

UBA
United Bank for Africa

Receive money worldwide at any UBA Branch and get exciting back to school gift items. Your child also stands a chance to win SLE 25,000 scholarship when you open a UBA Kiddies or Teens account for him/her.

Western Union | MoneyGram | Ria | Africash

Kiddies Teens

For more information, contact us on: +23278200200 | +23275142718 | +23231224488 | +23280419943

Excellence & Objectivity

Follow us: Concord Times Newspaper | @Concordtimes | sl_concord_times

CONCORD TIMES
NEWSPAPER

Vol. 17, No 140250995 | Wednesday, October 11, 2023 | Price: Le 2

SAY NO TO DRUGS

RC Bank
ROKEL COMMERCIAL BANK (SL) LTD
Bank of Choice

EU EOM presents final report

British International Investment partners with Access Bank Plc to extend US\$60 million trade finance facility across five African countries



By Ishmael Dumbuya

The European Union Observation Mission (EU EOM) to Sierra Leone has yesterday, 10th October, released its final report on the June 24th elections. In her presentation, EU Chief Observer to Sierra

Leone, Evin Incir, noted that the 2023 general elections underscored a clear commitment among Sierra Leoneans to the democratic processes, adding that there was an urgent need for reforms to enhance transparency and inclusion as well as build an overall trust in future electoral process.

Cont. Page 2

UNOPS, UN Women assert rural areas with equal opportunities

SLeCAD proffers recommendations to achieving 'Feed Salone' initiative

No purposely built warehouse to store drugs in Sierra Leone

ECOBANK SAVE AND WIN PROMO!

The more you Save the Greater Your Chances of Winning

ecobank.com

• Terms and Conditions Apply

Save NLE 5,000, NLE 10,000, NLE 20,000 or more and enter the draw

Ecobank
The Pan African Bank

REFLECTION

By Paul Baxter, Elections Expert

I have just glanced through the final observation report that the European Union has issued, and indeed it makes an interesting reading. Here are my quick highlights:

1. The June 2023 multi-tier elections were generally calm and peaceful. This lends credence to Sierra Leone as 3rd most peaceful country in Africa and 47th in the world.

2. The report also recognizes that Sierra Leone has passed progressive laws promoting greater citizens' inclusion in politics and female electoral participation. Indeed, a lot more has to be done to integrate our women in political life. The report observes that SLPP had one woman heading its parliamentary list (in Kambia), whilst all APC lists were headed by a man.

3. Fundamental human rights were largely respected, particularly freedoms of assembly, movement and expression. It is very obvious, from the report, that we all owe a duty to protect civil spaces (government, opposition, and citizens).

4. The Electoral Commission was largely prepared but failed in proactive public communication on the challenges it was faced with. As a result, it landed itself in a 'crisis of confidence' not merely because it was engaged in electoral improprieties, but because it failed to communicate effectively. This seeming silence left room for speculations, which both the opposition and EU observers exploited.

5. The counting of the results was largely transparent, and political party agents and citizens were present in all polling stations. The report seems to indict ECSL for not succumbing to APC's request to publish disaggregated polling station results. I will come back to this later.

6. The EU observers would also want a clear dichotomy between campaigning and governance, and recommend that government officials desist from utilizing state apparatus for campaign purposes

7. WhatsApp groups became the main forum for spreading disinformation and confusing voters.

8. Adebayo has been named the most destructive element, and his messages construed as damaging to national peace and cohesion.

9. There should be speedy consideration of election petitions and alleged criminal

EU Election Observation Mission Final Report: My Initial Assessment

offenses.

10. Detailed protocols to be established for tabulation and announcement of results.

11. The report does not seem to allocate attention to smaller parties and focused on the two main political parties. Invariably, the EU is contributing to the political dominance theory in countries where smaller parties must be brought along to ensure their continued participation in governance.

So, what does this 83-page report really mean?

First, it does not seem to raise any new substantive issues. Most of what the report contains had already been indicated by the EU mission in their preliminary report.

Secondly, the report has lent credence to President Bio's announcement of a National Electoral Review Committee. Only a review process will try and address legal and institutional bottlenecks and resolve the several technical questions posed in the report.

Thirdly, APC's failure or refusal to challenge the election result in court will always contribute to uncertainties in electoral processes. Had they gone to court, clarity would have been made to the key questions and complaints they have. In Nigeria, Peter Obi and Atiku Abubakarr went to court even though they might not have trusted the process. They were convinced that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was obliged to electronically transmit election results. Eventually, the court ruled that the Electoral Commission was under no obligation to transmit election results electronically.

Fourthly, the EU has missed a wonderful opportunity to project itself as a credible agency to partner with the government for meaningful electoral reforms. The report is largely accusatory (and manifestly biased), and even when there was a reasonable expectation that positive strides be commended, one would almost immediately sense a conspiratorial and desperate attempt to create the impression that Sierra Leone cannot organize its own elections.

In this vein, the EU has certainly misused

its foreign policy tool to genuinely support African democracies to grow. Inevitably, African democracies seem to have become wary of the EU and their policy flip-flops. EU is accruing to itself a trust deficit, and this is not good for an institution that has been in elections observation since 2000. EU blatantly failed to hold the balance in its report, and this has fuelled suspicions that it may have been frustrated by the foiling of a regime-change agenda.

Why does the EU always push African governments to be subservient to civil society and opposition tantrums just because they themselves support those dissident voices to promote their foreign interests?

I have always had the greatest respect for the EU and the West, but it is becoming increasingly clear that they are rapidly weaponizing oppositions and civil society against African stability and

progress. I am not impressed at all; the EU should have done a far better job.

I am neither supporting SLPP nor APC, but I recognize that the Julius Maada Bio government has progressively implemented about 66% of the EU elections observation mission reports. The government's account for the remaining 34% as a backlog is on account of the entrenched clauses in the 1991 constitution (you have to first amend the constitution by referendum before you can do those remaining reforms). The report has not made that key acknowledgment at all and is quite disingenuous.

