

## Sierra Leone Consultative and Networking Forum Pre-Conference Agenda

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 16.00 to 20.00

Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House,  
Pall Mall, London - SW1Y 5HX, UK

Summary Agenda	Present	Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issues, Challenges and Opportunities for engagement</li> <li>Opportunities in Sierra Leone – Developmental, Self-employed and employed</li> <li>To set the agenda for the Sierra Leone Investment Forum to take place on 4<sup>th</sup> June with wider representation from the SLD.</li> </ul>	Manja Kargbo Georgina Akibo-Betts Joseph Dauda Bimbola Carroll Alim Yilla Khadi Sankoh Iyamide Thomas Victor Mengot Momodu Mansaray Dr Banjoko Funto Akinkugbe Dupe Akidele Onome Ako	Ade Daramy Sarjoh Aziz Kamara Peter Turay Leslina Jonjo Bernie Sesay Sarah King Unisa Dizo Konteh Tucker Sesay Erik Holst-Roness E.Taylor-Kamara Tania Sherriff Sudha Singh

### Next Steps

Action	Who	When
Notes sent out	AfricaRecruit	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2005
Feedback on notes	From attendees	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2005
People to facilitate the workshops (10 volunteers (5 facilitators and 5 rapporteurs))	From attendees	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2005
To send out Agenda for the 4 <sup>th</sup> June	AfricaRecruit	25 <sup>th</sup> May 2005

### The Attendees

A diverse group of Sierra Leoneans participated in this meeting. They included Lawyers, Community Development/Charity Co-ordinators, Students, Trade unionist, Agronomist, Journalist, Health researchers, and IT support analysts who had varying interests in Sierra Leone.

Reasons for participation included:

- Desire to return home
- Contribute to the process of reconstruction and development
- Engage in capacity building efforts of the international community within Sierra Leone.
- Participate in economic rebuilding of the country through partnership, joint-ventures and investment



# Sierra Leone Investment Forum

## The Issues

- Strategy to encourage the Diaspora to return to Sierra Leone
- Lack of Infrastructure – Basic electricity, water, education, roads, communication, health
- Cultural Adjustments
- Human Resource Challenges – lack of open access to job opportunities, major shortage of skilled managers
- Constitutional and Legal Challenges – such as issues surrounding dual nationality, age of retirement, exuberant taxation
- Governance

## The Challenges

- Government Accountability
- Access to information – Communication (e.g. Investment / Job Opportunities)
- Creating an enabling environment for business
- Engagement – Diaspora and Government
- Defining the role of High Commissions – Strengthening support for the Trade and Investment Desk at the High Commission
- Role of Diaspora in contributing towards the development of Sierra Leone
- Image Enhancement
- Role of donors in building institutional capacity
- Rehabilitation of war affected

## The Opportunities and Action points

- Evaluation of past funded projects
- To create a cohesive Diaspora group in order to get government recognition and support from donors
- As a cohesive Diaspora; input as an interest group into constitutional and civil service reform/capacity building
- A single window for the Diaspora within the government
- Sharing best Practices (e.g. UK-SL Money transfers)
- Strengthening the trade desk at the High Commission

The pre-dominant constraint for the Diaspora to return to Sierra Leone was lack of basic infrastructure, access to information about opportunities and widespread corruption (real or perceived). Another key issue that emerged was about cultural adjustments and perceptions of returnees and intended returnees.

## Discussion

The members of the consultation discussed the opportunities for the Diaspora in the following sectors in Sierra Leone Development, Self-Employed and Employed. Individuals harnessed their existing strengths and skills to define possible areas of contribution that are noted below.

### Development

- Education/Training
- Agricultural & Environmental capacity building – including reforestation/agro-forestry and biodiversity; legislation and infrastructure to promote environmental management and protection.
- Conflict Resolution/rehabilitation – including implementation of the TRC recommendations
- Joint (Government and Diaspora) strategy for poverty alleviation



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- Young Sierra Leoneans Empowerment project
- Human Rights – and a strengthening of the legal and justice system via greater civil society participation

## **Self Employed**

- Health Sector investment (Medical as well as public health and sanitation)
- Real Estate Development
- Travel & Tourism, with particular emphasis on eco-tourism
- Transport systems development
- ICTs
- Agribusiness – intensive farming (crops and fish), horticulture and agro-processing with value added qualities for export (e.g. food & beverages, cocoa & coffee beans, palm oil & other edible oils processing, fruit canning and fertilizer production); forestry – soft/hard wood processing with value added qualities for export.
- News Media
- Security
- Promoting Investment
- Recruitment
- Training in E-gov
- Arts and Handicrafts
- Sports and Recreation

## **Employed**

- Recruitment by NGOs – including the establishment of quotas for employment of Sierra Leoneans
- Private sector to draw on skills of Diaspora

## **Opportunities and Action Points**

- Prioritisation of the electricity and water supply by Government
- Establishment of conditions for business confidence
- Input into devising a transparent, fair revenue (including income tax) collection system
- Government vision regarding Sierra Leone private sector development to undergo vision accountability by stakeholders.
- A transparent and genuinely accountable private sector and public sector procurement policy. Encouraging Diaspora participation in international procurements.
- Public sector transparency policy that enables SL to pursue rational strategies for economic growth and development.
- Access to reliable and up-to-date information [provided by government] in all sectors.
- Permission for businesses to compete for government tenders and to gain more easily, market access.
- Improving the Regulatory Environment in order to encourage FDIs
- Accountability of the government towards delivering on Human Rights, development, governance, corruption and other issues – (e.g. DFID works on MOU with SL government on conditionality) and force change within the government
- Create an enabling environment for businesses through regulation and capacity building on business advisory services.
- Establishing Business standards particularly Corporate Responsibility
- Creation of Diaspora Investment Club/Fund
- Strengthening Local government to deliver more services independently of Central Government
- A Centralised Database for the Diaspora, part-funded by DFID to access skills force and an up-to-date investment advice and opportunities from Diaspora



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- Suggestion for three seats reserved for Diaspora on DFID panel for monitoring (Sierra Leone Business Forum/Development) – Mainstream Diaspora representation on all fronts
- Maximising on Linkages of Diaspora with local Sierra Leoneans to understand issues on ground, inform and communicate
- DTI UKTI Trade Missions to Sierra Leone should encourage businesses to look for opportunities for joint ventures and partnerships. (DFID to use its links with other UK government departments to facilitate this)
- Better use of media to disseminate information to the masses (radio, newspapers etc); and to improve government-to-citizen public relations
- Address issues raised by the Truth & Reconciliation Commission on Human Rights, rehabilitation and training
- Address the huge need for education and vocational training towards creating skilled workforce – including volunteering of time and expertise by the Diaspora and International organisations
- Establish the linkages between the development agenda's of donors the MDGs and poverty alleviation

The inputs from this consultation would go towards development of an agenda for the Sierra Leone Investment Forum on 4<sup>th</sup> June in London. Approximately 170 members from the Diaspora communities would be participating in this programme.

## Annex

SL	Sierra Leone
UK	United Kingdom
ICT	Information Communication Technology
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
DFID	Department of Foreign and International Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
UKTI	United Kingdom Trade Industry
MDG	Millennium Development Goals

## Contact:

**Onome Ako**  
**Programme Manager AfricaRecruit**  
[Info@aficarecruit.com](mailto:Info@aficarecruit.com)

