous materials, and energy efficiency.

E&S Auditing Skills: The Environmental Team Lead should have expertise in conducting environmental and social audits. This involves assessing the environmental impact of construction and renovation activities, identifying potential risks and impacts, evaluating compliance with regulations and industry standards, and recommending mitigation measures to minimize negative environmental and social effects.

Project Management: require strong project management skills for overseeing the evaluation process. The Environmental Team Lead should be capable of coordinating with various stakeholders, managing timelines, and ensuring that the audit is conducted efficiently and effectively.

Communication and Reporting: Excellent written and verbal communication skills are necessary for preparing audit reports, documenting findings, and presenting recommendations to project stakeholders. The ability to explain complex environmental concepts in a clear and concise manner is crucial.

Sustainability Knowledge: A comprehensive understanding of sustainable practices, green building principles, and environmentally friendly technologies is beneficial. This includes knowledge of energy-efficient design, renewable energy systems, water conservation strategies, waste reduction methods, and green materials.

A Gender Specialist

Minimum five years' experience in mainstreaming gender into project activities

Education: A bachelor's or master's degree in gender studies, women's studies, social sciences, international development, or a related field would be advantageous. The degree should cover topics such as gender and development, gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, and social justice.

Gender Expertise: Strong expertise in gender issues, gender mainstreaming, and gender-responsive approaches is crucial. The Gender Specialist should have a deep understanding of the social, cultural, and economic factors that influence gender dynamics and inequalities in the context of education and construction projects.

Experience: Prior experience working as a Gender Specialist or in a related role is important. Experience in conducting gender evaluations or gender impact assessments in construction projects, preferably in the education sector, would be highly valuable. Familiarity with gender-sensitive indicators, tools, and methodologies is essential.

Knowledge of Gender Policies and Standards: Familiarity with international and national gender policies, guidelines, and standards is necessary. This includes understanding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to gender equality, relevant international conventions, and local regulations concerning gender equality and women's empowerment.

Gender Analysis Skills: The Gender Specialist should possess strong analytical skills to assess the gender implications of school construction activities. This involves conducting gender analysis to identify potential gender biases, inequalities, and social impacts in the project. The specialist should also be able to propose strategies and measures to promote gender equality and inclusiveness in construction processes.

Stakeholder Engagement: The Gender Specialist should be skilled in engaging with diverse stakeholders, including local communities, school administrators, construction teams, and policymakers. Building effective relationships and facilitating gender-sensitive consultations and discussions is crucial for understanding the needs and perspectives of different groups.

Communication and Reporting: Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, are necessary for preparing reports, documenting findings, and presenting recommendations. The Gender Specialist should be able to effectively communicate complex gender concepts and issues to different audiences, including non-experts.

Cultural Sensitivity: Sensitivity to cultural contexts, diversity, and local norms is essential for a Gender Specialist. Understanding the intersectionality of gender with other social identities such as age, ethnicity, religion, and disability is important in assessing the specific challenges faced by different groups.

Continuous Learning: Keeping up-to-date with the latest research, best practices, and emerging trends in gender equality and women's empowerment is important for a Gender Specialist. Participating in relevant training programs and conferences can contribute to ongoing professional development.

Social safeguards specialist qualification

The social safeguards specialist would typically need a combination of education, skills, and experience in the field of social safeguards, environmental management, and construction practices. Key requirements

Five years specific experience in social safeguards works.

Education: A bachelor's or master's degree in fields such as social sciences, environmental management, sustainable development, or a related discipline would be beneficial.

Knowledge of social safeguards: Gain a comprehensive understanding of social safeguards and their application in construction and renovation activities. This includes understanding the relevant national and international regulations, standards, and guidelines related to social impact assessment, stakeholder engagement, labor rights, health and safety, community development, and indigenous peoples' rights. World Bank experience is required.

Environmental management knowledge: Familiarize f with environmental management practices within the construction industry. This includes understanding environmental impact assessments, waste management, pollution prevention, and sustainable resource management.

