

## Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting on

### *The Support to an Integrated National Civil Registration System in Sierra Leone 2015 – 2017 Programme*

MOFED Conference Room, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016

---

#### Summary

The 3<sup>rd</sup> **Steering Committee (SC) Meeting** for *the Support to an Integrated National Civil Registration System in Sierra Leone, 2015 – 2017* was held on 11 February 2016 at 2.00 pm in the Conference Hall of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) in Freetown. The meeting was chaired by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Dr. Kaifala Marah, and co-chaired by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon. Joseph B Dauda. The meeting was attended by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED), the Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC), the National Registration Secretariat (NRS), the National Electoral Commission (NEC), Statistics Sierra Leone, (SSL), Office of Births and Deaths (B&D), National Elections Watch (NEW), PLAN International, British High Commission (BHC), EBF development partners (EU, Irish Aid), UNICEF and UNDP.

The update from NRS and the timeline for civil registration were the main items on the agenda.

#### I. Opening remarks

The **Chair, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Dr Kaifala Marah** welcomed all to the Steering Committee (SC) meeting which he said was to feedback on progress and to clear bottlenecks confronting the project. He noted that it was the wish of his Ministry that the project succeeds.

**Co-Chair, Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon. Joseph B Dauda**, in his opening remarks stated that the civil registration system when implemented would be beneficial to both the government and the populace. The Minister informed that since the last SC meeting, steps had been taken to have the Civil Registration Bill approved by Parliament. The Bill was approved on the proviso that the biometric ID cards comply with ECOWAS requirements. ECOWAS requirements however have technical implications.

**Minister Dauda** went on to inform that he had signed the final draft of the Data Protection Bill which was to be taken to the government printers for gazetting. It was the Minister's wish that the Bill would get to Parliament before March. MIA he said would embark on sensitization in the interim.

## **II. Adoption of minutes of Steering Committee (SC) meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

The minutes of the SC meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015 which had been circularized and read, were adopted by a motion moved by Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, UNDP Country Director, and seconded by Mr. Mohamed Jalloh of the Ministry of Information and Communications.

**Chair, Minister MoFED** mentioned that it had been decided that the SC would henceforth be guided by key action points

## **III. NRS update**

**Mr. Foday Kamara, Chief Registrar NRS**, briefly reported that the NRS had had several deliberations with NEC, Civil Society Organizations etc. He said task force meetings were held weekly and subsequent sub committees had been formed.

**Chair, Minister MoFED**, at this point assured the meeting that the Ministry of Finance would provide the funds needed to close the gap in the project budget.

The NRS update then followed by means of a power point presentation by Mr. Elijah Koroma:-

### **III.1 Action points of last SC meeting**

- a. **Relocation of Disaster Recovery Site (DRS)** – the committee set up to look into this recommended that a secondary DRS be set up. Three locations were recommended and the Ministry of Information (MIC) was mandated to do an assessment of these locations.
- b. **CRVS country assessment** – the committee recommended that the assessment be conducted in line with the civil registration process. MIA is to do a formal request to UNECA.
- c. **Data Protection Bill** – 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the Bill prepared; MIA to call meeting of the technical working group and to hold a workshop to sensitize the public on the Bill during the first week in March.
- d. **Outreach and sensitization** – radio and TV discussions held; consultations held with CSOs and NEC.

### **III.2 Operations**

The task force meets every Thursday at NEC and 3 sub committees (Operations, Procedures and Training, and Communications and Sensitization) have been formed

### **III.3 Budget**

Total cost for civic education, printing and distribution of ID cards for the project is Le151,989,209,305. The cost for 2016 is Le72,857,142,500.00, of which GoSL has committed Le39 billion, UNDP \$900,000.00, UNICEF Le114,000,000 (for registration forms for pilot test), leaving a funding gap of Le28,703,142,500.00 for 2016.

### **III.4 Timelines**

Detailed Operations timelines from the enactment of draft Bill in March 2016 to the printing and distribution of ID cards in June 2017.

