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Excellence & Objectivity

Vol. 17, No 140251032

Friday, December 1, 2023

Price: Le 2

SLCAA hosts 4th CODEVMET-AFI Project Steering Committee meeting

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Security risk for judges, magistrates impedes court proceedings



Ecobank and African Guarantee Fund Sign Transformative USD 200 Million Risk Sharing Agreement

In Segbwema...

Africell MD supports retailer with five kiosks, business expansion opportunities



By Yusufu S. Bangura

In the wake of the attempted coup which led to the release of nearly two thousand prisoners, after a security breach into the two major correctional Centres, normal court proceedings in Freetown were disrupted for the

whole week, according to the Director of Communications, Judiciary of Sierra Leone. Elkass Sannah told Concord Times in a telephone interview that most of the judges and magistrates were afraid to report for duty because most of them do not have state security.

Cont. Page 4

HRC-SL strengthens collaboration with MDAs

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PRESS INFORMATION

Ecobank and African Guarantee Fund Sign Transformative USD 200 Million Risk Sharing Agreement



- **This is the largest guarantee facility in sub-Saharan Africa**
- **The risk sharing agreement marks the third renewal of the partnership between Ecobank and AGF.**
- **SMEs from across 27 African markets in which Ecobank operates will benefit from the partnership; up from just 7 countries in 2013.**
- **The agreement includes favourable lending terms for gender financing and green transactions.**

Lomé, Togo, 16 November 2023, Ecobank, the leading pan-African banking group, and the African Guarantee Fund (AGF), a specialized pan-African guarantee provider, have joined forces in a groundbreaking USD200 million risk-sharing agreement, aimed at catalyzing economic growth and supporting entrepreneurial ventures – including women-owned SMEs on the continent.

The two organisations signed a strategic partnership agreement today on the sidelines of the Africa Financial Industry Summit (AFIS) in Lomé, Togo, in the presence of their respective leaders.

The USD 200 million risk-sharing agreement marks the third renewal of Ecobank's partnership with AGF. The initial guarantee, provided by AGF in 2013, covered seven countries with a total guaranteed portfolio of USD 50 million. In 2018, the scope of the guarantee expanded to encompass 14 countries, resulting in cumulative disbursements of USD 230 million since that time. The renewed partnership now extends to 27 countries within Ecobank's African network, offering 50% coverage for qualifying SMEs across all target markets.

By leveraging Ecobank's extensive network and financial expertise and merging it with AGF's proven track record in risk mitigation, the collaboration aims to address the challenges faced by SMEs in accessing affordable financing.

Key highlights of the partnership include:

- 1. Enhanced 75% guarantee cover for Gender Financing and Green Transactions:** Favourable terms have been set to ensure more women-led and green transactions are fast-tracked, incorporating reduced pricing.
- 2. Increased Lending Capacity:** The USD 200 million facility allows Ecobank to significantly boost its lending capacity to SMEs, enabling the Bank to extend more credit facilities to SMEs seeking to expand, innovate, and contribute to job creation.
- 3. Risk Mitigation:** AGF will play a pivotal role in mitigating the credit risk associated with lending to SMEs, fostering a more conducive environment for financial institutions to support these businesses without compromising

their risk profiles.

- 4. Financial Inclusion:** By channeling funds towards SMEs, the collaboration aligns with broader financial inclusion objectives, ensuring that a diverse range of businesses, including those in underserved and remote areas, can access the financial resources needed for growth.
- 5. Economic Impact:** The USD 200 million risk-sharing agreement is expected to have a ripple effect on various sectors, contributing to increased economic activity, job creation, and sustainable development across sub-Saharan Africa.

Commenting on the partnership, **Ecobank Group CEO, Jeremy Awori** expressed enthusiasm about the potential impact on SMEs and the overall economic landscape, stating, "Our enhanced partnership with the African Guarantee Fund marks a significant step forward in our commitment to supporting SMEs across Africa with affordable financing. Through this partnership, we are taking bold steps to enhance green financing and gender financing. In doing so, we aim to eliminate the rigorous and restrictive requirements for collateral, particularly hindering women-focused businesses' access to credit."

African Guarantee Fund Group CEO, Jules Ngankam acknowledged the longstanding partnership between AGF and Ecobank Group and its transformative impact on the SME landscape: "The renewal of our partnership with Ecobank Group to now span 27 countries is proof of the importance of risk-sharing mechanisms that banks should leverage to grow their SME portfolio. This partnership will catalyse close to \$1 billion of financing for SMEs, who are the real drivers of growth in African economies."

"Ecobank's 'Elevate' program will also largely benefit from our 'AFAWA Guarantee for Growth' facility to significantly boost financing of women led or owned SMEs," he added.

The USD200 million risk-sharing agreement is positioned to become a landmark initiative in the financial landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa, demonstrating the collaborative efforts of key players in driving economic growth and fostering entrepreneurship. Countries covered in the partnership, listed in alphabetical order, are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

- ENDS -

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About Ecobank Group (or 'Ecobank Transnational Incorporated' or 'ETI')

Ecobank Group is the leading private pan-African banking group with unrivalled African expertise. Present in 35 sub-Saharan African countries, as well as France, the UK, UAE and China, its unique pan-African platform provides a single gateway for payments, cash management, trade and investment. The Group employs over 14,000 people and offers Consumer, Commercial, Corporate and Investment Banking products, services and solutions across multiple channels, including digital, to over 32 million customers. For further information, please visit ecobank.com.

