



Integrated Country Strategy

SIERRA LEONE

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Sierra Leone, a country the size of West Virginia with a population of more than 7 million people, continues its slow climb out of the depths of the 2014-2015 Ebola epidemic, which resulted in the loss of nearly 4,000 lives and approximately 13,000 people infected. This catastrophe followed a decade-long civil war, which ended in 2002 and left 50,000 dead, 2.5 million displaced, and the economy destroyed. Despite its many challenges, Sierra Leone's post-war political stability has become a source of strength, as evidenced by the 2018 national elections, which were broadly judged to be the most free and fair in the nation's history and resulted in the second peaceful transition from one party to another via democratic means. While the economy continues to improve, with a 2017 estimated growth rate of 4.5%, the country remains largely dependent upon foreign aid, remittances from the diaspora, and the vagaries of extractive raw materials markets.

The United States and the people of America enjoy a positive relationship with the government and people of Sierra Leone. From the deployment of the first Peace Corps volunteers in 1962, less than 1 year after the nation's independence, Americans have been considered a source of support and friendship. We will continue to draw on that positive relationship as we move forward in partnership with the newly elected Sierra Leonean administration, while pressing for strengthening of the security sector, open markets, transparent governance, and inclusive development. For internal Embassy management, we will continue to develop our human capital and strengthen internal controls to serve as responsible stewards of the trust placed in us by the American people.

Security: We will safeguard the American people by denying space to external forces that may seek to gain strength and influence in Sierra Leone. We will provide appropriate training and equipment to support the ability of the government of Sierra Leone to protect and defend its borders against incursion by criminal and extremist networks. We will also support the Sierra Leonean government in their efforts to participate in peace keeping operations, based upon the willingness and abilities of the Sierra Leonean military.

Economy: We will support sustainable growth by encouraging private sector foreign direct investment, stimulating economic growth and supporting the transition away from aid dependency. We will also deploy commercial advocacy to support U.S. investors, and continue to press for open markets through regulatory reforms, anti-corruption initiatives, and fair competition.

Governance: We will continue to encourage Sierra Leoneans to strengthen their commitment to democratic, transparent and accountable governance while promoting decentralization, human rights, religious tolerance, and the rule of law. We will also advocate for greater civil society participation in governance and a vibrant and constructive role for the media. Further, we will continue to counter human trafficking and child labor exploitation, while advocating for

gender issues and women's empowerment through responsible civic engagement, policy dialogue, and public debate.

Development: We will promote inclusive and sustainable development, requiring Sierra Leoneans to take the lead and invest in the long-term improvement of their nation. We will work with the government as it strengthens its health care system, including improvements in human capital, supply chain, and communication. We will support the new administration to improve Sierra Leone's education system by supporting equitable access to education for all learners and training for Africa's next generation. We will continue our support of the agricultural sector, reducing malnutrition, hunger, and poverty by strengthening capacity. We will support strategic involvement of the private sector in domestic and foreign resource mobilization and advocate for greater use of digital technology to advance financial inclusion. We will support investment in modern and safe infrastructure to transition from foreign assistance to sustainable development. We will strengthen country capacity to adapt to environmental and demographic changes with increased resilience.

The U.S. Embassy in Freetown, Sierra Leone maintains a small but effective footprint, with many staff serving in their roles for the first time in their careers. As such, we will focus on development of our human capital, supporting staff as they enhance their skill sets. Similarly, we will strengthen internal management controls to ensure that we maintain accountability and most effectively implement the resources given to us to administer. As the safety and security of Americans continues to be a mission priority, we will prepare for a range of contingencies, given the history of recurring crises.

We anticipate changes in the local and regional environment will require adjustment and adaptation of our strategy over the next four years. We will continually monitor the progress toward our goals, contingent upon the level of support and engagement by the host nation, as well as constraints imposed by funding and staffing levels. Nevertheless, the U.S. Mission to Sierra Leone remains committed to advancing the interests of the American people and values in this challenging environment.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Advance mutual peace and security interests: Sierra Leone's security forces and judicial institutions are organized, trained, and equipped to professionally promote internal and regional security; participate in Peace-Keeping Operations (PKO) as called upon; secure American citizens and U.S. interests in Sierra Leone; combat transnational threats, including terrorism and crime, while respecting the rule of law and human rights.