Professional experience: Gain practical experience in the construction industry, particularly in projects involving social and environmental considerations.

5.0 Duration of Assignment

The consultancy firm will be required to conduct a yearly environmental, social evaluation and monitoring throughout the duration of the project. However, the duration of the assignment is three months (3)

6.0 Selection Criteria

The consultant will be selected in accordance with World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers November 2020, for procurement of goods, works, non-consultancy services and consultancy services as stated below in the procurement regulations.

7.0 Further information

Further details should be obtained from the Environmental Specialist, FREE Education Project-Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary School, 126 Regent Road, 55 Camp, Regent, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Submission Procedure and date

The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education now invites consultants to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the above services.

The envelope must be clearly marked "EOI HIRING OF A CONSULTANCY FIRM TO CONDUCT INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GENDER AUDITING AND EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF THE FREE EDUCATION PROJECT ACTIVITIES"

This REIO will lead to the preparation of a short list of consultants

Expressions of interest may take any format to represent the consultant qualifications and experience.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below in person or e-mail, by **August 25th, 2023** on or before 16:00hrs (Sierra Leone Time).

Interested candidates should send their applications accompanied by their curriculum vitae and copies of diplomas and certificates to:

The Project Coordinator
Sierra Leone Free Education Project Secretariat
Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
126 55 Camp, Regent Road, Regent, Freetown
Sierra Leone.

Application packages can also be forwarded by email to:

Email: menakallon@yahoo.com

Deadline: **August 25th, 2023**

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

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GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE
Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education

**Request for Expression of Interest (REIO)
Terms of Reference (TOR) for Individual Expert to Develop Standard
Operating Procedures (SOP) on Temporary Relocation of Students
during Renovation of Existing Classrooms**

**UNDER THE SIERRA LEONE FREE EDUCATION PROJECT
(Individual Consultant Selection)**

Country: Republic of Sierra Leone

Name of Project: Sierra Leone Free Education Project (SLFEP)

Grant Number: P16789

Assignment Title: HIRING OF A CONSULTANCY FIRM TO CONDUCT INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GENDER AUDITING AND EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF THE FREE EDUCATION PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Reference No. SL-MBSSE-364662-CS-INDV

Date of Issuance: July 28th 2023

1.0 Source of Funds

The Government of Sierra Leone has received a grant from a Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) for the implementation of the Sierra Leone Free Education Project (FREE). The Free Education Project is worth US\$72.82 million (US\$50 million from IDA (World Bank) and US\$15.97 from Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTF) supported by DFID, now FCDO, EU and Irish Aid), and (US\$6.85M) towards Covid-19 Response from the Global Partnership for Education-GPE). The project has been well aligned with the main objectives and focus of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2019-2023, as well as the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2018–2020, which also reflects the Government's and Development Partners' (DPs) priorities and strategies. These documents are geared towards addressing education sector challenges and transforming the education system over the long term. Specifically, the project was designed in close collaboration with the Government and its Development Partners, especially to support the Government's flagship Free Quality School Education (FQSE) Program—with the aim of ensuring that free quality education is provided to all school age children from pre-primary to secondary school.

This project is implemented by the Ministry of Basic Education and Senior Education (MBSSE) and coordinated by the Free Education Project Secretariat (FEPS). The project became effective in August 2020 and will continue to be implemented for a period of five years across all sixteen districts in Sierra Leone. The Project's Development Objectives are to improve the management of the education system, teaching practices and learning conditions with six major components:

- I. Policy, Governance, Accountability and Systems Administrations
- II. Teacher Management and Professional Development
- III. School Level Development
- IV. Project Management and Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation
- V. Contingency Emergency Response
- VI. COVID-19 Response.

About the Free Education Project Secretariat (FEPS)

The FEPS is tasked with coordinating all relevant institutions to implement the Free Education project and serves as liaison between the donors (MDTF) and the implementation agencies. It ensures that donors' regulations and policies are followed and stakeholders' expectations are met. It also serves as a major source of information and communication between the MBSSE, the Government and the public.