Now that Sierra Leoneans are looking forward to dialogue between the government and the APC (and Dr Samura Kamara has stated his party's readiness), the EU should give peace a chance and fully support the Electoral Reform initiative as a sustainable path.

EU EOM presents final report

From Cover

She went on to state that as part of the final report, the mission has offered 21 recommendations, key amongst them are; to promote transparency, as to help democracy thrive, reforms to ensure detailed information on the voter register, the electoral results processing system, including tabulation, and the final electoral results per polling station, are made available to the public, including online.

She also emphasised that political candidates should be protected, and promptly holding perpetrators of election related violence accountable. According to the report, the tabulation and announcement of the results proved to be the tipping point for the credibility of the elections, noting that the entire process was impeded and the declaration of winners was not followed by publication of disaggregated results per polling station.

"Following the declaration of the results of the parliamentary elections a few days later, it was clear that the total results published by ECSL showed several statistical inconsistencies and mathematical improbabilities. These included notable discrepancies in the number of average valid votes per polling



station between the first and second batch of the presidential elections," the report indicates.

The chief observer noted that the voter registration process and the subsequent production and distribution of Voter Identification Cards created various uncertainties for stakeholders and voters alike.

The report concluded that political violence in weeks before the polls disrupted that playing field in at least 6 districts.

The EU EOM crosschecked and confirmed reports on at least 17 violent attacks, which negatively affected the campaign environment nation-wide. Most assaults of party supporters and attacks on party offices or private properties of politicians went unpunished, thereby shrinking the space for political participation in the South and the South east.



Travel light with **UBA Cards**



[f @UBASierraLeone](#)
[@ubasierra_leone](#)
[@UBA_SierraLeone](#)
[@uba-sl](#)
[@ubasierra_leone](#)

For more information, contact us on:

+23275142718 | +23231224488 | +23280419943 | +232 90 200 200 | +232 78 200 200

[@uba_sierraleone](#)

Africa's Global Bank | www.ubasierraleone.com



British International Investment partners with Access Bank Plc to extend US\$60 million trade finance facility across five African countries



Admir Imami, Director and Head of Trade and Supply Chain Finance at BII, noted: "Access Bank is a long-standing partner of BII's and our new partnership is a significant step closer to narrowing the trade finance gap in Africa, particularly in Sierra Leone.

Access to finance in fragile states is hugely constrained, often these countries are buffeted by macroeconomic events far beyond their control. BII and Access Bank share a

Loan facility will help to ensure availability of key commodities across import-dependent economies and critical inputs for manufacturing goods, medicine, commodities, construction, food and agriculture.

Programme aims to stimulate African trade volumes by US\$90 million and will contribute to SDGs 8 and 9.

BII's second commitment to one of Africa's leading multinational banks.

Lagos, Nigeria – 3 October 2023: British International Investment (BII), the UK's Development Finance Institution (DFI) and impact investor, has announced a \$60 million trade finance facility for Access Bank Plc in Sierra Leone and other African countries wherein it operates. This will strengthen import and export capabilities amongst local businesses and plug the foreign currency supply gap. The programme supports Access Bank's strategy to enable continental trade and deepens BII's commitment to bolstering financing environments in fragile economies. BII estimates the loan programme will stimulate African trade volumes by US\$90 million.

The agreement reinforces BII's ongoing relationship with one of Africa's largest commercial banks by customer base and facilitates the provision of systemic liquidity during a period characterised by a challenging macroeconomic environment. Higher inflation and rising cost of capital have placed downward pressure on currency performance, both domestically and in the programme's target markets. Intervention at this critical juncture underlines the key role of BII, and development finance institutions in general, in extending countercyclical support to build economic resilience.

Between 80 and 90% of world trade is estimated to rely on the availability of trade credit, according to the World Trade Organization. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, that financing gap stood at US\$82 billion in Africa, and it is increasing. Recognising the positive ripple effects of robust trade flows on economies and livelihoods, Access Bank is aiming to provide 15% of trade finance across Africa, by growing the trade books of its subsidiaries.

Currency instability in Sierra Leone can hinder the wider proliferation of dollar denominated trade loans across African markets, constraining countries' ability to capitalise on opportunities opening up under the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. By specifically targeting import dependent economies – many of which will mark the first engagement with BII's Trade programme – the improved availability of US dollar denominated trade loans will ensure availability of key commodities and manufacturing inputs for the production and export of goods. The key outcome will be improving livelihoods and preserving jobs for the employees of importers and exporters with limited access to foreign exchange trade loans.

With the loans channelled into companies in construction, manufacturing and FMCG, the programme will directly contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and 9 (Industry, innovation, and infrastructure).

Simultaneously, the facility will improve inclusion under the 2X Challenge (a global initiative which seeks to provide women with improved access to quality employment and leadership opportunities in business), aimed at strengthening female participation and leadership in business, Access Bank will ensure the allocation of loans is designed deliberately to advance its gender commitments. In addition, the facility will contribute to BII's BOLD programme, dedicated to enhancing the availability of finance at more affordable rates to African-owned businesses.

Seyi Kumapayi, Executive Director, African Subsidiaries at Access Bank, remarked: "Access Bank is on a purposeful mission to scale intra-African trade and position the continent as a viable market for global trade. Hence, we are thrilled about the tremendous potential that this trade finance facility with the BII affords us across our pan-African subsidiaries. This strategic collaboration not only strengthens our import and export capabilities but also expands our resources to support local industries – especially women-owned businesses – and ultimately drive economic growth. By stimulating trade volumes, we will be playing a key role in fostering long-term economic resilience for the continent, while increasing its attractiveness for increased foreign investments."

conviction that building the resilience of these businesses by ensuring affordable access to foreign exchange is vital to keep intra-African trade moving and support the growth of inclusive economies."

