

**Minutes of the Local Programme Appraisal Committee (LPAC) on the
“Support to the Integrated National Civil Registry in Sierra Leone 2015 – 2017”**

13 May 2014

Summary

The Local Programme Appraisal Committee (LPAC) meeting for the Programme Document “Support to the Integrated National Civil Registry in Sierra Leone 2015 – 2017” was held on 13 May 2014 at 10.00am in UNDP’s Conference Room, UNDP Office, 55 Wilkinson Road, Freetown. The meeting was co-chaired by the UNDP Country Director, Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee and the Deputy Country Director Programmes a.i. Moses Sichei. The meeting was attended by the National Registration Commission (NRS), the National Electoral Commission (NEC), UNICEF and UNDP. The agenda was to present and approve the Programme Document “Support to the Integrated National Civil Registry in Sierra Leone 2015 – 2017”. After discussions, comments and suggestions, the Programme Document was approved with slight modifications.

1. Opening remarks by the Co-Chairs

Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, UNDP Country Director, welcomed all present and stated that the LPAC meeting is the meeting at which the new Programme Document is appraised to verify whether UNDP’s internal requirements are met; he said once the document is reviewed by the committee and changes incorporated, formal resource mobilization would start. He commented that this is the first LPAC meeting that includes so many partners.

The Chair’s opening remarks were followed by self- introduction from members present.

2. Presentation of the Programme Document

Mr. Esam Ismail, UNDP Chief Technical Advisor, for Elections giving a brief summary of the Programme Document said the “Support to the Integrated National Civil Registry in Sierra Leone 2015 – 2017” project has an estimated budget of USD11.5M (eleven and a half million dollars). He added that the situational analysis clarifies the fact that civil registration system in Sierra Leone is fragmented, with functions distributed amongst multiple agencies that are weak and at the same time maintaining unreliable databases. Each institution has its own arrangement as there are no harmonized laws or regulations of civil registration, no central body to monitor and plan civil registration activities, and no fully automated system to enable the transfer of data.

The objective of the project Mr. Ismail said is to help the government to develop an integrated civil registry which idea was borne from the successful biometric registration undertaken by the National Electoral Commission for the 2012 general elections during which 2.7M voters were registered. The civil registration project comes in accordance with the government’s priorities and in line with the United

Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) under the Outcome “Democratic Institutions Strengthened to enable Good Governance”, and UNDP Strategic Plan – “Citizens expectations for voice, development, accountability and rule of law are met by stronger systems of democratic institutions”.

The project seeks to address operational, institutional and legal gaps in the civil registration system. It will merge the databases of National Registration Secretariat, National Electoral Commission and the National Security and Social Insurance Trust, in addition to the databases of the other agencies so as to create a national database. A unified civil registration law as well as a data protection law will be enacted.

The Programme Document Mr. Esam Ismail said has six outputs:-

- Mass – printed new National ID Cards distributed
- Legal mandates and works of relevant agencies assured and harmonized
- National Civil Registration Authority established
- District Civil Registration Offices (DCROs) and Local Civil Registration Centres (LCRCs) established
- New National Civil Registration procedures and civic education programme developed and implemented
- New Civil Registration system reviewed and future development plan drafted

The management arrangements he said were to establish a Programme Management Unit (PMU), a Steering Committee comprising the Senior Supplier (representatives of donors to the programme, in addition to UNDP) and the Senior User (the beneficiaries). UNDP and MOFED is the Executive. When the project starts, the Annual Work Plan (AWP) will be drawn, quarterly and annual reports will be submitted and evaluation of the project will be undertaken at the end of each year.

Mr. Oscar Fiestas-Tejada, the Civil Registration Coordinator assured the meeting that he will coordinate activities in such a way that the 6 outputs would be achieved. The Integrated National Civil Registry System would be implemented after the legal aspects would have been fulfilled.

Mr. Moses Sichei remarked that the project was a very important one for the many institutions and GoSL.

3. Questions, comments and answers

Dr. Max Sesay commented that the project was a cross agency project and that it was government’s intention to make a mark in leaving behind a solid testament. He said since the project would have both a political and security dimension, he suggested that a Member of Parliament and a member of the Office of National Security (ONS) be members of the Steering Committee (SC). He also suggested that a media person be made a member.

Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, Chair suggested that the current SC for the Elections Project could be expanded to form the SC for this project, with the Minister of Finance as Chair and the United Nations Resident Coordinator as Co-Chair.

Mr. Issa Conteh pointed out that UNDP's role was clearly spelt out in the Programme Document but that of the partners was not properly defined.

Mr. Esam Ismail informed that in terms of financial contribution, GoSL will allocate \$6M (six million dollars) to be disbursed over a 3 year period.