The overall environmental and social risk rating of FREE is classified as moderately satisfactory. This risk rating takes into consideration the tendency for the project to conduct an independent environmental, social and gender evaluation and monitoring of the project activities. In this regard, the Free Education Project Secretariat intends to engage an independent consulting firm to conduct a comprehensive evaluation and monitoring of the project's environmental, Social and gender activities.

Background / Introduction

The Free Education Project renovating existing classrooms to improve the learning environment and infrastructure. During the renovation process, it is necessary to temporarily relocate students to alternative spaces to ensure their safety and continuity of education. To ensure a smooth and organized relocation process, the organization requires the expertise of an individual expert to develop comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the temporary relocation of students.

Objective of the assignment

The main objective of this assignment is to develop a detailed SOP for the temporary relocation of students during the renovation of existing classrooms. The SOP should provide clear guidelines and procedures to ensure the safety, well-being, and uninterrupted education of the students during the relocation process. The expert will work closely with the project team and relevant stakeholders to develop a tailored SOP that meets the specific needs and requirements of the organization.

Scope of Work

The individual expert will be responsible for the following tasks:

- a. Conduct a needs assessment and analysis of the existing classrooms and infrastructure to understand the renovation requirements and potential challenges associated with the temporary relocation of students.
- b. Review relevant policies, guidelines, and best practices related to temporary relocation of students during construction or renovation projects in the education sector.
- c. Consult and collaborate with key stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, parents, and students, to gather input, insights, and concerns regarding the temporary relocation

process

Time:

Qualification and requirements of the expert.

Education: The individual should have a master's degree in education, project management, social safeguards or a related field.

Experience: The individual should have experience in managing projects related to education infrastructure and construction, particularly with respect to temporary relocation of students during renovation activities. Experience in developing SOPs, policies, or guidelines related to education infrastructure is preferred.

Technical knowledge: The individual should have technical knowledge and expertise in the construction and renovation of educational facilities, including familiarity with building codes, regulations, and standards. They should have an understanding of the specific challenges related to temporary relocation of students during renovation activities and the associated risks and mitigation measures.

Communication skills: The individual should have excellent communication skills, including the ability to communicate technical information to non-technical audiences. They should be able to effectively collaborate with stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, parents, and construction teams.

Analytical and problem-solving skills: The individual should possess strong analytical and problem-solving skills, including the ability to analyze complex situations, identify key issues, and develop effective solutions. They should be able to develop and implement appropriate risk management strategies.

Attention to detail: The individual should have strong attention to detail to ensure that the SOP accurately reflects the specific needs and circumstances of the school and students.

Time management: The individual should be able to manage their time effectively to ensure that the SOP is completed within the required timeframe and in accordance with the agreed-upon scope and objectives.

The Government of Sierra Leone, through MBSSE, now invites eligible ("Consultant") to indicate their interest in providing the Services.

2.0 Brief Description of the Assignment

The purpose of this consultancy is to engage a consultant to conduct a water quality and pumping test for a school WASH project. The consultant will be responsible for conducting a comprehensive study of the water quality and quantity at the school site and providing recommendations for the implementation of the WASH project.

3.0 Deliverables

The following deliverables will be expected from the consultant:

The inception report and revised work plan
Draft Standards Operation Procedure (SOP)
Final Draft Standards Operation Procedure (SOP)
Training of contractor and teachers

Note: All of the above-mentioned deliverables must be informed by relevant stakeholders' contribution through accepted methods of strategic plan development.

5.0 Duration of Assignment

The consultant will complete the project within six weeks from the date of signing the contract.

6.0 Selection Criteria

The consultant will be selected in accordance with World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers November 2020, for procurement of goods, works, non-consultancy services and consultancy services as stated below in the procurement regulations.