Mission Objective 1.1: Enhance the capacity of security forces and the judiciary to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflict, deter human trafficking, counter internal and external threats, and promote peace and stability in Sierra Leone and regionally.

Mission Objective 1.2: Through Consular services, protect American citizens in Sierra Leone and protect the U.S. homeland by preventing the entry of malafide visa applicants into the United States

Mission Goal 2: Promote sustainable economic growth and an enabling environment for market development with private sector and foreign direct investments, contributing to the transition from aid dependency.

Mission Objective 2.1: Achieve greater fiscal transparency and foster fairer competition through commercial advocacy in support of U.S. partnerships and investments, and regulatory reforms and development including anti-corruption initiatives.

Mission Goal 3: Strengthen Democracy, Human Rights, Access to Justice, and Media Freedom: Strengthen government accountability, responsive public institutions, and judiciary processes to protect human rights, promoting strong democratic norms and processes.

Mission Objective 3.1: Support government and civil society efforts to strengthen democratic processes, deter child labor, promote a constitutional referendum, maintain religious tolerance, and advocate for gender, disability issues, and women's empowerment through enhanced issue-oriented public discourse supported by active civil society engagement and increasingly professional media.

Mission Objective 3.2: Increase space for peaceful pluralistic political participation and inclusive engagement in civic life by fostering respect for human rights and freedom of the press.

Mission Goal 4: Promote Inclusive Country-led Development:

Mission Objective 4.1 (Health System): Sierra Leone strengthens its health systems to ensure delivery of quality health services.

Mission Objective 4.2 (Education): Sierra Leone improves its access to education for all learners and develops its next generation of leaders.

Mission Objective 4.3 (Agriculture and Nutrition) Agricultural sector improves nationwide in quantity and quality of food commodities:

Mission Objective 4.4 (Infrastructure and Resilience): Encourage investment in modern and secure infrastructure in transition from aid dependency to sustainable development and help create resilience for adapting to demographic and environmental changes.

Management Objective 1: Managing for improved Mission outcomes: Advance Diplomatic and Development Effectiveness to Increase Accountability to the American Taxpayer.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 Advance Mutual Peace and Security Interests: Sierra Leone's security forces and judicial institutions are organized, trained, and equipped to professionally promote internal and regional security; participate in Peace-Keeping Operations (PKO) as called upon; Secure American Citizens and U.S. interests in Sierra Leone; combat transnational threats, including terrorism and crime; while respecting the rule of law and human rights

Description and Linkages: We will work to strengthen peace and security by advising security sector leadership and training personnel in order to develop professional, capable, and law-abiding forces. This links to the National Security Strategy (NSS) 2017, Pillar IV, which aims to assist developing nations and fragile states to deter and defeat threats to national security and stability; the 2018 National Security Strategy, which emphasizes strengthening allies and partners; the U.S. Africa Command Theater Campaign Plan for enhancing security "by, with, and through African partners;" the State-USAID Joint Strategic Goal Framework goal 1; and the AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) goal 1.

Mission Objective 1.1 Enhance the capacity of security forces and the judiciary to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflict, counter internal and external threats, and promote peace and stability in Sierra Leone and regionally.

Justification: Since the end of the civil war in 2002, significant effort has been put into building and professionalizing Sierra Leone's military. With a national mandate to support civil authorities when called up, the military is most often used in a domestic security capacity, such as during national elections or disaster response. Increasing levels of transnational threats have also caused an uptick in troops being posted to Forward Patrol Bases to conduct border security operations. Participation in international peacekeeping operations, however, is viewed by military leadership as a top priority, as it provides both income and operational experience to the military. In 2013, the first Sierra Leonean peacekeepers deployed to Somalia but faced many challenges. Insufficient training, equipment, maintenance capabilities, and leadership remains the obstacle that Sierra Leone must overcome to properly develop its military to meet both its national mandates and international aspirations.