### **III.5 Challenges and recommendations**

Challenges in the areas of legal framework, sensitization, procurement, pilot testing, recruitment and training, and field data capture, were highlighted with recommendations made accordingly.

The Chief Registrar in addition recommended that the registration process be decentralized: for the process to be decentralized, the district offices ought to be ready. He said there was need to tour the provinces to sensitize the populace on the process.

***Note: For detailed presentation see Annex***

#### **Questions, comments and answers**

**Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, UNDP Country Director**, commended MIA for the leadership role played and for the positive strides made in bringing the process this far, whilst also recognizing NEC's role. It was his wish that the Civil Registration Act would be passed in March, and encouraged the Minister to start off discussions in Parliament. Mr. Mukerjee intimated that printing of the ECOWAS cards was highly expensive, but was optimistic it would be done.

The funding gap he said was as a result of how the proposal for the programme (which had been changed a few times) was developed. Mr. Mukerjee informed that a consultant had been hired to look at plans and assess the preparedness of the programme. The report of the consultancy would go to reassure potential funders that the programme was ready.

Mr. Mukerjee further stated that he was happy with the relationship between NEC and NRS and hoped NRS would be able to make the data for voter registration available to NEC no later than January 2017 for extraction, and advised NRS maintain the operations meeting.

Mr. Mukerjee informed that an expert was to arrive on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016 to design the next programme for the elections.

**Mr. Rudolf Elbling, Project Coordinator**, intimated that the work plan for UNDP funding of USD\$900,000 for the project had been done and discussed with NRS; budget allocations were mainly for procurement, logistics and civil registration.

**Mr. John Callaghan, Irish Aid**, wanted to know a) whether data collection process would precede the enactment of the civil registration Bill and b) the rationale for the ECOWAS compliant cards.

**Mr. Mohamed Jalloh, MIC**, explained that the ECOWAS cards are an ECOWAS requirement and Sierra Leone as a member of ECOWAS, signed up to its treaties and protocols. The Data Protection Bill he said harmonizes ICT. He advocated for the installation of a second DRS, being that the current one holds data on NEC, and therefore could not be regarded as a holistic site for NRS. He suggested that a technical subcommittee be formed which main purpose would be to verify specifications, and monitor to see that all equipment comply with the required standards and specifications.

**Co-Chair, Minister, MIA** informed that the ECOWAS cards would also be used for travelling within the region and to ECOWAS countries.

**Mr. Gibril Kargbo, Irish Aid** enquired as to whether the additional cost implications would be dealt with, and or whether the process would be compromised because of costs.

**Minister MIA** replied that a hybrid system would be used i.e. children 16 years and below would be issued with the ordinary cards, whilst citizens of voting age would be issued with the ECOWAS cards.

**Mr. Augustine S Sheku, Permanent Secretary MIA**, reminded that the ECOWAS compliance must be looked at from a bigger picture, and that the relationship between the EU and ECOWAS must not go unnoticed.

**Mr. James Lahai, NEW**, observed that civil registration is a reality and as such civil society would like to be following up on its activities. He wondered whether the civil registration activities would not impinge on the elections timelines. Mr. Lahai noted that sensitization on the Bills was still minimal, and raised the issue of sustainability and continuity. He also pointed out that apart from extracting the data, time would be needed for the verification exercise. Mr. Lahai hoped the idea of issuing separate sets of cards to various people will be included in the Bill.

**Minister, MIA** assured all that the timeline for extraction and display of the data was adequate i.e. the data extracted and exhibited in January 2018, then elections held in

February 2018. He promised that all persons eligible for ID cards would be issued with ECOWAS cards, if the programme was able to raise enough money to get the cards.

**Ms. Ndanga Moyo, UNICEF**, informed that the country assessment is a must for the civil registration. WHO she said is an expert in such areas and recommended that WHO become a member of the SC.

**Minister MIA** explained that civil registration was not a new phenomenon, only that this time, it is to be carried out by a single entity.

**Mr. Francis Tommy, SSL**, mentioned that given SSL's expertise in data collection, he would recommend SSL to be part of the technical working group.