7.0 Further information

Further details should be obtained from the Environmental Specialist, FREE Education Project-Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary School, 126 Regent Road, SS Camp, Regent, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Submission Procedure and date

The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education now invites consultants to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the above services.

The envelope must be clearly marked "EOI Terms of Reference (TOR) for Individual Expert to Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) on Temporary Relocation of Students during Renovation of Existing Classrooms"

This REOI will lead to the preparation of a short list of consultants

Expressions of Interest may take any format to represent the consultant qualifications and experience.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below in person or e-mail, by August 25th, 2023 on or before 16:00hrs (Sierra Leone Time).

Interested candidates should send their applications accompanied by their curriculum vitae and copies of diplomas and certificates to:

The Project Coordinator
Sierra Leone Free Education Project Secretariat
Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
126 SS Camp, Regent Road, Regent, Freetown
Sierra Leone.

Application packages can also be forwarded by email to:

Email: menakallon@yahoo.com

Deadline: August 25th, 2023

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.



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NEWS AROUND AFRICA COMPILED BY GABRIEL BENJAMIN

Ghana implements 10% tax on betting and lottery winnings

Ghana has introduced a new measure that will see a 10% tax applied to betting and lottery winnings, effective as of Tuesday. The Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) has outlined that this withholding tax will be automatically deducted at the point of pay-out for all betting, games, and lottery wins.

In cases where a game is cancelled and the player's initial stake is refunded, or if the pay-out amount is equal to or less than the staked amount, the withholding tax will not be applicable. To facilitate easy monitoring by the revenue authority, lottery operators are required to update their software to display the details of the amount staked, the winnings, and the tax withheld during pay-out.

Edward Gyambrab, Commissioner of the GRA, emphasized that this tax implementation is expected to enhance domestic tax revenue mobilization, citing Ghana's comparatively low tax-to-GDP ratio within the sub-region. However, the new tax initiative has faced criticism from the younger generation in Ghana, who argue that betting and lottery winnings often



Shop manager David Mugisa, center, helps a customer at the Fortebet sports betting shop. Copyright © africanews Hajarah Nalwadda/ Copyright 2022 The AP. All rights reserved

serve as alternative income sources for the unemployed.

In a stern warning, revenue authorities have indicated that non-compliance with the new regulations will lead to the withdrawal of licenses for sports betting firms, lottery operators, casinos, slot machine operators, and marketing promoters.

Ghana recently entered into a three-year IMF bailout program in May of this year, following a prolonged period of economic challenges. As part of the efforts to revive the economy, economic managers have urged the expansion of the tax base and the mobilization of domestic resources to drive the country back towards growth.

Chad: outbreak of a dengue "epidemic" in the east (health minister)



Illustration photo: INHP agents at work fumigating an area to prevent mosquitoes from spreading. Copyright © africanews SIA KAMBOU/AFP or licensors

Chad's Ministry of Health told AFP on Wednesday that an epidemic of dengue fever had broken out in the east of the country at the beginning of August, a viral disease transmitted by a mosquito, the severe forms of which are rare but can be fatal.

"The Ministry of Public Health and Prevention informs the public of the outbreak of an epidemic of dengue fever in the health district of Abéché,"

the capital of the Ouaddaï region, around 650km east of N'Djamena, Chad's capital, said Abderrahim Mahamat, the Minister of Health, in a statement sent to AFP on Wednesday. On 7 August, "samples taken and analysed confirmed the existence of the epidemic, but for the moment we have not yet recorded any deaths", said the ministry, contacted by AFP.

Transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito, dengue fever is a virus that is widespread in hot countries and occurs mainly in urban and semi-urban areas, causing between 100 and 400 million infections every year, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). Dengue fever can cause high fever, headaches, nausea, vomiting, muscle pain and, in the most serious cases, haemorrhaging that can lead to death.

Nigeria's NNPC obtains a \$3 billion loan to stabilize the foreign exchange market

The biggest economy in Africa, Nigeria has been trying to increase its reserves and stop the decline of its currency, which has fallen to record lows on the black market two months after trading restrictions were loosened on the official market.