Multiple avenues can be utilized to assist Sierra Leone with the development of its security forces. Through State Department and U.S. Africa Command, the military will continue to benefit from leadership and technical development courses funded through programs such as International Military Education and Training (IMET), African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA), Combatting Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP), African Military Education Program (AMEP), and mobile training teams. International exposure is an important step in the development of the military but is only part of the process of continuous improvement. Material support provided through the Excess Defense Articles (EDA) program will provide a boost to meet the logistics challenges of equipping its force, allowing better prioritization of remaining resources. Policy development, particularly in the realm of Equal Opportunity, will also assist leadership in developing an apolitical and professional force, thereby improving retention and performance.

Unfortunately, there had not been a simultaneous investment in the Sierra Leone Police (SLP). As result, the level of professionalism is far behind that of the military, which has created concerns about the general capability of the police, including their use of force in civil order management. As was the case during the Ebola epidemic of 2014-2015, military personnel continue to be used for standard policing functions. Sierra Leone also faces many of the same transnational threats as other countries in the region. Numerous unofficial border crossings and an unmonitored maritime domain makes Sierra Leone vulnerable to transnational organized crime, narcotics and human trafficking and smuggling, and terrorism. Sierra Leone has just begun to recognize that it is ill-prepared to handle these threats and is a willing and eager partner in this sphere. Programs such as the Department of Defense Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP) will help Sierra Leone improve its capacity to counter destabilizing transnational issues over the coming years. Sierra Leone has at times in the past insufficiently cooperated with the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) by refusing or delaying repatriation of their nationals who have no legal right to remain in the United States and, after due process of law, are subject to final orders of removal. Improvement in this area will help to keep Sierra Leone off both ICE's designated "At-Risk of Non-Compliance" list as well as list of "Uncooperative" countries with regard to alien removals.

Mission Freetown will continue to engage Sierra Leone to improve its internal capacity to strengthen the judiciary, combat terrorism, crime, and trafficking-in-persons (TIP). The Mission will engage Sierra Leone to continue operationalizing its Transnational Organized Crime Unit (TOCU) to facilitate coordination among law enforcement agencies, promote intelligence-led policing, and enhance international cooperation in the region. Programs such as the Department of Defense Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP) will help Sierra Leone improve its capacity to counter destabilizing transnational issues over the coming years. Sierra Leone has at times in the past insufficiently cooperated with the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) by refusing or delaying repatriation of their nationals who have no legal right to remain in the United States and, after due process of law, are subject to final orders of removal. Improvement in this area will help to keep Sierra Leone off both ICE's designated "At-Risk of Non-Compliance" list as well as list of "Uncooperative" countries with regard to alien removals. Further, the Mission will advocate continued support for the Sierra Leone Police's Public Order Management training module to professionally manage officer safety and public order threats in a sustainable manner that is human rights compliant, minimizes recourse to force, and generates public trust and confidence in the police. Additionally, the Mission will advance judicial transparency by promoting Parliamentary passage of the Bail and Sentencing policies and guidelines. Further, the Mission will assist Sierra Leone's Correctional Services to implement its strategic plan, improving overall management of the prison system to improve security, decongest facilities, and treat inmates with human dignity. Lastly, the Mission will focus on collaborating with key GoSL officials and civil society at appropriate to upgrade Sierra Leone from the Tier 2 Watch List for TIP, and prevent further downgrade to Tier 3.

Mission Objective 1.2 Through Consular services, protect American citizens in Sierra Leone and protect the U.S. homeland by preventing the entry of malafide visa applicants into the United States

Justification: The probability of natural or man-made disaster in Sierra Leone is high; poor infrastructure (roads, hospitals, emergency services, and an inaccessible airport) makes even routine emergency responses nearly impossible and quickly overwhelms existing host country resources. Seasonal rains cause extensive flooding and the lack of vehicle safety enforcement or road maintenance throughout the country regularly leads to fatal traffic accidents, sometimes on a large scale. As occurred during the Ebola outbreak of 2014-2015, poor sanitation, poorly resourced health care facilities, and the lack of potable water can lead to outbreaks of diseases such as Cholera and malaria which then become humanitarian disasters. The Mission must be ready to assist the

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resident population of U.S. citizens in Sierra Leone, many of whom are dual nationals, in the event of a major crisis and to partner with other USG agencies to prevent an outbreak from leaving the country.

