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Short Term Assignment - Report
**TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT FOR CIVIL AND
VOTER REGISTRATION IN SIERRA LEONE**

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Clet Turiho', is written over the printed name.

National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA)
UGANDA

Duration: 1st September 2016 to 10th September 2016

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1. Introduction

The UNDP approached the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) in Uganda, that has recently completed civil and voter registration, to provide technical expertise to National Civil Registration (NCRA) and National Electoral Commission (NEC) to conduct civil registration in a credible and efficient manner. Duration of the short time assignment was one week. The report contains the observations and recommendations.

1.1. Terms of Reference

- 1.1.1. Assess the state of readiness for undertaking the mass registration in January 2017, and extraction of voter list by May 2017 and recommend urgent priority preparatory actions.
- 1.1.2. Assess associated risks and challenges and recommend mitigation measures.
- 1.1.3. Provide technical advice to the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) on extraction of voter list from the civil register

1.2. Key deliverables

- 1.2.1. Technical report stating the key findings and recommendations relevant for a successful civil and voter registration in Sierra Leone
- 1.2.2. A presentation to the GoSL and Development Partners (DPs) on best practices on civil and voter registration.

2. Interactions

There were interactions from key agencies especially those from GoSL that provided key information that led to the findings and recommendations. The Agencies included United Nations Development Program (UNDP), National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA), Ministry of Internal Affairs of the GoSL and the National Electoral Commission (NEC).

Key locations visited include:

- NCRA server room
- NEC Server room
- UNDP warehouse where existing equipment is being kept
- Wellington – Planned data processing center



I also participated in the live presentations and live demonstrations of the registration kits' functionality that was part of the procurement process for acquisition of registration kits as an observer.

3. Key Findings

Observations made:

3.1. Legal Framework

A law to legally support the registration process, the *Civil Registration Act (2016)*, had been passed into law by Parliament in June 2016. The act provides for among other things:

- Creation of the National Civil Registration Authority
- Develop and maintain a database of the population of Sierra Leone
- Issue National Identification Numbers and Cards to People Living in Sierra Leone
- Registration of Births, Deaths, Adoptions, Marriages, Divorces and Nullities.
- Access and Use of Civil Registration Information to Third Parties
- Enhance National Security and generate income for GoSL
- Registration plan and Strategy
- There existed a registration plan whose execution of activities had been planned to commence in July 2016

Noted was that, the law had not been operationalized. For example, the law required constitution of the board of directors which had not been done.

3.2. Project Resources

It was reported that the project required a total of **29** million dollars. Only **6** million dollars was available for commencement of the project. The rest of the funds were expected from Development Partners.

3.3. Project Implementation Strategy plan

There existed a project implementation plan whose timelines had kept shifting. It was reported that the most current plan had activities that were



scheduled to commence in July but had not commenced in September. That was a two months' delay that rendered a risk of failure to the project.

The strategy proposed registration of all Sierra Leone citizens in 10 weeks using 3,800 registration kits.

Given the NEC calendar timelines, it was evident that the project was slightly behind schedule to deliver the voters' list in time.

3.4. Project Governance Structure

A governance structure had been proposed but had not been fully constituted. Detected shortcoming to why the governance structure was not constituted was lack of enough knowledge in Mass Civil Registration.

3.5. Project Implementation Team

There exists a not properly constituted implementation team with only one senior government official (Mr. Koroma Elijah) of whom the whole project activities depend on.

3.6. Political support

Adequate political will was evidenced though not hands-on.

3.7. Registration Kits

A process of acquisition of registration kits was being finalized with live demonstration of the kits functionality. Noted was that this was unnecessarily taking a lot of time given the rigid time lines that must be met on the NEC calendar.

3.8. Central Processing Systems

There exists a central processing system at the NCRA headquarters. Seen were racks of servers that were not powered on to some server component failures that had not been repaired. The main components' hardware of the central system that included the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) and the Database Systems were seen. The central system software was reported not to be ready for production purposes. Most of the system use cases had not been developed and tested fully.



A backup system of the central database that is considered as the NCRA system disaster recovery system is installed at the NEC server room.

3.9. Data Processing and ID Card Production Systems

Adequate data processing clients and production equipment exist and are safely stored at the UNDP warehouse and the proposed Data Processing Center at Wellington. The data processing center at Wellington is equipped with adequate power backup systems (thermal generators).