About African Guarantee Fund

African Guarantee Fund (AGF) is a specialized guarantee provider whose mission is to facilitate economic development and poverty reduction in Africa. To achieve this, AGF increases access to finance for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) across key economic sectors through an array of guarantee products and capacity development assistance. Since inception, AGF has unlocked more than USD 3.5 billion in SME financing, through partnerships with 200 partner financial institutions across 40 African countries.

AGF is backed by the following shareholders and sponsors: The Government of Denmark through the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Government of Spain through the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECID), the African Development Bank (AfDB), French Development Agency (AFD), Nordic Development Fund (NDF), Investment Fund for Developing Countries (IFU), German Development Bank (KfW), French Agency for Private Sector (PROPARCO), West African Development Bank (BOAD), Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and USAID's West Africa Trade & Investment Hub (WATIH).

African Guarantee Fund is rated AA- by Fitch Ratings. www.agf.africa



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LOCAL NEWS

SLCAA hosts 4th CODEVMET-AFI Project Steering Committee meeting

The Director General of the Sierra Leone Civil Aviation Authority, Madam Musayeroh Barrie has assured members of the CODEVMET Steering Committee of Sierra Leone's commitment to the Successful Implementation of the CODEVMET-AFI project.

The three-day meeting, organized by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) through the Western and Central Africa (WACAF) Office, brings together air navigation service providers, stakeholders, and observers in the aviation industry.

The Deputy Regional Director for Western and Central African (WACAF) Office, Mr. Nika M. Manzi, on behalf of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), thanked the government of Sierra Leone for its acceptance to host the conference which according to him, "is the second in-person steering committee meeting since COVID-19 pandemic erupted."

Mr. Manzi said, "Sierra Leone's willingness to host the meeting demonstrates the importance the country attaches to this project."

The Deputy Minister of Transport and Aviation, Mr. Rex Bhonapha, officially welcomes member states to the project and to Sierra Leone, while assuring them a peaceful stay in the country. He used the platform to congratulate the International Civil Aviation Organization for their consideration to giving Sierra Leone the opportunity to host the fourth session of the steering committee



Members of the 4th CODEVMET-AFI Project Steering Committee Meeting

meeting.

Mr. Bhonapha said, "The importance of meteorology in air navigation and accurate and timely weather information is essential for safe, economics and efficient air navigation."

The meeting is expected to adopt this year's agenda and work programme, conduct election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee, review of its decisions taken during the last Steering Committee meeting, review of its Terms of Reference, and assess the implementation status of the CODEVMET-Afi project, among other items on the agenda.

Failure to appear in court: Bench warrant for APC Sheriff, 8 others

By Ibrahim Kabba Turay

Justice Browne Marke has issued a bench warrant for Alpha Sheriff aka APC Sheriff and eight others, who are on trial at the High Court, for failing to appear before the court during the November Criminal Session.

The Call-Over ceremony for the November Criminal Session was presided over by Justice Browne Marke.

Before the commencement of the Call Over ceremony, Justice

Browne Marke, said he was at the Freetown Correctional Centre to verify how many inmates have returned.

He continued that upon his visit, he noticed that a good number of the inmates have returned to the Correctional Centre.

There are 31 accused persons on the list of this call over ceremony in which all of them absent in yesterday trial Session ranging from Ibrahim Bangura house breaking and Larceny, Foday Sesay Larceny, Abass Koroma house breaking and Larceny

Ibrahim Sesay wounding with Intent Mose Ezikiel Sylvanue Raay Fraudulent Conversion Lansana Turay Wounding with Internet.

Alpha Sheriff aka APC Sheriff and 8 others for operating a private Security Service without Licence and other with Murder trial among others are all on Bench Warrant

JM Bockarie representing the State and C, Turker for the accused persons all matter adjourned to December 6th 2023.

Security risk for judges, magistrates impedes court proceedings

From Cover

"We have not had normal court sittings throughout this week because most of the judges and magistrates are not better secured. They are afraid for their safety as most of them are not provided with state security. Imagine, all the prisoners that were released are directly dealt with by these people and you know the security risk they are currently exposed to," he said.

Since the November criminal session has resumed, he said one of the Supreme Court Judges, Justice Brown Marke, was on seat to deliver justice to inmates who have spent years behind bars, but that most of them had escaped.

Going forward, he said since some prisoners, especially those on trial, are making themselves available, the Judiciary was in constant touch with

the relevant stakeholders to ensure that normal court sittings resume.

He called on the security sector to provide adequate security for judges and magistrates so as to enhance their work.

Also, Defence Counsel from the Legal Aid Board, Randy Salieu Bangura, told this medium that the unfortunate occurrence on Sunday has affected their work greatly, because their clients who were detained at both the Male and Female Correctional Centres, had escaped.

He said since that day, their clients have not made themselves available in court for trial, a situation he said was challenging for them at the Legal Aid Board.

He further stated that a few of their clients who have contacted the Legal Aid Board were advised to turn in themselves to the police.



"As a defence counsel giving free promo to those who have come in conflict with the law, I am calling on all our clients to return to the police because there is a law in this country. The Sierra Leone Correctional

Services Act No.6 of 2014, Section 76 and Section 78 makes it very clear that any person or inmates that escaped from lawful custody, the law will come down heavily on that individual," he cautioned.