Following a meeting with President Bola Tinubu to examine methods to increase dollar liquidity on the official market, acting central bank governor Folashodun Shonubi said on Monday that the bank will take

actions that will have an impact on currency markets in the coming days.

Shonubi said the president was worried about the black market rate serving as a reference rate for domestic use and its influence on inflation, but did not specify what steps were going to be taken.

With his boldest reforms in decades, Tinubu eliminated an expensive fuel subsidy and devalued the naira, sparking interest from foreign investors in the nation, which had been struggling with high inflation and skyrocketing debt-servicing costs.

Niger coup is doomed to "failure" - Nicolas Sarkozy

Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy on Wednesday predicted the "certain" failure of the perpetrators of the coup in Niger, believing that it was the "long-term" maintenance of French military forces in the Sahel that provoked anti-French.

"The problem is deep and in reality insoluble because it is that of the prolonged presence of our army in our former colonies", explains the former head of state, in a river interview with Le Figaro on the occasion of the release of his new book "Le Temps des combats" (Fayard).

"As good and generous as our intentions, any mission that drags on ends up making us appear (...) as an occupying force", he adds, convinced that "the Africans themselves" will understand "the impasse into which these so-called leaders resulting from military coups are leading them".

"Their failure is certain," he warns, of the perpetrators of the July 26 coup that led to the ousting of President Mohamed Bazoum. The latter is still being held prisoner in this country where France had 1,500 soldiers actively participating with the Nigerien army in the fight against jihadist groups.

Criticizing his successor at the Élysée, François Hollande, Nicolas Sarkozy sees in "maintaining our army in Mali" after the military intervention decided in 2013, "a double error". Military "because we cannot hold a territory three times the size of France with 4,000 men" and political "as we see today".

He also criticizes the socialist president who "dropped the Libyan file", after the intervention of France - within



Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy arrives at the investiture ceremony. Copyright © africanews Gonzalo Fuentes/Copyright 2022 The AP. All rights reserved.

an international coalition - while the regime of Muammar Gaddafi violently repressed the uprising of its population in the spring of 2011.

He also cites former US President Barack Obama, who "self-acknowledged that it was his greatest foreign policy fault" to have "abandoned Libya's fledgling democracy in 2012 when it needed more than ever we support her."

Nicolas Sarkozy finally recalls not having ordered the elimination of the Libyan dictator. "This unworthy controversy has given way to the facts", he observes, referring to "coordinated collective action, led by NATO".

"Much later, the Gaddafi clan took revenge by claiming to have financed my campaign" in 2007, he adds about one of the legal cases involving the former head of state.

Brics: South Africa's complex and passionate relationship with Russia

South Africa's love affair with Putin's Russia, the big absentee at next week's Brics summit in Johannesburg, dates back to Soviet support for apartheid fighters but extends far beyond that, leaving many observers perplexed.

Its contemporary extension is all the more questionable in that it seems to run counter to the African country's own interests, both commercial and diplomatic.

These ties have come under intense scrutiny since the invasion of Ukraine and Pretoria's decision not to condemn it, which was seen as implicit support for Moscow. The long-standing ambivalence over whether or not the Russian President will attend the Brics summit has fuelled speculation.

Vladimir Putin, who is the subject of an international arrest warrant, finally decided last month not to attend, putting an end to a thorny problem for Pretoria.

The ANC (African National Congress), the party in power since 1994, forged links with the Soviets during decades of "struggle" against white domination. "You could say that their alliance is a friendship built on blood... and bullets", says political analyst Sandile Swana.

But that's not all.

-An "odd couple" -

Politically, the ANC and Putin's party form "an odd couple", notes Steven Grudz of the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). United Russia's nationalist values are closely linked to the Orthodox Church, while the ANC leans to the left and defends LGBTQ rights.

Economically, the relationship makes even less sense. Pretoria is under strong pressure from the US and Europe to distance itself from Moscow.