**Mr. Elijah Koroma, NRS**, clarified that the difference between the ECOWAS and the ordinary ID cards lies on the printing and not on the data.

**Ms. Illuminate Maerere, UNDP**, enquired about the fate of the printers that had been procured to print the ordinary cards.

**Minister, MIA** replied that the printers would be used to print the cards for the children 16 years and under.

There were concerns about the funding gap of Le28billion, but MoFED assured the meeting that the budget would be replenished to close the gap as and when necessary.

#### **IV. Timelines**

Paragraph III.4 refers

#### **V. AOB**

**Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee** suggested that a presentation on the civil registration programme be made to stakeholders, and proposed that MIA hosts the meeting for the presentation. He added that potential partners have concerns about the programme that were yet to be addressed, and that partners would not make a commitment knowing there is a big funding gap.

**Mr. Josephus Ellie, EU** informed that EU and the National Authorizing Office (NAO) were planning for activities for EU's governance sector up to 2020. The electoral process he said is an important activity and the EU would programme funding for it, though funding by the EU before 2017 was very unlikely. The civil registration process he added is important for the success of the election.

#### **VI. Action points and conclusion**

**Action points**

- a. MIC to take the lead in conducting assessment of the 3 recommended DRS locations and submit report.
- b. MIA to make formal request to UNECA a propos the CRVS country assessment.
- c. MIA to hold workshop to sensitize on the Data Protection Bill – 1<sup>st</sup> week of March.

**Minister MIA** in his concluding remarks stated that MIA was working closely with MIC on the Data Protection Bill, and that appeals for funding would continue to go out to development partners.

## **Attendance List**

1. Hon. Dr. Kaifala Marah, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, (MoFED), Chair
2. Hon. Joseph B Dauda, Minister of Internal Affairs, MIA, Co-Chair
3. Mr. Augustine S Sheku, Permanent Secretary, MIA
4. Mr. Foday Kamara, Chief Registrar, NRS
5. Mr. Elijah S Koroma, NRS
6. Mr. Donald King, NRS
7. Mr. Abdul Malik Bangura, NRS
8. Mr. Abdul L Sheriff, NRS
9. Mr. Matthew A Jabati, NRS
10. Mr. Simeon Sowa, NRS
11. Mr. Milton Jusu, NRS
12. Mr. Vandy Kormoh, NRS
13. Ms. Augusta Bockarie, Commissioner, NEC
14. Mr. William A Davies, Executive Secretary, NEC
15. Mr. Edmond Alpha, NEC
16. Mr. Albert Massaquoi, NEC
17. Mr. Philip F Kargbo, NEC
18. Mr. Mbekay S Amara, NEC
19. Mr. Mohamed M Jalloh, MIC
20. Mr. Alhaji S Nallo, Office of Births & Deaths
21. Mr. Henry Sandy, Office of Births & Deaths
22. Mr. Francis Tommy, Statistics SL
23. Ms. Abie Kamara, Deputy Director DACO, MoFED
24. Mr. Matthew Dinge, MoFED
25. Mr. Ibrahim Kallon, MoFED
26. Ms. J C Jones, MoFED
27. Ms. Memunatu Bangura, MoFED
28. Ms. Lucy Brewah, MoFED
29. Mr. David A K Abu, DACO, MoFED
30. Mr. James Lahai, NEW
31. Ms. Cecilia S Hanciles, PLAN International
32. Ms. Ndangariro Moyo, UNICEF
33. Mr. John Callaghan, Irish Embassy
34. Mr. Gibril Kargbo, Irish Aid
35. Mr. Josephus J Ellie, EU
36. Mr. Annup Vyas, British High Commission
37. Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, Country Director, UNDP
38. Ms. Illuminate Maerere, UNDP

39. Ms. Annette Nalwoga, UNDP

40. Mr. Rudolf Elbling, UNDP

41. Mr. Edward Kamara, UNDP

42. Ms. Gloria Thomas, UNDP

## **ANNEX – NRS update**