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Beyond Borders

By Sulaiman Momodu

Have you ever wondered why Sierra Leone claims to be a God-loving nation yet contends with endless challenges? This article is a sequel to: "Bombs and guns again: Talking about God, Sierra Leoneans, and the devil" following the 26 November attempted coup that once again claimed the lives of our beloved compatriots. It was a close shave to unseat President Julius Maada Bio's government. May the souls of compatriots we lost, rest in peace.

In the first part of this piece, I explained that Sierra Leone could be lauded for being a very tolerant country, religiously speaking. The current president and the main opposition leader are both Christians and they even attend the same parish at Wilberforce in Freetown. The spouse of the current president is a Muslim etc. Please don't take my word for it.

In his farewell message titled, "**The Salone I'll remember not to forget**" as he was leaving the country this week at the end of his assignment, the UN Resident Coordinator, **Babatunde A. Ahonsi**, stated that "...It would be hard to forget Sierra Leone's uniquely high level of inter-religious harmony and tolerance. It is the only country among the nearly 50 that I have paid extended visits to where there are so many people bearing Christian-sounding names but are practicing Muslims, and so many people bearing Islamic names that are practicing Christians. It is also the only one where so many of its political leaders of the Christian faith regularly recite the basic Islamic prayer – the Al-Fathia - at public gatherings, and so many political leaders of the Islamic faith regularly recite the basic Christian prayer – the Our Father - at public functions."

If Sierra Leoneans love God and have no problems with inter-ethnic marriages, what's going on in the country? I dare say that the political volatility is taking a dangerous tribal and regional dimension which must be nipped in the bud. Here are some thoughts which are in no way exhaustive on addressing the shameful and embarrassing situation in the country:

War against corruption:

With corruption, all evil practices are possible. Proverbs 15:27 says, "Whoever is greedy for unjust gain troubles his own household, but he who hates bribes will live." When the SLPP returned to power in 2018, many citizens were delighted with the war against corruption in view of the unexplained wealth and the

Bombs and guns again: What's the solution for S/L's woes?

staggering sums of looted money that were recovered by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). Former President Koroma, who had promised change, was even questioned amid tension. Months later though, President Bio's government officials were also found wanting. The country's Auditor General who exposed unpatriotic acts of corruption was removed from office over allegations of malfeasance? Recently, just after the June 2023 elections, President Bio removed his chief minister and other top SLPP officials from their positions. No official reason was given, but the media reported that it was over a three-million US dollar support for the elections from somewhere that a handful of the president's men greedily collected and pocketed without even informing their boss let alone say 'Pa, look small thing'? The presidency denied the allegations. Also, the once vibrant ACC is today a lame duck engaged only in absurd corruption prevention campaigns. Bio himself had said that any president of Sierra Leone who would like to succeed must fight corruption, but is he?

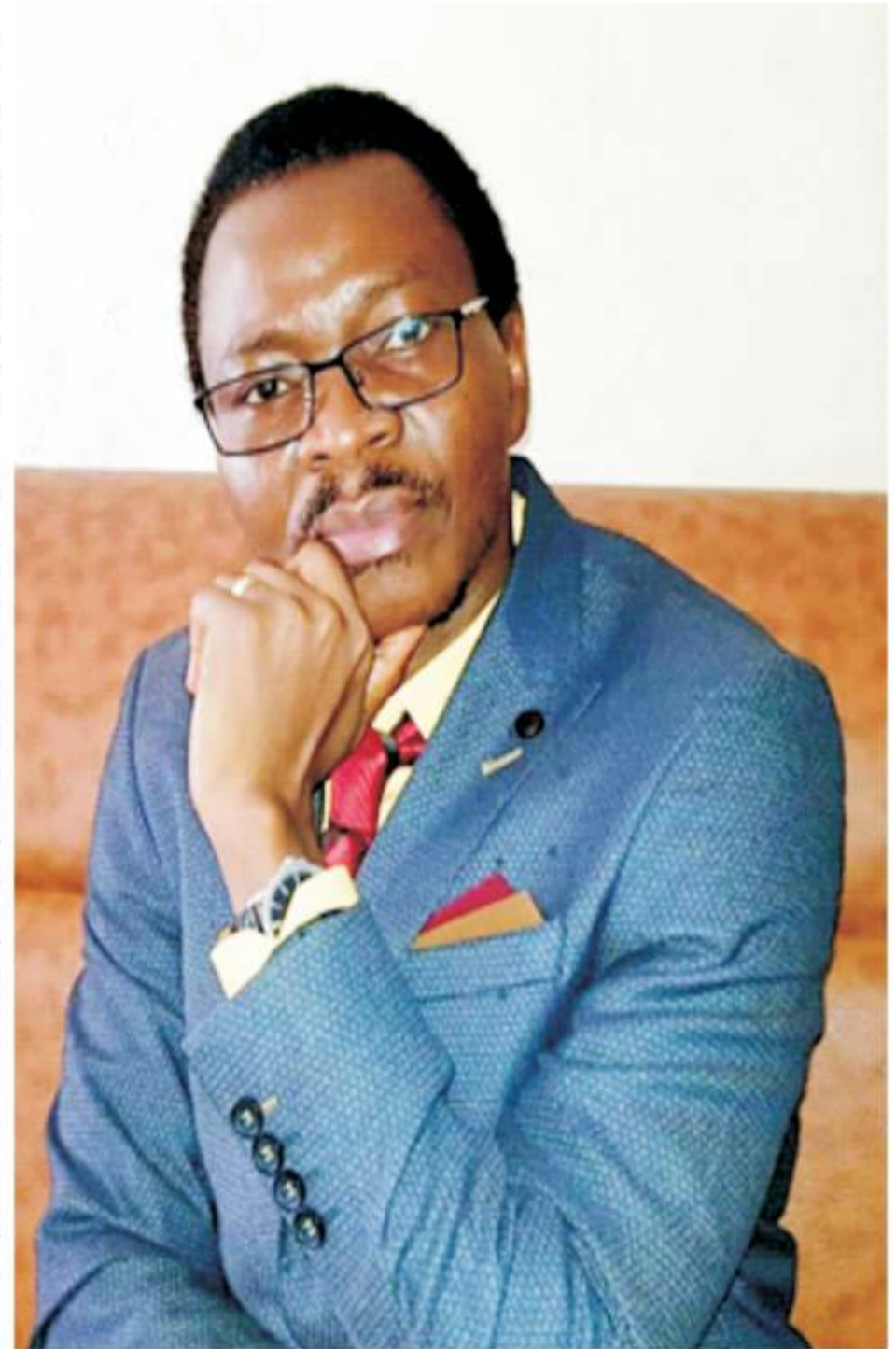
Leadership and patriotism:

When I visited South Africa a few years ago, I ensured that I went over to the home where world icon Nelson Mandela spent his last days, as well as visited his foundation near Johannesburg and prayed for his soul to rest in peace. Mandela was a one-term president. In Sierra Leone, we have a challenge with leadership. President Bio has directly accused his predecessor, former President Ernest Bai Koroma of being behind the disturbances in the country. In the aborted coup, the bodyguards of the former president were reportedly among the ringleaders.

The outgoing UN diplomat in his farewell message stated that it is not surprising that many political analysts largely attribute the polarizing and divisive nature of politics in Sierra Leone, especially during elections, "to the irresponsible exploitation and instrumentalization of latent primordial sentiments of ordinary people by leading politicians for electoral advantages".

Elections and Electoral Commission:

It is unfortunate that in 2007, a former catholic nun, Christiana Thorpe, myopically and unilaterally annulled votes that would have made significant difference in the result and told the SLPP to "go police". Fast forward to 2023, the current commissioner Mohamed Kenewui



Konneh has refused to give the breakdown of the election result. Our Electoral Commission urgently needs reform.

Misusing and abusing the youth: Most people of voting age who are in their twenties or thirties were either not yet born or were babies to understand the horror that we experienced during the war. Misusing the future leaders of the nation through Kush and other substances for political gains must stop.

Missing arms:

It is very concerning that some of the assailants in the 26 November attack escaped with arms and some serving military personnel joined the killers. All efforts must be made to retrieve these arms and we must strengthen our bilateral relationship with Guinea and Liberia.

God or the devil?

In my view, if we truly believe in God or have a sincere relationship with Him, it will lead to transformation in the ways we do things which bring

peace and development as we will see each other as brothers and sisters. Otherwise, we become sons and daughters of the devil when we become selfish, greedy, corrupt etc.

Conclusion:

To conclude, Romans 13:1-2 warns: "those who refuse to obey the law of the land are refusing to obey God, and punishment will follow." Let me once again leave you with the RC's farewell. He noted that "joint efforts will yield even bigger and faster development gains for Sierra Leone if significant sections of the elite could become less motivated by selfish, narrow interests, privilege the long-term over the short-term, look more inward than outward, be more patriotic, and act more consistently for the common good."

While we will continue to pray for our country and its leaders, unless and until we put Sierra Leone first beyond tribal and regional bigotry and wage peace and love, Sierra Leone making headlines for all the wrong reasons will sadly continue, I hope not.

LOCAL NEWS

Under the visionary leadership of its Managing Director, Africell Sierra Leone took a proactive step in bolstering local entrepreneurship by supporting one of its oldest retailers Babajeh in Segbwema with five Africell kiosks.

The Managing Director's visit to Segbwema was not only a gesture of solidarity but also an opportunity to spur economic growth in the region. During his visit, the Managing Director of Africell Sierra Leone Shadi Gerjawi encouraged the retailer to propose a plan aimed at optimizing sales and amplifying profits for his business.

This initiative is part of Africell's commitment to fostering local business development and empowering entrepreneurs within the community.

Expressing his gratitude for Africell's support, the local retailer Babajeh, whose business has been a longstanding partner of Africell Sierra Leone, commended the company for its dedication to uplifting local enterprises.

He acknowledged that the provision of the kiosks would significantly enhance his business's visibility and customer accessibility.

The Managing Director emphasized the importance of collaboration between Africell and local businesses to create sustainable economic opportunities.

Shadi Gerjawi reiterated Africell's dedication to fostering partnerships that empower local entrepreneurs, driving economic progress and community development.

This collaborative effort between Africell Sierra Leone and the local retailer did not only symbolize a mutually beneficial partnership but also signifies a strategic move towards amplifying the region's economic landscape.

As the proposal plan takes shape, it is anticipated to pave the way for increased business growth, job creation, and a stronger entrepreneurial ecosystem in Segbwema.

The Managing Director's visit and the subsequent support extended to the local retailer reflect Africell Sierra Leone's commitment to corporate social responsibility and its vision of catalyzing positive change in the communities it serves.