Washington is Pretoria's second-largest trading partner after Beijing, with exports of \$4.2 billion in the first half of the year, compared with just \$132 million with Moscow.

Recent accusations that Pretoria secretly supplied arms to the Kremlin have prompted Washington to threaten to exclude South Africa from a major trade pact, causing concern among businesses and opposition parties.

The ANC denounced this as an attempt at "intimidation".

But political scientist William Gumede believes it is time for Pretoria to recognise that its allegiance to Moscow no longer serves the country and is based on an "emotional bond" that "we cannot afford".

In June, President Cyril Ramaphosa led an African peace mission to Kiev, underpinning his claims of "neutrality" in the conflict. The trip was welcomed by Ukrainians, who sometimes find it hard to understand how the ANC, which fought against oppression, does not identify with Kiev's fight to counter its own oppression.

The trip was welcomed by Ukrainians, who sometimes find it hard to understand how the ANC, which fought against oppression, does not identify with Kiev's fight to counter its invasion.

Ramaphosa was able to "speak directly" to the Ukrainians and assess the situation for himself.



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and Russian President Vladimir Putin shake hands. Copyright © africanews Sergei Bobylev/TASS Host Photo Agency

notes Dzvinka Kachur, a Ukrainian association leader in South Africa, who believes that Moscow is succeeding in manipulating and embellishing its image on the continent.

Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, she argues, and contributed "significantly to the anti-apartheid movements".

-Money counts too -

For Putin, nostalgic for the USSR, South Africa is a strategic gateway to a continent that has become a diplomatic battleground, according to experts.

But some believe the relationship has blossomed out of a disconnect between the African country's founding values and what its ruling party represents today, against a backdrop of widespread accusations of corruption and mismanagement.

"The ANC clearly sees something else in Putin's Russia - something ambitious," writes Daily Maverick columnist Richard Poplak. "Russia is the beacon on the hill, a shining autocracy that lights the way to eternal governance," he adds wryly in a July post. Money counts too.

It makes sense for the cash-strapped ANC to get closer to Putin because of the potential financial support expected, Grudz points out.

Last year, the party received more than 800,000 dollars from a manganese mining company linked to a Russian tycoon sanctioned by Washington to finance an important congress in the country.

Last year, the party received more than 800,000 dollars from a manganese mining company linked to a Russian tycoon sanctioned by Washington to finance an important congress, a donation that raised many eyebrows.

"The ANC is siding with Russia for one reason only: because it is funding the ANC, and therefore infiltrating and destabilising South African democracy", accused opposition leader John Steenhuisen in May.

Tokologo Ngoasheng, an ANC official in Johannesburg, retorts that the party has also received donations from "American businessmen".

"It only becomes a problem when it's Russians who support the ANC", he complained, "it's not fair".

Credit: Rédaction africanews with AP



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INT'L SPORT

Arsenal £40m new boy Jurrien Timber is set to undergo knee surgery in major blow to Gunners

Arsenal defender Jurrien Timber is set to undergo knee surgery in news that will arrive as a major blow to Mikel Arteta.

The Gunners have been dealt a crushing injury blow after summer signing Timber suffered a suspected anterior cruciate ligament injury in the opening weekend win over Nottingham Forest.

Mail Sport were first to reveal on Monday that the Holland international had suffered a serious knee injury amid concerns he would miss months of the season.

Those fears have been realised in the last 48 hours following further tests with a knee specialist.

It is understood Timber is now expected to undergo surgery to repair the injury and is likely to miss a minimum six months of the season, although Arsenal are reluctant to put a specific timescale on his recovery.

Timber was handed an instant competitive debut against Forest on the opening weekend of the season following his arrival from Ajax earlier in the summer.

But the versatile defender was substituted early in the second half suffering the injury.

He had taken a blow in the first-half but was deemed fit enough to return at half-time.

Timber only arrived at Arsenal a few weeks ago following a £40million move from Ajax.