Benson Adenuga, Head of Office & Coverage Director for Nigeria, BII said: "Our latest commitment to Access Bank reiterates our assurance to this leading multinational institution and to Nigeria. It comes at a time when Nigeria's fragile economic situation needs additional funding, particularly from counter cyclical investors like development finance institutions. Our funding will help bolster the economy and ensure the availability of staple goods, medicines, and food across Africa."

###

Media contacts

British International Investment: Clare Murray | press@bii.co.uk

Access Bank Plc: Abdul Imoyo | mediarelations@accessbankplc.com

Notes to editors

About Access Bank

- Access Bank, a wholly owned subsidiary of Access Holdings Plc, is a leading full-service commercial bank operating through a network of more than 700 branches and service outlets, spanning 3 continents, 20 countries and serving over 60 million customers.
- The Bank operates in Nigeria and has subsidiaries in sub-Saharan Africa and the United Kingdom, branches in Dubai, Paris, and representative offices in China, Lebanon, and India.
- Access Bank encourages and delivers sustainable economic growth that is profitable, environmentally responsible and socially relevant, helping customers to access more and achieve their dreams.
- Over the past 17 years, Access Bank has consistently demonstrated its commitment to gender equality and women's economic empowerment, expending over ₦246.46 billion in financing for 3,145,319 women.
- In honour of its defining roles across the African continent, the Bank has been accorded recognition by reputable domestic and global organisations. Some of these recognitions include: 2023 Karlsruhe Award "Outstanding Business Sustainability Achievement"; 2023 IFC Gender Leadership Award "Recognition for Women Empowerment and Leadership"; 2023 World Finance "Most Sustainable Bank in Nigeria"; 2023 Global Finance "Best Bank for Sustainable Finance in Nigeria"; 2022 International Investors Award "Best Environmental and Social Performance Award"; 2022 Finance Derivative Award "Best Sustainable Bank Africa"; 2022 Euromoney Awards "Best Bank in Nigeria"; 2022 Global Sustainable Finance Awards "Outstanding Leadership in ESG-Related Loans, Africa", and "Financial Leadership in Sustaining Communities, Africa".

About British International Investment

- British International Investment is the UK's development finance institution and impact investor.
- British International Investment is a trusted investment partner to businesses in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.
- It invests to support the UK Government's Clean Green Initiative and to create productive, sustainable and inclusive economies in our markets.
- Over the next five years, at least 30 per cent of BII's total new commitments by value will be in climate finance.
- In 2022, 46% of our commitments were in climate finance. We invested £591 million to help emerging economies reduce emissions, protect the environment and adapt to the changing climate.
- BII is also a founding member of the [2X Challenge](#) which raised over \$16 billion to empower women's economic development from 2021-2022. BII invested \$813 million in 2X qualified businesses in 2022.
- The company has investments in over 1,470 businesses in emerging economies across 65 countries and total assets of £8.1 billion.
- In 2019, BII helped to fund a \$162.5 million syndicated loan package to Nigeria's Access Bank Plc.
- For more information, visit: www.bii.co.uk | [watch here](#).

LOCAL NEWS

By Alhaji Haruna Sani

To mark International Rural Women's Day, UNOPS and UN Women launched a social media campaign and events to call for action to empower women in rural areas so that they can be better equipped to contribute to food security and climate change adaptation in their communities.

According to a joint presser from UNOPS and UN Women, from 9 October to 15 October (International Rural Women's Day), UNOPS and UN Women across Africa will be sharing messages on social media and hosting events in different African cities such as Harare (Zimbabwe), Freetown (Sierra Leone), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Kinshasa (DRC) and Juba (South Sudan), among others.

The joint campaign aims to promote the role rural women play in supporting their households in achieving food security, generating income, improving rural livelihoods, and building climate change resilience.

In Freetown, Sierra Leone, UNOPS and UN Women will be having a panel discussion and exclusive interview on radio and TV on the empowerment of rural women and their role in climate change and food security, infrastructure development and challenges.

UNOPS and UN Women are also marking International Rural Women's Day by launching a joint campaign to underline the contribution of rural women to development in Africa and highlight the importance of investing in gender-

sensitive infrastructure that will allow them to better contribute to food security and climate adaptation. The objective of the campaign according to the presser is to call policy and decision-makers, societies, and international partners to action in supporting gender-responsive infrastructure in Africa that can empower rural women to access productive resources and opportunities, accelerate their socio-economic mobility, and boost gender contribution to climate adaptation and food security.

The campaign, according to the joint press, will include joint activities in several African countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Zimbabwe, among others.

The events will be supported by a social media campaign in UNOPS and UN Women regional and national channels in Africa.

The presser reads, "On 13th October, UN Women Africa and UNOPS Africa will be hosting a live conversation, where stakeholders including a woman from an African rural area and a specialized journalist will highlight the importance of addressing persistent gender gaps in the response to climate change and food insecurity".

In Freetown, Sierra Leone, UNOPS and UN Women will be having a panel discussion and exclusive interview on radio and TV on the empowerment of rural women and their role in climate change and food security, infrastructure development and current challenges.



UNOPS Director for Africa Region, Dalila Gonçalves, said: "Gender-blind infrastructure limits women's access to financial resources, land, education, health, and other rights and opportunities. Also, it limits their capacity for coping with and adapting to climate change impacts. Women can play an active role as change-makers and educators in embedding sustainability within different infrastructure sectors. Supporting the empowerment of rural women through gender-responsive infrastructure, UNOPS helps low and middle-income countries across Africa in their journey toward the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals."

UN Women Regional Director for East and Southern Africa and Regional Director for West and Central Africa, Dr. Maxime Houinato, said "Rural African women's pivotal role in bolstering regional economies and combating

poverty is irrefutable. Yet, they grapple with pronounced challenges in securing vital agricultural resources, restricting their agricultural productivity and impacting their adaptability to climate change. UN Women studies reveal that gender disparities in agriculture have a direct impact on the economic growth of countries ranging from 13 to 28 per cent of GDP, equivalent to annually elevating 80,000 to 238,000 individuals above the poverty line per country. It's imperative that we advance programmes and policies that increase financing for rural women's access to labour and time-saving equipment and services, fostering gender equality and improving rural women's economic security."