Sierra Leone is a high fraud environment where forged documents are often purchased directly from government actors. Consular staff must obtain and maintain the professional skills necessary to detect imposters, recognize forgeries and other fraud indicators to ensure the integrity of visa issuance and protect U.S. borders.

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Approved: August 22, 2018

Mission Goal 2 Increase Mutually Beneficial Economic Growth, Trade and Investment, aiding the transition from aid dependency to private sector growth

Description and Linkages: We will work to strengthen the sustainable economy through private sector foreign direct investment, stimulating economic growth. This links to the National Security Strategy (NSS) 2017, Pillar II, page 20, to facilitate new market opportunities; also, to the State-USAID Joint Strategic Goal Framework, goals 2 and 3; and, is tied to the AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) goal 2. In Sierra Leone, we will work to expand trade and investment opportunities between U.S. enterprises and investors, and their Sierra Leonean partners.

Mission Objective 2.1 Achieve greater fiscal transparency and foster fairer competition through commercial advocacy in support of U.S. partnerships and investments, and regulatory reforms and development including anti-corruption initiatives.

Justification: A primary obstacle to U.S. direct investment and business partnerships in Sierra Leone is the level of corruption, which creates an un-level playing field that prevents free and transparent business competition. Sierra Leone ranked 160th on the World Bank Ease of Doing Business report, down from 147th position in 2016. Bank supervision needs to improve so U.S. businesses can work with more reliable financial institutions locally, and the regulatory framework must provide a more efficient business climate. To reduce dependency on foreign assistance, including budget support and other aid programs, the investment climate must improve to attract private sector foreign capital. Private investment is the only mechanism to successfully diversify the economy away from extractive industries and raw commodities, to value-added exports.

Mission Goal 3: Strengthen Democracy, Human Rights, and Good Governance: Strengthen government accountability, responsive public institutions, and judiciary processes to protect human rights, promoting strong democratic norms and processes

Description and Linkages: Civil society capacity building programs are the key to help sustain democratic gains. We will urge the GoSL to respect human rights, political freedoms and media independence by supporting its efforts to strengthen citizen-responsive governance and rule of law. This links to State-USAID Joint Strategic Goal Framework 1.3, Countering instability; the Joint Regional Strategy Goal 1, Strengthening Democratic Institutions; and the National Security Strategy which stresses improved governance in Africa to reduce vulnerability and instability.

Mission Objective 3.1: Support government and civil society efforts to strengthen democratic processes, counter child labor, maintain religious tolerance, and advocate for gender, disability issues, and women’s empowerment through including enhanced issue-oriented public discourse supported by active civil society engagement and increasingly professional media.

Justification: Sierra Leone successfully transferred presidential power to the opposition Sierra Leone’s People Party (SLPP) in 2018, while the former ruling All People’s Congress (APC) retained a majority in the National Assembly. The U.S. will continue to support democratic governance in the context of a new administration that will also need to work constructively with legislative and local authorities. U.S. efforts will thus continue to ensure that the newly elected officials are well equipped to lead and be responsive to citizens. At the same time, efforts continue to ensure that citizens are able to effectively advocate and demand services from their governments and that citizens and elites alike are well-informed by an open, professional, fact-verified, and inclusive information environment.

In the aftermath of recent elections and the installation of a new government, strengthening democratic processes, justice and social cohesion will be improved if citizens are able to freely participate in public-policy decision making at all levels. In this new political administration where anticipation of the future is prevalent, more substantive dialogue and understanding within communities and between citizens, advocacy groups, and government are necessary for developing an understanding of new policies, reconciliation with the past administration, and a consensus on an inclusive path forward that encourages the input of all citizens. The judiciary should seek to maintain its independence, while ensuring access to justice, improvements in professional capacity and; modernization of processes, including swift implementation of the Bail and Sentencing regulations once passed by Parliament. The historical predisposition for religious tolerance should be encouraged as it provides an important check on the creation of violent extremism. The GoSL has repeatedly emphasized the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment principles, but there is room for progress in light of low representation of women at all political levels despite their qualifications and record participation during the recent national elections.