But he will now spend his first season in England undergoing a gruelling rehabilitation programme as he aims to regain full fitness before the end of the season.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football>



Hakim Ziyech is set to FINALLY leave Chelsea after two failed moves

Hakim Ziyech is reportedly closing in on a move away from Chelsea after the Blues reached an agreement in principle with Galatasaray for the winger.

According to transfer insider Fabrizio Romano, Chelsea are approaching the deal with caution, and there are still some details of the deal to be finalised, but Ziyech is set to undergo a medical.

Chelsea's caution is understandable given that Ziyech has narrowly missed out on two moves in recent months.

The Moroccan star looked set to join PSG on loan in January, but the transfer fell through on deadline day, with the French giants accusing Chelsea of sending them unsigned documents twice to scupper the move.

Ziyech was then on the verge of joining Saudi Arabian side Al-Nassr earlier this summer, in a switch that would have seen him earn £9m net each year.

However, the deal collapsed after a knee problem was raised in his medical.

It could be a case of third time lucky for Ziyech as he edges nearer to joining Galatasaray.

The 30-year-old arrived at Chelsea in 2020, but his Premier League career has failed to take



off.

In 107 appearances for the west London club, Ziyech has scored just 14 goals.

He fell down the pecking order at Stamford Bridge last season, featuring in just 18 league games as Chelsea finished down in 12th place.

He was left out of the squad for their opening game of this season against Liverpool on Sunday, and his time at Chelsea now looks to be nearing the end.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football>

Man United chief breaks silence on Mason Greenwood's future at Old Trafford

Manchester United's chief operating officer has broken the club's silence on Mason Greenwood's future at Old Trafford, insisting they have performed a 'detailed and thorough internal investigation' following his dropped criminal charges.

Greenwood, who has not featured for the Red Devils since he was arrested in January 2022 for attempted rape, assault and coercive control, had his charges dropped in February and is now waiting to learn his fate in football.

The Premier League club have remained silent on the issue for several months while undergoing their own investigation.

But now, United's chief operating officer Collette Roche has finally opened up on the internal six-month probe.

She told The Athletic: 'We've done a really detailed and thorough internal investigation and we've asked as many people as we can around what happened and try to understand it beyond the original investigation done by the police.'

'You'd expect us to engage with people who were relevant in terms of stakeholder groups.'

'And now we just need to make the decision. That decision is firmly a decision that's on us.'

In February, the Crown Prosecution Service announced the charges had been dropped following the withdrawal of 'key witnesses' in the case.

Manchester United have not yet officially revealed their decision on whether or not the forward will return this season, even though the new campaign began last weekend.

However, as Mail Sport reported last week, the Red Devils have now moved a step closer to bringing back Greenwood after seeking final approval from their women's team, club sponsors and fans' groups.

Manchester United's players believe Greenwood deserves a second chance at Old Trafford and would welcome his return, and the club will now enter a



consultation period including speaking to the women's team to ratify the move. However, a group of Red Devils fans protested the prospect of Greenwood's return ahead of their club's Premier League season opener against Wolves on Monday.

The United supporters made their feelings clear outside Old Trafford with a banner reading: 'Female fans demand. End violence against women. No Greenwood return.'

Another fan was seen raising a sign at Old Trafford which said: 'Don't leave the decision up to the women's team you spineless motherless.'

Last week, one of the organisers of the protest insisted: 'It's time for the club to stand up and make the right decision.'

'It's time to say, "We have high standards at United about how we expect players to conduct themselves and, if you do not meet those standards, you need to be moved out."

'This is a tipping point for the club. Are they going to side with commercialism and trophies and money?'

'Or are they going to take the side of match-going fans and the club being a social and community institution that we can be proud of, and proud to have as part of our identity?'

Greenwood has been pictured training away from the Manchester United training camp this summer, and it is believed the Red Devils are considering a loan move abroad for the forward to keep him out of the spotlight as much as possible.

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