This endeavor stands as a testament to the company's pledge to be an active contributor to Sierra Leone's socio-economic development.

In Segbwema... Africell MD supports retailer with five kiosks, business expansion opportunities

This gesture from Shadi Gerjawi towards the local retailer Babajeh in Segbwema has been met with widespread appreciation and enthusiasm from the community.

Residents and other business owners in the area hailed Africell's initiative as a significant boost to the local economy.

Many expressed their admiration for the telecommunication company's commitment to supporting indigenous businesses and fostering growth within Segbwema and its environs.

According to some of the residents in Segbwema, this initiative by Africell is a game-changer for our local businesses it will not only showcases their dedication to corporate social responsibility but also demonstrates a genuine interest in our prosperity.

The infusion of five Africell kiosks into the retailer's business is seen as a strategic move that will not only enhance the retailer's reach but also provide easier access to Africell products and services for residents in the area.

"It's heartening to witness a company like Africell actively engaging with local entrepreneurs. This support will undoubtedly have a ripple effect on our economy, creating opportunities for growth and employment," said Brima Kallon, another local business owner.

The Managing Director's call for a proposal plan to boost sales and profits has ignited a sense of entrepreneurial spirit among business owners in Segbwema.

Many are inspired to innovate and strategize, aiming to take advantage of this opportunity presented by Africell.

The anticipation within the community for the positive outcomes of this collaborative effort continues to grow.

There is widespread optimism that this partnership will not only benefit the local retailer but also serve as a catalyst for further economic empowerment in Segbwema.

As Africell Sierra Leone's support continues to resonate within the community, the forthcoming proposal plan from the local retailer is eagerly awaited, with hopes that it will outline a roadmap towards



sustainable business growth and prosperity.

The Managing Director's visit and the subsequent support extended to the local retailer have sparked a renewed sense of optimism, unity, and entrepreneurial drive in Segbwema, reflecting the transformative potential of corporate-community collaborations.

As the collaboration between Africell Sierra Leone and the local retailer in Segbwema gains momentum, optimism for a brighter economic landscape permeates the community.

The Managing Director's visit marked the beginning of a promising partnership aimed at driving sustainable growth and fostering local entrepreneurship.

With the provision of five Africell kiosks and the call for a strategic proposal plan, the groundwork has been laid for a transformative journey that aligns with both Africell's commitment to community empowerment and the retailer's aspirations for business expansion.

"We are thrilled about the possibilities that lie ahead.

Africell's support is a testament to their belief in our potential. We're ready to seize this opportunity and elevate our business to new heights," expressed the local retailer, speaking on the prospects of the partnership.

The ripple effect of this collaboration extends beyond mere business transactions.

It signifies a deeper connection between a multinational company

and the local entrepreneurial fabric, showcasing the power of strategic alliances in nurturing grassroots growth.

Moreover, the positive reception and support from the Segbwema community underscore the significance of corporate initiatives that prioritize community development.

The unity and enthusiasm witnessed among residents and fellow business owners illustrate a collective eagerness to leverage this partnership for mutual prosperity.

As the local retailer Babajeh crafts the proposal plan, the anticipation for innovative strategies and sustainable business models amplifies.

The forthcoming plan is poised to outline a roadmap that not only maximizes sales and profits but also sets a precedent for inclusive economic growth and empowerment within the region.

In closing, Africell Sierra Leone's commitment to empowering local businesses stands as a testament to its dedication towards fostering socio-economic progress.

This collaboration serves as a beacon of hope, igniting aspirations and paving the way for a brighter future for businesses and communities in Segbwema.

As the partnership progresses, the shared vision of Africell Sierra Leone and the local retailer remains steadfast: to create enduring opportunities, drive economic prosperity, and uplift the spirit of entrepreneurship within the vibrant fabric of Segbwema.



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LOCAL NEWS

HRC-SL strengthens collaboration with MDAs

By Hassan Gbassay Koroma

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone collaboration with the Office of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has organised a human rights seminar on the role of ministries, departments and agencies in fulfilling government's human rights obligations.

Speaking at the one day seminar that was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation's conference Hall at Tower Hill in Freetown, the Chairman of event, Commissioner Hassan Samba Yarjah said every year on 10th December, HRCSL joins the rest of the world in celebrating the International Human Rights Day.

He said UDHR is a milestone document in the history of human rights and Sierra Leone has an obligation to uphold the provisions therein.

He said it therefore behooves the Commission to engage all agents of government that are responsible in letting the government achieves the fulfil, protect and respect aspect of its obligations to the people of Sierra Leone.

He said this year's commemoration will be centered around the International theme; "Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for All" which has been localized as 'Stand up and Fight Against the Impact of Climate Change.'

He said the objective set out is deliberate, as it is geared towards strengthening the capacity of MDAs to effectively protect and promote human rights and stand up for someone's rights wherever the need arises, at all times and to further strengthen cooperation and collaboration between the Commission and MDAs.

Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission for Sierra Leone, Patricia Narsu Ndanema said the Commission is the accredited body responsible for assessing the operations of all National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIS) in line with the provisions highlighted in the 1993 United Nations Paris Principles that govern the operations of NHRIs.

She said the provisions in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have been instrumental in drafting several international



human rights laws, national constitutions and other laws, specifically targeting women, children, disable persons and other targeted groups with the objective of leaving no one behind.