Mr. Oscar Fiestas-Tejada added that four million ID cards were to be printed in the 1st year of the project whilst one million each will be printed in the subsequent years.

Dr. Max Sesay cautioned that GoSL was obligated to the firm De La Rue the contractors for national ID cards; he would hope that GoSL would give De La Rue notice to terminate the contract by the end of this year so that the \$1M could be reallocated to the new project. He said it was necessary also for the Ministry of Finance to do some front loading.

Ms. Illuminate Maerere commenting on resource mobilization stated that DFID could not now fully commit funds until its Headquarters had reviewed the proposals; however DFID intends to allocate GBP800,000 (eight hundred thousand pounds) for 2015 and GBP400,000 (four hundred thousand pounds) for 2016.

Mr. Esam Ismail mentioned that the GMS stated in the document was 7%; he was however informed that effective January 2015, GMS should be charged at 8%. The document is to be revised accordingly.

Mr. Matthew Dalling, UNICEF commended GoSL and UNDP for taking the project forward; he suggested that something in regard to births and deaths registration should be added.

Mr. William Taylor, NEC asked about the pilot project and mentioned that the various agencies were doing their own transition.

Mr. Esam Ismail replied that the project was developed as part of the Elections project with the pilot going up to the end of 2014 when the Elections project ends. He informed that UNDP prepared a policy paper on the various agencies and how they can be unified. He also asked for further suggestions from the meeting on how the agencies could be unified.

Mr. Mbekay Amara, NEC enquired how the voter register would be handled as he said it was important to have a plan to capture all voters especially for the referendum.

Dr. Max Sesay replied that provision was made for a transition hence the creation of the Civil Registration Commission which will deal with all aspects of registration including census.

Mr. Frik Olivier mentioned two pilots – the 1st is the printing of the initial two million cards - for this he said the production aspect should be working and various ID numbers etc. must be available: only then would one be able to determine whether the information, photos and others were good and that production was going on well. The 2nd pilot he said would be a shallow project at the NRS HQ to see whether the software was working well. The pilots he intimated are to be launched in November 2014.

If everything goes according to plan, distribution of the ID cards would start and mass registration would commence. He informed that voters 16 years and above will be registered for the referendum.

Mr. Mbekay Amara reiterated that all other institutions were functioning fully and that it was only NEC operations that were put on hold with even the funds transferred to other projects. He stressed that time was of the essence.

Dr. Max Sesay informed that cards for children 6 to 16 years will contain no chip and will not be paid for; the cost of the card will be subsidized by GoSL. Children below 6 years will not be issued with cards, but their birth certificates will have a unique number.

Ms. Illuminate Maerere stated that donors were very appreciative of GoSL's move on the project. She suggested that other donors be approached for funds to fill the gap.

Mr. Frik Olivier asked whether a 7th output would be possible as the National Civil Registration Authority should be able to register births and deaths as is done in other countries; the project he said does not make provision for that.

Mr. Matthew Galling added that the Births and Deaths Act is to be reviewed so that notification is fed into the system; he said something to strengthen the births and deaths registration system must be added to the Programme Document

4. Conclusion

Dr. Max Sesay suggested that presentation be made to Cabinet.

Mr. Esam Ismail promised to circulate the revised document.

Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, Chair in his concluding remarks said the Programme Document would be revised taking all comments into account. The next steps he said would be presentation to the donors and prospective donors; potential donors he said should be identified. He informed that he had a meeting with UNFPA and they were happy to transfer all assets used for the census to this project.

Mr. Moses Sichei thanked all for attending and added that their contributions were appreciated.


Sudipto Mukerjee
Country Director
UNDP

Date: 21/05/14

Donald King
Head of Community Relations
National Registration Secretariat

Date:


22/5/14

Attendance List

1. Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, Country Director, UNDP
2. Mr. Moses Sichei, Deputy Country Director, Programmes a.i. UNDP
3. Mr. Donald King, NRS
4. Dr. Max Sesay, Chairperson of the Public Service Commission (formerly of NRS)
5. Mr. William Taylor, Acting Executive Secretary, NEC
6. Mr. Mbekay S Amara, Director IT, NEC
7. Mr. Matthew Dalling, UNICEF
8. Mr. Esam Ismail, Chief Technical Adviser, PMU UNDP
9. Ms. Illuminate Maerere, Operations Manager, PMU UNDP
10. Mr. Issa Conteh, UNDP
11. Mr. Oscar Fiestas-Tejada, UNDP
12. Mr. Frik Olivier, UNDP
13. Mr. M. Humayun Khan, UNDP
14. Ms. Gloria Thomas, UNDP
15. Ms. Nganga Musa, UNDP