According to UN Women, women make up more than 50 percent of Africa's population and 80 percent of them reside in rural areas. The International Labour Organization states that giving women the same opportunities as men could raise agricultural production by 2.5 to 4 percent in the poorest regions and reduce the number of malnourished people by 12 to 17 percent.

The UNOPS Report, 'Infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women', stated that in rural areas inadequate infrastructure services disproportionately affect 2 women's time use because they bear the burden of household tasks, like collecting water and firewood, cooking, cleaning, and providing childcare.

This limits the time available for pursuing educational, economic, or social activities. Women also face disadvantages when it comes to land and livestock ownership or equal pay which hampers their productivity and growth, resulting in weak rural economies, and impacting the local and global food systems and climate adaptation capacity.

No purposely built warehouse to store drugs in Sierra Leone

By Hassan Gbassay Koroma

The Acting Deputy Director of the National Medical Supply Agency (NMSA), Jatu Abdulai has disclosed that there is no medical supply storage purposely constructed in the whole of the country.

She said they were currently spending over \$500,000 United States Dollars to rent warehouse to store the Free Health Care drugs and some of those warehouses are not good enough to store the drugs and maintain it quality.

She was speaking at the 2024 budget hearing process organised by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development.

She said even the Medical Store facility at the New England Ville in Freetown is not fit for the storage of

drugs because that facility was constructed for the storage of arms and ammunitions and that they are too deep underground, hot and dark.

She said they need a central warehouse storage facility with good temperature condition that will keep the quality of the drugs.

She said once they have such facility it will also help them to be able to track the distribution of the drugs, take proper data of stock and distribution.

She said the agency needs the sum of NLe123,104,500.0 to enable them embark on their 2025 development plans, recruiting more staff, procuring of CR drugs and medical supplies, procuring of Free Health Care commodities for FHC drugs and medical supplies, and have warehouse and also effectively enable them to

distribute free healthcare drugs nationwide.

She cited that parallel procurement amongst other line ministries, NGOs and agencies posed a huge challenge for the Agency to fully implement its mandate as a sole procuring agency for drugs and medical equipment.

She further stated that they have inadequate funding to carry out capacity building and trainings, unavailability of funds to monitor and supervise activities around the use of the logistics management information system.

She said their legal mandate is to serve exclusively as a public service agency responsible for the procurement, warehouse and distribution of drugs and medical supplies on behalf of all public institutions in Sierra Leone.



Live the
Good Life
With our



FLEXIBLE LOAN!

- Zenith offers fast and eazy loan
- Interest rate is very attractive
- Payment tenor is up to 36 months(3years)

HEAD OFFICE
18-20 Rawdon
Street Freetown

KENEMA
27 Kaisamba Terrace
Off Hanga Road

BO
54 Tikonko
Road Bo

WELLINGTON
282 Bai Bureh Road,
Wellington Industrial Estate

CLINE TOWN
155 Fourabay Road
Freetown

LUMLEY
15 Freetown Road
Lumley Freetown

LUNGI
F/T International
Airport, Lungi

MAKENI CASH CENTER
Ernest Bai Koroma University
of Science and Technology
Makeni Campus

....in your best interest

LOCAL NEWS

By Alhaji Haruna Sani

The Executive Secretary of the Sierra Leone Chambers for Agribusiness Development (SLeCAD), Ahmed Nanoh, has told the press that his organisation wholeheartedly supports the government's 'Feed Salone' initiative because it shares the same objective with the Chamber.

Speaking in the conference room of his Bathurst Street Office on Tuesday, October 10th, Nanoh said if government is to achieve the Feed Salone initiative, it should first of all conduct feasibility studies to encourage and increase private sector investment in the agriculture sector.

Nanoh also recommended that government should support the establishment of agriculture insurance to de-risk the sector, map and register lands owned by Sierra Leoneans to be used as collateral to access finance and improve on the hard and soft skills development, including mind-set change to support private sector investment.

More importantly, Nanoh advises that government should encourage mining companies to support funding the government effort to Feed Salone by increasing the 3% royalties they pay to the government and called on all development partners to generously fund the Feed Salone initiative.

He said the initiative will help reduce food security, reduce poverty, create jobs and wealth and ensure inclusive growth.

The Executive Secretary encouraged the citizenry to call on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Community to restructure and cancel Sierra Leone's debt in order to increase the government investment in the agriculture sector.

Among many other solutions, Nanoh called on all Sierra Leoneans to work together and encourage peace and focus on the development agenda of the country through the Feed Salone initiative, so that Sierra Leone will become a better place.

The SLeCAD head reiterates the Chamber's supports for the Feed Salone initiative because it shares the same objective to Feed Salone, which include promoting private sector investment in the agricultural sector, promoting agribusiness and industrialization, promoting wealth and jobs creation goals, reducing hunger and malnutrition and to end poverty and promote inclusive growth, among others.

The Executive Secretary outlined that SLeCAD supports feed Salone because government will for the first time make agriculture the topmost priority and flagship programme.

He said President Bio is a farmer and previously owned company (Tropical Farm) and that he was a member of the Chamber and was engaged in producing and exporting organic Cocoa to Europe.

Nanoh said SLeCAD supports Feed Salone because of the initiative to move national budgetary support for agriculture from 2.6% to 10%, fulfilling the MAPUTO Declaration, provision of



Ahmed Nanoh, Executive Secretary of SLeCAD speaking to newsmen

incentives to encourage private sector investment in the Agrico sector and the government commitment to improve the business environment.

He suggested for Government to impose tax on rice and use the funds to support agriculture, stating that it will help promote market access and increase the competitiveness of the private sector and farmers.

He also mentioned that Feed Salone should promote inclusive collaboration and partnership and put private sector at the centre of Feed Salone.