She said over the years, the government has taken bold step in developing its national human rights framework through the signing, ratification and domestication of human rights laws meant to promote and protect the rights of all in Sierra Leone and additionally, the Commission notes government's responsiveness in putting structures in place for rights holders to access as and when necessary.

She further noted that Section 7(2)(a)-(g) of the Commission's Act, requires the Commission to perform several functions with emphasis on their collaboration with human rights interest bodies, and that MDAs are in that same category.

She said the fundamental principles of state policy in chapter Chapter 2 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 highlights four objectives of government including political, social, educational and foreign policy objectives.

She said the Commission has been working closely with Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies to ensure that government fulfils its human rights obligations of respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights by making sure that they put laws in place that respect and promote human rights.

"We see the steps taken by government through the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (MGCA) towards the enactment of the Gender, Girls and Women's Empowerment Act (GEWE). We also see structures such as the Special Model Court all meant to give effect to the Sexual Offences 2019 and subsequently providing justice to victims," she said.

She said MDAs have a great role to play in human rights protection, respect and fulfilment.

She said as a Commission and being the umbrella body to protect and promote human rights, they have planned a series of activities to this year's celebration including the seminar organised on the topic, 'The Role of government Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) in the protection and Promotion of human rights.

Director General at Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Corporations, Victoria Sulaimani said MDAS are tasked with developing and implementing laws and policies that align with international human rights norms, stating that legislations should be designed to protect the rights of all individuals, with special emphasis on vulnerable groups such as women, children, persons with disabilities and the aged.

She said heads of entities are strongly encouraged to organize adequate training and capacity-building programs within their respective MDAS, with a view to fulfilling treaty reporting obligations and the promotion of the fundamental human rights.

"This ensures that those responsible for policy development, law enforcement, and service delivery are well-equipped to promote and protect human rights," she said.

She said MDAs should actively work to eliminate any semblance of discrimination and address systemic inequalities that may hinder the enjoyment of fundamental human rights of all and promised that the government will continue implementing policies that promote inclusivity, diversity management, and equal opportunities for all.

"The Judiciary and law enforcement agencies have a pivotal role to play in upholding human rights tenets as has been in years past. Law enforcement institutions in the country will continue their work to ensure equal access to justice for all citizens. This includes addressing issues such as prolonged detention, fair trials, and combating impunity," she said.

Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Mohamed Lamin Tarawally Esq. appreciated the work the Commission was doing to promote and protect human rights in the country and that he was proud of the milestone that have been achieved by the Commission.

He said the State holds the responsibility to promote and protect human rights in the country, adding that as a country, they have domesticated many treaties that promote human rights.



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE
Ministry of Information and Civic Education (MoICE)
 8th Floor, Youyi Building, Brookfields, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Issued Date: 24th November 2023

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Procurement Number: MOICE/NCB/EOI/2023/01-02

Request for Expression of Interest for Communications Transformation for the Ministry of Information and Civic Education

Background

The Ministry of Information and Civic Education (MoICE) has received funds from the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) through the Ministry of Finance (MoF), for which the MoICE has agreed to use part of it for the procurement of Consultancy Services. These services are to conduct an Assessment, create a Roadmap and Strategy Document for Communication Transformation, and design, construct, and impart training on modern communication methods for the government.

The Ministry of Information and Civic Education now invites competent firms/consultants (both local and international) with the ability to undertake the following activities:

1. Conduct an assessment and create a roadmap and strategy document for communication transformation. Firms/consultants interested in delivering these services should present their sealed Expressions of Interest (EOI).
2. To design, construct, and impart training on modern communication methods for the government to enhance creative content and design.

Description and Scope for Lot. 1

The overarching objective of the consultancy assignment is to undertake an Assessment and produce a Roadmap and Strategy Document Design covering the following areas:

The primary aim of this consultancy assignment is to conduct an Assessment and create a Roadmap and Strategy Document Design, which includes:

- i. Mapping the Current Government Communications Infrastructure and System.
- ii. Conducting an Inspiration pack and best practice case studies.
- iii. Designing transformation, testing ideas, and envisioning
- iv. Creating a Roadmap and Strategy Document

Description and Scope for Lot. 2

The primary aim of this consultancy assignment is to build the capacity of MoICE Officials and other government personnel and enhance creative content and design in the following areas:

- i. To design, construct, and impart training on modern communication methods for the government.

- ii. Aid communications teams in developing skills across all disciplines: Designing transformation, testing ideas, and envisioning.

- iii. Provide training for MoICE officers to increase visibility through a website, app, video production, interactive data visualization, etc.

Submission Requirements

The following documents must support the Expression of Interest:

Evidence of Experience in Similar Services

Business Registration Certificate

Curriculum vitae of proposed staff for the assignment

Valid NRA Tax Clearance Certificate if applicable

Valid Local Council Business License if applicable

Valid NASSIT Clearance Certificate, if applicable

Evaluation of Expressions of Interest

Expressions of Interest submitted before the deadline will be evaluated on a PASS OR FAIL basis per the Guidelines under the Sierra Leone Public Procurement Procedures. A Request for Proposal (RFP) shall be issued to only firms/consultants that comply with all the criteria considered in the evaluation exercise.

Interested firms/consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours (09:00 – 16:00HRS) starting **Friday, 24th November 2023 to Monday, 4th December 2023.**

All submissions of documents must be delivered to the address below on or before 1:00 P.M. on Wednesday, 6th December 2023.