Mission Objective 3.2: Increase space for peaceful pluralistic political participation and inclusive engagement in civic life by fostering respect for human rights and freedom of the press.

Justification: The incoming administration has the opportunity to encourage continued space for non-violent opposition, recognize the value of an independent and active civil society and media and promote respect for constitutionally guaranteed civil and political

rights. We will urge the GoSL to respect, human rights, political freedoms, and media independence while recognizing that we can influence, but not determine, the outcomes of these objectives. We will also identify, support, and advocate for the protection of civil society actors dedicated to the promotion of democracy through responsible civic engagement, policy dialogue, and public debate.

Mission Goal 4: Promote Inclusive Country-led Development

Description and Linkages: Critical investments in the health, education, and agricultural sectors are required to ensure sustainable equitable, and broad-based development. Ensuring that this development is country-led allows the U.S. mission to pivot from a donor-recipient relationship to a partner bilateral economic and security partner. This is in line with the Global Health Security Agenda Framework, the President’s Malaria Initiative Malaria Operational Plan (MOP).

Mission Objective 4.1 (Health System): Sierra Leone strengthens its health systems to ensure delivery of quality health services

Justification: The Sierra Leone health system continues to build back better after the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak. Continued needs exist to build capacity of the health systems to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats including improving disease surveillance, strengthening laboratory systems, and improving emergency management. During the outbreak, many Sierra Leoneans stopped visiting health clinics, immunization rates dropped dramatically, fewer women gave birth at facilities, and stock depletions of medicines and supplies slowed the delivery of effective health care. The outbreak exhausted the ability of the health services to respond to other infectious diseases, leading to measles outbreaks, and to treatment disruptions for malaria and tuberculosis. While previous investments focused on emergency service provision and expansive renovation of health facilities, there is continued need to ensure that optimal health outcomes are obtained through support to key national level policy areas, by improving the delivery and quality of health services at the regional and community levels and by creating demand for those services. Additional constraints remain particularly related to human resource capacity in both human and animal health, as well as the need to ensure that health communication remains stable to respond to the needs of the system. Further, significant behavior changes will be needed to sustain the gains made in the sector.

Objective 4.2 (Education): Sierra Leone improves its access to education for all learners and develops its next generation of leaders.

Justification: Sierra Leone's human capacity is underutilized and the education system has crumbled under decades of under-funding and overcrowding. The Government of Sierra Leone has made it a priority to improve access to quality education, and the U.S. government will support them in the best way we are able. Sierra Leone's youth bulge has the potential to make important contributions to the country's development with the right conditions and education.

Mission Objective 4.3 (Agriculture and Nutrition): Agricultural sector improves nationwide in quantity and quality of food commodities.

Justification: The agricultural sector remains the majority of the GDP of Sierra Leone, such that investments continue to strengthen and modernize the sector, enabling Sierra Leone to provide its populations with sufficient nutritious food as well as the ability to sustain their own livelihoods through agricultural related enterprises such as horticulture or aquaculture. The transfer of innovative techniques in production, harvest, and post harvest processing, paired with support to improve marketing and access to finance for business growth, will ensure the viability of the various agribusinesses that make up the economy.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: Embassy Freetown provides sustainable cost-effective services that are aligned with Mission Goals and Objectives.

Justification: Embassy Freetown's ability to implement its goals will require innovative use of resources, identification of maximum leverage opportunities for those resources, and commitments to data-based decisions. Additional growth in the Embassy community will strain the ICASS-platform's footprint and abilities but also provides opportunities for efficiency gains, cost savings, and performance improvements.

Management Objective 2 Develop a highly skilled workforce and mission culture that embraces change, accountability, and results.

Justification: The mission must ensure that the workforce, policies, and procedures reflect Department best practices, regulatory requirements, and operational needs.

Management Objective 3 Strengthen our Internal Management Controls

Justification: To ensure that the Mission is safeguarding the proper use of Department and Mission human, financial, and technical resources, management controls will confirm procurement and fiscal activities are in compliance with all relevant laws and regulations, provide transparency of our processes, and avoid the appearance of favoritism or impropriety.