3.10. Sensitization/Awareness

No awareness was detected on ground. Interaction with ordinary Sierra Leoneans showed that they were not aware of the pending exercise and its impotence. This was mainly due to the fact that definite schedule of the exercise was not certain.

3.11. Training and Capacity Building

It was observed that recruitment of the registration officers from the different provinces and districts was underway. In most of the districts, selection of the shortlists had been concluded. The exercise was coordinated by one of the UNDP consultants Mr. Zulu Mike.

4. Readiness Chat

The chat below illustrates readiness of the high level key activities:

#	Task												%age
1	Legal Framework	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	70
2	Availability of Funds	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	30
3	Acquisition of Registration Kits	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	20
4	Readiness of the team	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	10
5	Readiness of Central System	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	50
6	Sensitization/ Public Awareness	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	0
7	Training and Capacity Development	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	30

5. Detected Risks

- 5.1. Total Failure of the Registration Exercise due to mainly late or not at all availability of project funds.
- 5.2. Delayed Start of the registration may lead to failure to deliver on the NEC calendar dates
- 5.3. Christmas Holidays may affect the registration process and delivery timelines
- 5.4. Poor Quality of data collected as a result of not enough time for training of the registration Officers which training depends on the availability of training kits.
- 5.5. Incomplete central system software may lead to failure or delay processing of the data collected.
- 5.6. Delayed data processing exercise may lead failure to deliver on the NEC calendar dates since the extraction list depends on the readiness of the processed data. This would also affect production and issuance of Identity Cards

6. Mitigation & Recommendations

- 6.1. Immediately constitute the NCRA board to operationalize the law to avoid legal challenges. The board should conduct a meeting and a resolution to delegate its mandate of registration to the project team.
- 6.2. The board should also review the existing governance structure to ensure that it is all inclusive of stake holders.
- 6.3. GoSL and Development Partners should Immediately avail resources/ funds for the project
- 6.4. Immediately constitute the project team with required competences
- 6.5. The political Leadership should provide hands-on leadership and guidance to the project implementation team.
- 6.6. Conclude the Acquisition of Registration Kits at the earliest
- 6.7. Give attention to infrastructure detail like Electricity power and network connectivity to avoid unnecessary equipment breakdowns.
- 6.8. Contract a competent firm to conduct Sensitization, Awareness and Mass Mobilization



6.9. Provide enough time for training. The training should be completed as close as possible to the commencement of the Registration exercise. This would improve quality of the data collected and shorten the mass registration exercise.

6.10. Complete the development of the Central System as soon as possible. There two options to this:

6.10.1. *Complete development of the existing central System Software.*

This would call for hiring of a minimum of three senior software engineers to assist the existing software developer.

Advantages to this include:

- Better in-house capacity building
- A little bit cheaper in a short run

Disadvantages include:

- Long Software Development Cycle. Cannot be read in the available time
- There will be Software bugs that can totally stall the data processing exercise
- Sustainability depends on the Individual Software Developers

6.10.2. *Acquire a ready developed software solution for the Central System.*

This may involve varying the terms of reference of the supplier of the registration kits to cover the central system too.

Advantages:

- Shorter time to customize and deploy
- Software bugs are minimized since the Software would have been taken through the Software development testing and proven somewhere else.
- Shorter time for resolution of software bugs that may come up during the exercise because the manufacturer would be having a credible Software Research and development function.



- Sustainability can be catered for under after sales support.
- The NCRA team is left for concentrating on core business functions as laid down in the law

The only disadvantage to this option is that the cost of the project may slightly increase.

The second option is recommended.

- 6.11. The team may have to do benchmarking and training visit to a country where registration has been successful like Uganda. This would provide more information and knowledge on registration of persons from a similar experience.
- 6.12. Due to delayed commencement of the Registration Exercise and stringent NEC timelines, it is recommended that registration starts with Citizens of age 16 years and above in the first 2 to 3 weeks. Then registration of children and those who would have missed continues immediately after (*without a break*).
- 6.13. Logistics Management and field operations should ride on the NEC Infrastructure.
- 6.14. Acquire the central system from a solution provider. Use of the same provider for registration kits is recommended to provide central system for Seamless compatibility.
- 6.15. The provider of the central system software should be able to use the existing Hardware

7. Conclusion

Though the project seems to have delayed to commence, few things done immediately would turn around and put the project back on course. Most critical milestones are; Constitution of the board, Availability of sufficient funds and finalize acquisition of registration kits and the central system