Electronic submissions are allowed through the following emails: ps@moic.gov.sl / joefayianyuma@gmail.com and a copy of the email to gabrielpgeorge@hotmail.com

**The Procurement Unit
 Ministry of Information and Civic Education
 8th Floor, Youyi Building, Brookfields
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LOCAL NEWS

Peace Corps, Ministries Sign Memorandums of Understanding for Continued Cooperation

The U.S. Government's Peace Corps program in Sierra Leone has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements with the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) renewing their continued commitment to partnership. American Peace Corps Volunteers have served in Sierra Leone since 1962 and continue to teach alongside Sierra Leonean teachers in math, science, and literacy around the country. The program has operated in the health sector since 2016 and places Volunteers in clinics in collaboration with community health workers across 10 districts in Sierra Leone. These MOUs ensure that the partnership between the U.S. Peace Corps and the Sierra Leonean Government will continue for the foreseeable future.

Honorable Minister Conrad Sackey (MBSSE) welcomed Natalie Gill-Mensah, Peace Corps' Country

Director, and Mohamed Dumbuya, Education Program Manager, to his office to discuss the Peace Corps. Eighteen Volunteers are serving as teachers in primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools around the provinces. Minister Sackey recalled many positive experiences with Peace Corps from his early years at Albert Academy to a fellowship experience in the United States where he visited the Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, DC.

Honorable Acting Minister Dr. Charles Senessie (MOH), Gill-Mensah, and Peace Corps Program Manager Zainab Kamara met for MOH MOU signing. Twelve Peace Corps Volunteers are currently serving in clinics supporting maternal child health efforts, reproductive health education and malaria prevention. They discussed the importance of the partnership and appreciation for ministry support



as the Peace Corps continues to identify clinics for Volunteer service. "Peace Corps' commitment to Sierra Leone and its people has a long-storied history and I am so excited and honored to continue in this tradition through renewing our

MOUs with the ministries," said Gill-Mensah. These meetings and MOU signing represents the ongoing partnership between the United States Peace Corps and the Government of Sierra Leone and the intention to maintain it for years to come.

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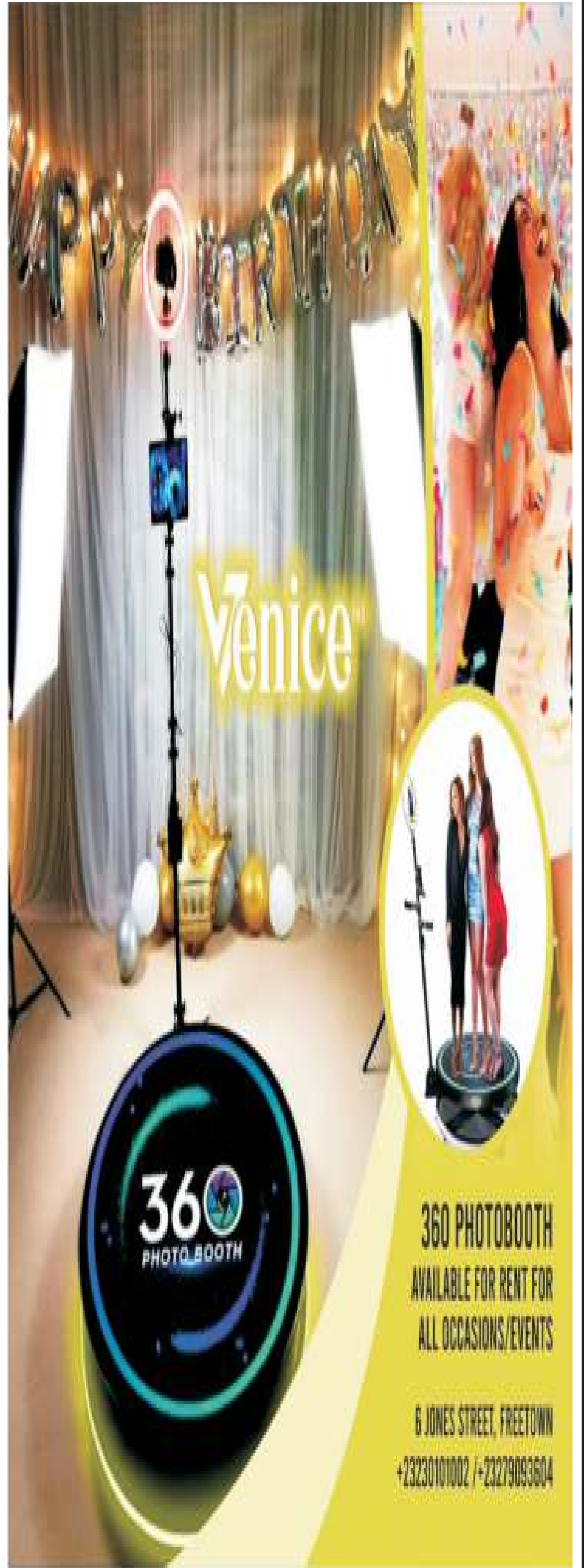
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INT'L SPORTS

Paris St-Germain 1-1 Newcastle: Late Kylian Mbappe penalty denies visitors win

Kylian Mbappe scored a controversial late penalty to deny Newcastle an impressive win at Parc des Princes but the draw keeps the visitors in the fight to reach the Champions League knockout stages.