Access to housing accounts for 46% of homeless people

By Abubakarr Tarawally (intern)

Research on "Homelessness Situation in Freetown" conducted by the Ministry of Social Welfare together with Social Workers Sierra Leone (SWSL), has revealed that access to housing account for 46% of homeless people in Freetown.

Speaking about the rise of homelessness in Freetown during the launch of a survey report at the Ministry of Social Welfare's conference hall, New England Ville, the Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Mohamad Haji Kella, explained that they have identified people of all ages who are experiencing homelessness in Freetown, among those are youth within the age bracket of 20-35 years, and the age of 50 years and above.

He said they have discovered that Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) were in the majority with 81 percent, while young people and adults with severe mental health illnesses, unaccompanied children, children with their parents and single mothers, with 19 percent

The Deputy Minister went on to state that some of the contributing factors to homelessness include family misuse, poverty, mental health issues, substance abuse, and adverse circumstances.

He said pervasive problem of homelessness demands immediate

Access to housing accounts for 46% of homeless people -report



Cross-session of Social Workers and Officials from the Ministry of Social Works during the launch of the report

action and comprehensive solutions.

He noted that there is a growing trend in homelessness in major cities in the country with little social safety net for that population, adding that, youth and young adults migrating from rural towns and villages merging with the already crowded cities, hassle for jobs and housing experience leads to a lot of people being homeless.

"Youth migrating from up country to the city for a better life without strong family connections ended up succumbing to homelessness. We also discovered that many of these youths are into substance misuse and criminality and that many of them were previously incarcerated," he said.

The minister said some of the reasons

for homelessness in the country are neglect and lack of an early support system for PWDs from family members and the community at large, since many PWDs become homeless before they turn 15 years, old due to family neglect and lack of support to attain in normal life.

"This category represents 54% of the total number of PWDs. 46% reported the lack of access to housing, combined with other challenges, forced them to become homeless couple with the fact that the neglect of persons with severe mental health illnesses by family members forced them to become homeless.

The minister assured the public that, as a government, they were working to help curb homelessness and make Sierra Leone become a better place for

every citizenry.

He said they would work hard to close the gap around the homelessness crisis for the best interest of the most vulnerable people in the country, and that they will develop a partnership with other line ministries to address the threatening issues facing people experiencing homelessness.

According to the Head of Research at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Hassan Koroma, Social Works Sierra Leone has recognised the persistent neglect and discrimination of persons experiencing severe mental health illness, with the struggle to access decent and healthy meals, shelter, medical, and even normal human relationships.

He continued that such people are at risk of malnutrition, disease, and worsening mental conditions, mainly because Society has created a social fence, making life for persons experiencing severe mental health illness valueless, hence they are referred to in this manner, they are regarded as meaningless and left on their own.

Koroman stressed that Social Works Sierra Leone had introduced the "Sunday Meal Service" for people experiencing severe mental health illness without care and the other set of neglected individuals who are experiencing homelessness were also being undergoing a similar struggle, for access to food and other basic human needs, in which the majority are persons with disabilities.

MEGA PROMO

CONGRATS
EJATU BANYYA

2ND CAR WINNER

WINNER

afri money | africell

FEATURE

Fafang town's Agricultural Subsidies: a beacon of inspiration for Sierra Leone's farmers

By Luke Kakpa Pessima,
a Sierra Leone student in
China Agricultural University

During my visit to Fafang town in Liangzhou District, Gansu Province, China, I investigated amid the attractive landscapes of Shiyanghe Basin. Fafang Town has risen as a symbol of hope and transformation for the country's farmers in the west desert.

In a region where agriculture serves as the lifeblood of the economy, Fafang Town's visionary agricultural subsidy program has become a shining example of success. Initiated in 2005 through collaboration between local leaders, progressive farmers, a ND agricultural expert (researchers), the program aimed to address the long-standing challenges faced by farmers in the area.

Access to agricultural inputs such as high-quality seeds and fertilizers, irrigation infrastructure, and machinery, coupled with extensive training and education on modern farming techniques, laid the foundation for a paradigm shift in agricultural productivity. Moreover, the program also offered critical infrastructure development, financial support, and direct market linkages, empowering farmers and lifting entire villages out of poverty. As Fafang town reaped the fruits of its innovative approach, the impact rippled far beyond its borders, inspiring the entire nation to reconsider its agricultural policies and practices. This article delves into the remarkable story of Fafang town's agricultural subsidies and explores the possible profound influence it continues to have on my home country Sierra Leone's farmers and the agricultural sector at large.

By learning from this inspiring story, Sierra Leone could take significant strides toward a future of sustainable farming, economic prosperity, and food security. Sierra Leone's agricultural sector has long been grappling with numerous challenges that hindered its growth and progress. Farmers faced limited access to modern farming techniques and quality agricultural inputs, such as improved seeds and fertilizers, irrigation technology and machinery. As a result, yields remained stagnant, leaving farming communities trapped in a cycle of poverty and food insecurity. Erratic weather patterns and a lack of supportive infrastructure further

compounded their struggles. Recognizing the dire need for change, Fafang Town became a catalyst for transformation, pioneering an agricultural subsidy program that would ultimately alter the course of Sierra Leone's agricultural landscape.

The inception of Fafang Town's agricultural subsidies was not an isolated effort. It stemmed from the collaborative spirit and determination of local leaders, farmers, and experts who understood the urgent necessity of uplifting the agricultural sector. Through fruitful partnerships with central governmental and agricultural extension services provided by universities and research centers, Fafang town's innovative program began to take shape.

At the core of this groundbreaking initiative was the provision of agricultural inputs and infrastructure development at subsidised costs. The agrarian inputs proved to be the bedrock of enhanced productivity and yielded bountiful harvests that farmers had only dreamed of previously. With access to improved seeds, which were specially bred to withstand local environmental conditions and diseases, and the right balance of fertilizers, crop yields saw a remarkable increase.

The town's once-struggling farmers soon witnessed their efforts culminating in prosperous fields of vibrant crops. But seeds and fertilizers alone could not unlock the full potential of the farmers. The program recognized the importance of knowledge and education in empowering agricultural communities.

