



Office of Diaspora Affairs
Office of the President
State House, Freetown, Sierra Leone

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July 31, 2012

Attn: Mia Seppo
Country Director,
UNDP Country Office,
Wilkinson Road.
Freetown.

Dear Mia,

I hereby forward you a copy of signed minutes of the Diaspora Advisory Group (DAG) meeting held on Wednesday June 6, 2012 to officially close the project ("Delivering Results and Accelerating Public Sector Reform with Diaspora Resources and Experts from the South").

Please be informed that the pending supporting financial documents will soon be submitted to your office in order to bring the project to a final closure.

Thanks for your usual Cooperation.

Yours faithfully,


Kallay Musa Conteh
Director



Office of Diaspora Affairs
Office of the President

State House, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Minutes of the Diaspora Advisory Group (DAG) Meeting to Close the Project:
“Delivering Results and Accelerating Public Sector Reform with Diaspora Resources and Experts from the South” (Diaspora Project)

Award ID: 00050560

Project ID: 00062526/00062988

Conference Room, 1st Floor, State House
Wednesday 6th June, 2012

Present:

Hon. Alpha Kanu	Minister/ MPPA – Chair
Mr. D.B. Kanu	Permanent Secretary/MPPA
Mr. Ernest Surrur	Director General, HRMO
Mr. L. Ola Williams	Senior Management Analyst, PSRU
Ms. Mia Seppo	Country Director, UNDP
Mr. Kallay Musa Conteh	Ag. Director, ODA
Mr. Mohamed Kargbo	Snr. Assistant Secretary, MoFED
Mr. Freddie E. Keita	Snr. Assistant to the Secretary to the President
Mr. Cleophas Torori	Civil Service Reform Adviser, UNDP/HRMO
Mrs. Abibatu Koroma	Communications Officer, ODA
Mr. Mohamed A.K. Fofanah	Administrative Assistant, ODA

The meeting was convened by the Office of Diaspora Affairs (ODA) with a singular agenda- to close the above project that has been in operation since Sept. 2008 – July 2011 and supported by UNDP and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA).

In his opening remarks, the Chairman of the Diaspora Advisory Group (DAG) who is also the Minister for Political and Public Affairs, Hon. Alpha Kanu, paid tribute to UNDP for not only having conceived the idea but also providing funding support throughout the life of the project. He underscored that ODA had made a credible start, and assured the meeting that Government was exploring options to take forward the initiative, drawing lessons from the past and building on the Transformation Plan. He emphasized on the fact that ODA is the brainchild of the UNDP and as a result, government would continue to partner with them for further support to strengthening ODA in order to make it realize its full potentials.

Due to other pressing commitments, however, the Minister could not stay on for long. He handed over the chairmanship to the Director-General of the HRMO, Mr. Ernest Surrur who steered the rest of the meeting.

The DAG then received a summarized report on the above project from the Ag. Director of the ODA, Mr. Kallay Musa Conteh based on the project's final narrative report prepared in the late 2011 in conjunction with UNDP. This report, besides providing the background and key objectives, outlined the project's key achievements against the agreed outputs over its period. This includes a summary table showing some key results achieved by some of the experts, drawing from the annual reviews and the independent evaluation report.

The report also addresses the partnerships established through the project, some lessons learnt, the amount of resources mobilized through the project as well as the way forward with the project, putting into perspective the results of the Independent Evaluation conducted in early 2011.

Formally presenting the Transformation Plan and Diaspora Engagement Strategy Document to DAG, the Ag. Director, Mr. Conteh paid tribute to UNDP for supporting the consultancy in putting together this document which he described as strategic and a clear roadmap for ODA's next agenda. He noted that the document is voluminous, but appealed to the DAG members to cautiously go through it and digest its contents. He further appealed to DAG to ensure that the recommendations made in the document are implemented, and raised the issue of funding its implementation. He also revealed that upon the expiry of the project in August 2011, some 14 experts were absorbed by the Government and continues to serve in a number of MDAs, paid by the Government of Sierra Leone. This shows how Government cherishes and appreciates the achievements of the Diaspora project, and also sends a clear message that the closing of the Diaspora project in July 2011 should not be misconstrued for the closing of the Diaspora agenda.

In her remarks, the Country Director of UNDP Ms. Mia Seppo welcomed the meeting which she saw as not only a compliance milestone, but an opportunity to reflect on the project's overall performance, some of the challenges faced and lessons learnt. She maintained that ODA has indeed made a credible start. She underlined the level of investment made by UNDP & OSI to the ODA project – over \$3.6m over three years (2009-2011) of which \$1.7m was UNDP resources and expressed the hope that this would not be lost with the closure of the project.

She made reference to the Transformation Plan as providing options for taking forward the Diaspora agenda based on lessons learnt during implementation as well as the result of the Independent Evaluation. She stated that the implementation of the Transformation Plan should be completed in twelve months: Starting from Sept. 2011 - August 2012.

Touching on the standard practice in closing the project, the Country Director expressed concern over the failure of ODA to comply by providing full financial report together with supporting documents for the resources it was entrusted to manage. She urged ODA to do this as soon as possible to allow for proper accounting of the use of funds and reporting on the same

Responding, the Ag. Director of ODA, Mr. Conteh told the meeting that all the concerns raised by the UNDP Country Director have been noted, and assured that steps would be taken to submit

the documentations required as soon as possible. He stressed that MPPA and ODA would engage the Government to ensure that the recommendations made in the Transformation Plan be implemented. He appealed that the bond between UNDP and ODA should continue to hold as development partners would be approached to buy the said document, and one such partner that knows much about ODA is the UNDP.

In his remarks, the Acting Chair, Mr. Ernest Surrur underscored the compliance issue and urged ODA to move quickly and ensure full accounting for the use of funds as failure to do so, will jeopardize future funding prospects. He pointed out that no financial report is complete without supporting documents.

In his observations, Mr. Freddie E. Keita, Snr Assistant to the Secretary to the President, in the Office of the President thanked UNDP for the support provided to the project and asserted that it is now the responsibility of the Government to review the proposals in the Transformation Plan and take them forward to the Cabinet. He urged that the sooner the stakeholder put their hats together in this regard the better.

In closing the meeting, the Acting Chair summarized the action points as follows:

- a. That ODA takes urgent steps to complete the financial reporting by providing the needed supporting documents;
- b. That ODA, working through the MPPA takes forward the Diaspora Transformation Plan and Engagement Strategy to the next level, link to the agenda for prosperity, working closely with other partners, especially the HRMO, PSRU and Office of the Chief of Staff.
- c. That at an appropriate time, a presentation to the Cabinet be organized
- d. That in the meantime, the project as supported by UNDP stands closed.

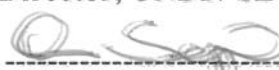
Approval of the minutes as reflecting the deliberations of the DAG meeting.

Hon. Alpha Kanu
Minister of Political and Public Affairs

Signature -----

Date 30/07/12-----

Ms. Mia Seppo
Country Director, UNDP/ SL

Signature -----

Date 31/7/12-----