The spot-kick was awarded after review by the video assistant referee, with referee Szymon Marciniak consulting the pitchside monitor before ruling Tino Livramento had handled the ball inside the box when blocking a cross.

It was a cruel blow for Eddie Howe's side, who had looked on course to secure a hugely impressive win after Aleksander Isak struck in the first half when Miguel Almiron's effort had been pushed to the striker's feet.

Newcastle then defended with everything they had to keep out PSG and Nick Pope made a superb save from close range to deny first Bradley Barcola and then Kylian Mbappe, who drove the rebound just wide.

But the visitors' resolve was broken deep in stoppage time when PSG were awarded the penalty, from

which Mbappe made no mistake. The result means Newcastle are third in Group F, two points behind second-placed PSG.

Eddie Howe's side now need to beat AC Milan in their final group game and hope already qualified Borussia Dortmund avoid defeat against PSG. The finish to this game will have been devastating for Newcastle after they had put in a brilliant display of fight and bravery to keep out the hosts for 97 minutes.

Howe's side had arrived in Paris impacted by a lengthy injury list as they named two goalkeepers on their bench alongside four teenagers.

But those who played gave everything and more as they came within seconds of another huge result on their Champions League return.

They rode their luck at times, with Mbappe and Barcola both missing some big opportunities, and it looked like it was going to be Newcastle's night.



But in the last minute of eight added on in stoppage time, Ousmane Dembele's cross struck the chest of Livramento - who had been excellent throughout - and the ball bounced up onto his arm.

Referee Marciniak had earlier dismissed a similar penalty claim for an Anthony Gordon challenge inside

the box, but this time decided to award the spot-kick as Mbappe rescued his side.

But the decision seemed harsh on Newcastle and the result means progress to the last 16 is now not in their hands.

<https://www.bbc.com/sport/football>

Man City comes back from two down to beat Leipzig

Erling Haaland obliterated a Champions League goalscoring record at Etihad Stadium as Manchester City fought back from two goals down to complete a thrilling victory against RB Leipzig. The Norway forward is the quickest player ever to score 40 goals in the competition - reaching the milestone in just 35 matches, 10 fewer than Ruud van Nistelrooy, the previous record holder.

His goal also sparked a comeback win that ensured City, already through to the last 16, secured top spot in Group G with a game to spare.

For an uncomfortable 40 minutes, it looked as though their proud 28-match unbeaten home European record was about to come to an end.

But the second-half introductions of Julian Alvarez and Jeremy Doku transformed City.

Within seconds, Alvarez had sent Haaland through to half the deficit - and with Doku's running unbalancing the Leipzig defence, Phil Foden took advantage of the space he found after collecting Josko Gvardiol's inside pass to level.

Three minutes from time, Alvarez completed the fightback, steadying himself eight yards out before delivering a precise finish to the corner after Foden had provided the cross.

The defeat was tough on Belgian forward Lois Openda, who cost Leipzig a club record fee when he signed from Lens in July - one that could reach 45m euros (£38.95m).



And he showed his quality with an excellent first-half double that had raised hopes of a shock win for the visitors on the ground where they lost 7-0 in last season's knockout phase.

Haaland's great goalscoring feats continue

The first half must have brought back uncomfortable memories for Gvardiol. As the Croat recounted in the build-up to the game, he was part of the Leipzig squad beaten by seven goals in this stadium earlier this year in a one-sided last-16 game.

Having switched between the clubs for £77m in August, Gvardiol might have hoped for a happier experience this time.

And it was in the end - but only after a tough opening half. He was the man Openda stepped inside to drive his low shot past Stefan Ortega for Leipzig's second, even if the blame belonged to Ruben Dias, who lunged into a tackle by the touchline on the

halfway line to allow a clear run for the forward.

Close by, City manager Pep Guardiola waved his arms in that familiar dismissive fashion, which suggested he was not happy.

That reaction was similar to the one that had followed Openda's opener. On that occasion, Manuel Akanji had tried to block the striker from reaching a bouncing ball on the halfway line. Although he succeeded in that mission, the Swiss defender did not think his opponent would simply spin away from him and on to the loose ball, which he tucked neatly into the corner.

Rico Lewis and Haaland both drove over from central positions before the break. Haaland's thunderous effort in particular suggested he was not happy at the state of affairs.

Instead, Haaland took his tally for the campaign in all competitions to 19. That means he now has 71 in less

than a season and a half.

Once the Norwegian had scored, there was inevitability about what was to come.

City will be sure of playing their second leg at home when the draw for the last 16 is made next month and few will argue against their chances of becoming the first English side since Nottingham Forest in 1980 to successfully defend what used to be known as the European Cup.

The thrilling manner of the victory was appropriate given it coincided with City unveiling a statue outside the stadium in honour of three of their greatest past players: Colin Bell, Francis Lee and Mike Summerbee.

A video montage was played before kick-off in tribute to City's 'Holy Trinity'.

Sadly, only Summerbee is still with us, although Bell's son, Jon, paid eloquent tribute to what the statue would have meant to his dad.

"I wish he was here to see it," he said. "I think he would be slightly embarrassed by it but deep down, I am sure he would have been extremely proud."

"It invites a new generation of supporters to ask questions about that era and the legacy of the football club. The great success we are having now is built on that history and fanbase and these three players and the ones who came before them."

"It is great to see where we are. I enjoyed coming here with my dad towards the end of his life. He was a supporter first and foremost and loved watching the team of today."

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

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