Thus, a robust agricultural extension service was established, offering training and workshops on modern farming techniques, soil management, pest control, and post-harvest practices. This knowledge transfer became a vital tool in transforming small-scale subsistence farming into sustainable and commercially viable agricultural practices.

Infrastructure development played an equally pivotal role in the program's success. Fafang Town invested in essential infrastructure, such as greenhouse technology, irrigation systems, agricultural machinery, and access roads, which facilitated better transportation of agricultural produce to markets. This improvement minimized post-harvest losses and connected farmers directly to



the consumers, thus reducing their dependency on middlemen who often took a significant portion of their profits.

Furthermore, the program recognized that financial barriers were a major impediment for farmers looking to invest in their farms and expand their operations. To address this issue, Fafang Town provided financial support and credit facilities to eligible farmers, allowing them to make critical investments and adopt new technologies. This financial boost proved transformative, giving farmers the financial security needed to take risks and innovate.

Another crucial aspect of the program was the establishment of direct market linkages for the farmers. By connecting farmers directly to buyers, whether through local markets or bulk buyers, the program helped eliminate intermediaries and ensured that farmers received fair prices for their produce. This not only increased their income but also instilled a sense of confidence and pride in the farming community.

The positive outcomes of Fafang Town's agricultural subsidies echoed throughout the community. With increased productivity and income, farmers experienced improved living standards and greater access to modern farming techniques to farm in the arid region of Gansu Province. Smallholder farmers, in particular, benefited from this program, empowering them with equal opportunities and recognition.

Moreover, the rise in agricultural productivity translated into enhanced food security for the town and its surroundings. Surplus produce was sold, generating additional income for the farmers and ensuring that their families and communities were well-nourished throughout the year. The reduction of poverty further fortified the community's resilience against various economic and environmental shocks.

The success story of Fafang Town's agricultural subsidies could not be contained within its borders. Word of its transformative impact will spread like wildfire, capturing the attention of policymakers and agricultural stakeholders across Sierra Leone. The government of Sierra Leone will highly recognize the potential of this model in driving national development and economic growth through the agricultural sector. Inspired by Fafang town's success, the government of Sierra Leone will take decisive steps to replicate the program

within the country facing lower agricultural development and challenges with food security.

The key success from Fafang Town's triumph were evident. A collaborative approach, involving local leaders, farmers, experts, academic institutes, and governmental agencies, proved to be highly effective in addressing the multifaceted challenges of agricultural development. Tailoring the subsidies and support to the specific needs of each region and its crops was equally crucial, acknowledging the diversity within Sierra Leone's agricultural landscape. Sustainability was a cornerstone of the program's design. Understanding that long-term commitment was essential for meaningful impact, Fafang Town's agricultural subsidies were not seen as short-term fixes but rather as long-lasting investments in the future of the farming community.

As the program expands, it will reveal the tremendous potential of Sierra Leone's agricultural sector. Gradually, farmers across the nation will begin to witness positive changes in their own lives. Crop yields will increase, incomes will rise, and the vicious cycle of poverty will begin to break. The nation's journey toward food security will gain momentum, and the dream of a thriving agricultural economy will seem within reach.

In conclusion, Fafang Town's agricultural subsidies will scrape an inspiring story of hope and transformation in the archives of Sierra Leone's agricultural history. What begins as a visionary initiative by a group of determined individuals will blossom into a national movement, illuminating the path toward a sustainable and prosperous agricultural future. As Sierra Leone continues to learn and build upon the successes of Fafang Town, the country will march towards a brighter tomorrow, where its farmers, the backbone of the nation, will stand tall in the face of challenges, equipped with knowledge, resources, and unwavering determination. Fafang Town's future story will be a testament to the remarkable power of innovation, collaboration, and perseverance in creating a better world for generations to come.





POWER & PRAYER REVIVAL WEEK
Plan Now To Attend

THE MERCY THAT SPEAKS

4 NIGHTS OF PROPHETIC POWER

With: Evangelist Victor Ajisafe

Tues 10th - Fri. 13th October 2023
5:30 pm Daily

SANCTUARY PRAISE CATHEDRAL
2 Sawi Drive Off Kingharman Road, Brookfields

  **@LetMyGateBeOpened-SolutionCathedral**

GOD WILL SURELY TOUCH YOU !

LOCAL NEWS

Man in custody for killing his cousin

By Mohamed J Kargbo

Mohamed Jakitay made his third appearance before Magistrate Mark Negba of the Pademba Road Court No.1 for allegedly killing one Ibrahim Jakitay and he was remanded at the Male Correctional Centre.

The accused person is standing trial on a count charge to wit murder contrary to the laws of Sierra Leone.

Police alleged that on the 28th July 2023, at Kellie Farm, Malambay Village, Waterloo, with intent, murdered one Ibrahim Jakitay, his cousin. Police prosecutor, Sellu TAP, led in a witness to testify in court.

Ibrahim Kargbo identified himself as the headman of the above mentioned village and

that he only recognised the accused.

He recalled on the 28th July 2023 when he was at the Mosque discussing community issues.

He said one Mr. Bangura went to him and informed him about a certain corpse at New Site.

He further said that he went there and saw the now deceased lying on the floor and that he reported the matter to the police.

He said he was accompanied by police officers who took snapshot of the crime scene and the deceased.

He added that the police found a knife and a white airpod at the same crime scene and that he was taken to the police station to make statement.

The matter was adjourned to the 17th October 2023 for further hearings.

Jeep for Sale

Model: Sport Edition (2005)

Contact: 078221530





UNION TRUST BANK LIMITED

...Empowering Sierra Leonean Commerce.



THE SALONE PAYMENT SWITCH (SaPS)

**YOU CAN USE ALL LOCAL BANK
ATM CARDS ON UTB'S ATM TERMINAL**

Di Betteh Bank Na Salone

Specific Procurement Notice

Request for Bids

Goods

(Two-Envelope Bidding Process)

Country: Sierra Leone

Name of Project: Sierra Leone Free Education Project

Contract Title: Procurement of Solar Powered Tablets and Accessories

Loan No./Credit No./ Grant No.: TF0B4694

RFB Reference No.: SL-MBSSE-369873-GO-RFB

address given below: **126 Regent Road, SS Camp, Regent, Freetown** and inspect the bidding document during office hours *0900 to 1700 hours* at the address given below: **126 Regent Road, SS Camp, Regent, Freetown**

1. The Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, Teaching Service Commission *has received* financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Sierra Leone Free Education Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for **Procurement of Solar Powered Tablets and Accessories for TSC (Supply, Delivery and Installation)** *“For this contract, the Borrower shall process the payments using the Direct Payment disbursement method, as defined in the World Bank’s Disbursement Guidelines for Investment Project Financing, except for those payments, which the contract provides to be made through letter of credit.”*
2. The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for Procurement, Supply, delivery, installation and commissioning of Solar Powered Tablets and accessories to the Teaching Service Commission, the total quantities required is **6,061** to be delivered to all sixteen districts for a delivery period of **16 weeks**.
3. Bidding will be conducted through international competitive procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank’s *“Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers”* Fifth Edition, September 2023 (*“Procurement Regulations”*), and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Sierra Leone Free Education Project, from the Procurement Specialist-Mohamed Kallon, on email menakallon@yahoo.com and inspect the bidding document during office hours *0900 to 1700 hours* at the address given below: **126 Regent Road, SS Camp, Regent, Freetown**
5. The bidding document in English may be purchased by interested eligible Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of Le 2,400.00 NL or US\$ 100.00. The method of payment will be through the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank, cash payment. The document will be sent by soft or can collect hard copy. **Acct No. 003001060322112174 Leones account.**
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below 126 Regent Road, SS Camp, Regent, Freetown on or before 12:00hrs, 22nd November, 2023. Electronic Bidding will *not* be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. The outer Bid envelopes marked *“ORIGINAL BID”*, and the inner envelopes marked *“TECHNICAL PART”* will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below on 126 Regent Road, SS Camp, Regent, Freetown on 22nd November, 2023. All envelopes marked *“SECOND ENVELOPE: FINANCIAL PART”* shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Purchaser until the second public opening.
7. All Bids must be accompanied by a *Bid Security* of **US\$ 60,000.00.**
8. Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.
9. *The address referred to above is:*
Sierra Leone Free Education Project
Mohamed Kallon-Procurement Specialist
126 Regent Road, SS Camp, Regent, Freetown, Sierra Leone.
+232 76 646144
menakallon@yahoo.com
www.mbsse.gov.sl

■ Terms and Conditions Apply

ECOBANK SAVE AND WIN PROMO!



The more you **Save** the
Greater Your Chances
of **Winning**



Save **NLE 5,000, NLE 10,000, NLE 20,000**
or more and enter the draw

ecobank.com

Ecobank
The Pan African Bank

DoFA's

Miss Old is Gold Vol 3



Theme: Resilience of older persons in this changing world.

Miss
Mountain Cot
**Daphne
Joya Pratt**

Miss
Magazine Cot
**Isatu
Bangura**

Miss
Congo Town
**Salamatu
Conteh**

Miss
Peninsula
**Mariama
Jalloh**

Miss
Aberdeen
**Ina
Kamara**

Ticket Price

Silver
NL\$ **100**

Gold
NL\$ **250**

VIP
Donation

Sat **14 Oct 2023**

Freetown City
Council
Auditorium

**4:30
pm**

Sponsors



Bake some festive treats this Christmas!

Padi
Wheat Flour
Enriched with Vitamin A & D

Padi
You Padi the Kitchen

Ready, Steady, Bake!

Padi

Padi
You Padi the Kitchen

"The fondest memories are made when gathered around the table."

Padi
You Padi for life

Spaghetti Jollof. You can use Padi items to cook it and it will taste delicious, promise!

Padi
You Padi the Kitchen

ARE YOU

TEAM KETCHUP

OR

TEAM MAYO

Padi
You Padi the Kitchen

Enriched with / Enrichi
Vitamin A & D

Proudly made in Sierra Leone

Padi
You Padi the Kitchen

Padi, sharing is caring 😊

Padi
You Padi the Kitchen

Mama Mia!

Padi Spaghetti, strands of deliciousness!

Padi
You Padi the Kitchen

Daddy you are my best Padi!

Padi
You Padi the Kitchen

Spread the love!

Padi
Margarine
Cooking Butter Flavour

Padi
You Padi the Kitchen

I followed my heart and it led me to the kitchen.

Padi

Truly Natural & Healthy

Good Morning **Padi**
Premium Black Tea
Finest Ceylon Blend

Padi
You Padi the Kitchen



DRIZILIK

KAM JOIN WI PATNA PROGRAM!

Enji up to 30% bonya
we yu kostoma win.



CONTACT US

 **080 732 720**

 PLEASE GAMBLE RESPONSIBLY

DRIZILIK
MERCURY INTERNATIONAL
AFFILIATE PROGRAM BRAND AMBASSADOR

INT'L SPORT

Olivier Giroud pulled on his keeper gloves after Mike Maignan was sent off to make a brilliant save and keep AC Milan's 1-0 lead over Genoa in Serie A.

Christian Pulisic thought he had provided the night's entertainment after a drab game when he strike with three minutes to go in regular time.

The ex-Chelsea man controlled a cross from fellow American Yunus Musah before lashing home the eventual winner

However the game took another chaotic turn when Milan goalkeeper Maignan saw red for a foul on Caleb Ekuban late in stoppage time and Giroud took his spot in goal after Stefano Pioli had used up all of his substitutions.

Albert Gudmundsson then crashed a free kick against the bar from the edge of the box before Giroud brilliantly denied George Puscas just before the final whistle.

The French striker was called into action to deny Puscas, diving head first at a bouncing ball and snapping up the loose ends.

In another twist Genoa also had their keeper, Josep Martinez sent off, when he was given a second yellow card for a late foul on Musah.

On the being in goal Giroud said: 'I've never experienced that in my

Olivier Giroud makes STUNNING save after stepping in goal for AC Milan following Mike Maignan's sending off



career and I'm proud of the whole team. We fought like lions.'

'The final stop? I made a great save at the end. Almost a goal. Calabria massacred my arm but

it's okay... I'm going to frame this shirt!

Milan moved two points clear at the top of the table after rivals Inter Milan threw away an early

two-goal lead to draw 2-2 at home to Bologna earlier on Saturday.

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

Barcelona 'unhappy with Spain boss Luis de La Fuente' after he compared 16-year-old wonderkid Lamine Yamal to Lionel Messi

Barcelona are 'upset' with Spain manager Luis de La Fuente after he compared Lamine Yamal to club legends Lionel Messi and Diego Maradona. At just 16, Yamal is fast becoming a favourite for Xavi's side and has appeared in each of their league games so far.

He is yet to get on the scoresheet for the Blaugrana, but did force Barca's old nemesis Sergio Ramos into an own goal as they beat Sevilla last weekend.

Barcelona are 'upset' with Spain manager Luis de La Fuente after he compared Lamine Yamal to club legends Lionel Messi and Diego Maradona.

At just 16, Yamal is fast becoming a favourite for Xavi's side and has appeared in each of their league

games so far.

He is yet to get on the scoresheet for the Blaugrana, but did force Barca's old nemesis Sergio Ramos into an own goal as they beat Sevilla last weekend.

'There are footballers who knock down the door before others,' he said. 'He [Yamal] has exceptional conditions and his performance will determine what we can give him.'

'Remember when Messi or Maradona played when they were 16? Now it seems sacrilegious to debate whether they should play when they are 16 years old.'

'You don't have to set limits for players like that.'

Reports in Sport suggest the comments did not go down well with Barcelona, who have been trying to keep as much pressure off Yamal as

possible.

Manager Xavi, who played alongside Messi for 11 years at the Nou Camp, said as much in an interview just a week earlier.

Speaking ahead of their 1-0 Champions League win over Porto on Wednesday, he said: 'We are not doing Lamine any favors if we compare him with Messi.'

'It is true that the expectations are enormous, he is proving it, but we are going to see the future. But we have already seen that all the players who have been compared to Messi, they haven't done well at all.' Regardless of the chat surrounding Yamal, Barcelona have made a steady start to the season and are within a point of league leaders Real Madrid after eight games.

They are yet to produce their best



football, though, with just two of their six league wins coming by a margin of more than one goal.

With Spain's two biggest clubs separated by so little, Real's trip to the Olympic Stadium for the Clasico at the end of October could be one of the biggest in recent memory.

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

ALL CREDIBLE INSTITUTIONS HAVE ADVERTISED IN

CONCORD TIMES

FOR ADVERT PLACEMENT CALL: +232 76 694292/+232 99 822587 E-mail: concordtimes100@yahoo.com

Follow us: Concord Times Newspaper @Concordtimes sl_concord_times

LEGAL AID BOARD **TRANSCO** **HIV/AIDS**
BRAC **ACCESS BANK** **MINISTRY OF YOUTHS AND SPORTS**
FAO **MBSSE** **GUMA VALLEY WATER COMPANY** **NACSA**
GTB **CARE INTERNATIONAL** **MTHIE** **ACTIONAID** **SAVE THE CHILDREN**
SIERRA LEONE RED CROSS **NASSIT** **SIERRA LEONE POLICE** **SLRA**
EPA **SIERRA LEONE BREWERY** **SLTC**
RMF **MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS** **NJALA UNIVERSITY**
SOS CHILDREN VILLAGE **ACC** **MINISTRY OF DEFENCE** **MMCET CHAI**
TRANSFAPAY **STAR TIMES**
CRS **ACTION AGAINST HUNGER** **WORLD VISION** **UBA**
MINISTRY OF FINANCE **ADB** **DSTV** **AUDIT SERVICES**
SELL **MINISTRY OF ENERGY** **NRA** **SLAJ**
SIERRA BAY HOTEL **MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE** **NEMS**
MARIE STOPES **SEA COACH EXPRESS** **GIZ**
SLRSA **NATCOM** **OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT** **WATERAID**
SALCAB **ECOBANK** **LAPO MICRO FINANCE (SL) LTD**
HRC **NPPA** **BSL** **SOLTHIS** **OXFARM** **AHF**
MIC **UTB** **SLCB** **RCB**
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT **ORANGE**
MERCURY SL **UNDP** **WHO** **M.R. DISTILLERIES** **IGR**
OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY **AFRICELL** **MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY**
NMA **ZENITH BANK** **MINISTRY OF HEALTH**
NATIONAL TOURIST BOARD **KENEMA CITY COUNCIL** **EUROPEAN UNION** **SMEDA**
STATISTIC SIERRA LEONE **PPRC** **CHASL** **STANDARD BUREAU**
MARITIME **WORLD BANK** **AFRIGAS** **RADISSON BLU HOTEL**
NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES **PLAN INTERNATIONAL**
PRA **FAWAZ BUILDING MATERIALS** **ECOMED** **PARTNERS IN HEALTH**
PEE CEE & SONS **SMALL ARMS** **SLWREC**
KINGHO MINING COMPANY **PPRC** **MOTT MACDONALDS**
NEC **NATIONAL TOURIST BOARD** **NPPA** **EBK UNIVERSITY** **JUDICIARY OF SIERRA LEONE**

Published by Concord Times Communications, 44, Edwards Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone www.slconcordtimes.com

Editor: Alusine Sesay +232 78 385923; opinion@slconcordtimes.com Advertisement: +232 79 355725, +232 76 694 292 advert@slconcordtimes.com

Follow us: Concord Times Newspaper @Concordtimes sl_concord_times