

REPORT ON HRMO PHASE TWO OUTREACH PROGRAMME WITH CIVIL SERVANTS IN FALABA, KOINADUGU AND KARENE DISTRICTS



SUBMITTED BY: DIRECTORATE OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND ADMINISTRATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

In continuation of the Director General HRMO and Team Nationwide Outreach visit at district level across the country, a one- day Outreach Programme/meeting with Civil Servants in the District Head quarter towns of Falaba, Koinadugu and Karene was held on 21st, 23rd and 25th of June 2021 respectively. The outreach programme was organized by the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) with funding support from European Union and Government of

Sierra Leone which brought together Senior, Middle and Lower level Civil Servants in MDAs across the three districts.

As you are aware, HRMO is the central personnel agency of the Sierra Leone Government charged with the responsibility of providing human resource policies, advisory services and managing the Civil Service workforce. Over the years, HRMO in collaboration with other partners have implemented a host of reform activities and programmes in the Civil Service. To enable HRMO deliver best on its mandate and having in mind that Freetown is not Sierra Leone, it is but necessary to be interfacing with Civil Servants across the country. This outreach session across all districts will help HRMO to explain Government policies and identify the challenges/constraints Civil Servants are faced with at their respective districts in the discharge of their duties and enable HRMO to find solutions to those challenges for improved service delivery.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE OUTREACH PROGRAMME

The Objective of the outreach programme among many others was:

- To establish a direct line of communication with Civil Servants in the regions,
- To understand their grievances and challenges in the discharge of their duties
- To address some of their problems within the reach of DG,HRMO without them traveling to Freetown and also engage their MDA leadership on those that need collaboration
- To understand the ongoing reforms and efforts of Government of Sierra Leone in improving service delivery.
- To enlighten colleague civil servants to know as to how to channel their request and grievances on specific HR issues.

3. EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE OUTREACH PROGRAMME

At the end of the outreach programme, the following among many others are the expected outcomes:

- a) Civil Servants at district level are fully sensitized about reforms in the Civil Service
- b) Also, fully informed about government policies and programs
- c) Challenges and constraints faced in the discharge of their duties are expressed
- d) Civil Servants enlightened on specific HR issues.
- e) Civil Servants will now know how to channel their request and grievances to HRMO on specific HR issues

4. OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremonies in Falaba, Koinadugu and Karene started with a call to order, followed by prayers in Muslim and Christian ways and introduction of chairman.



From left to right, The District Officers of Koinadugu, Falaba and Karene who chaired the outreach programme in their respective districts.

5. CHAIRMEN OPENING REMARKS

In their opening remarks, the Chairman Mr. Osman Samura, District Officer Falaba, Mr. Idrissa Kamara, District Officer, Koinadugu and Mr. Abdulai A. Kargbo, District Officer, Karene all welcomed Director General, Human Resource Management Office and his Team to their respective districts. They also registered their sincere admiration of the Director General's

leadership style of bringing Human Resource Management Office to the districts which is a novelty as it has never happened in the history of Sierra Leone Civil Service. They encouraged their colleague Civil Servants to take full advantage of the history making event by expressing their concerns and challenges they are faced with in the discharge of their duties for the citizenry of Sierra Leone. On that note, they encouraged the Director General and Team to make themselves comfortable and enjoy their stay as the people of their respective districts are hospitable and peaceful.

6. STATEMENT FROM THE DIRECTOR, CORPORATE STRATEGY AND ADMINISTRATION

The Director, Corporate Strategy and Administration , Mr. Ibrahim S. Kamara in his statements across the three districts, started by thanking the Chairmen and colleague Civil Servants across various MDAs for leaving their busy schedules to attend the outreach engagement. Adding, director laid the foundation by telling participants why the HRMO Team led by the Director General is in their respective districts. He also encouraged them to make full use of the opportunity they have to interact with the DG, HRMO. He furthered that, this approach initiated by the Director General through support from the European Union is a laudable one that has never happened in the history of the Sierra Leone Civil Service. Director adding, the DG's leadership style is a testament to show that the Civil Service is changing and adopting to modern day human resource management systems

The Director concluded by thanking participants for attending the outreach programme and wished them fruitful discussions.



Director, Corporate Strategy and Administration Mr. Ibrahim S Kamara making statements

7. DIRECTOR GENERAL'S OUTREACH MESSAGE ACROSS FALABA, KOINADUGU AND KARENE DISTRICTS

In his message across the three districts, the Director General (DG), HRMO started by thanking the chairmen for hosting him and team and the hospitality accorded to him and team across the three districts. He also delivered greetings from HRMO to the people of Falaba, Koinadugu and Karene districts. Director General also commended the hardworking Civil Servants for their resilient shown towards national service bearing in mind the difficult terrain they are working. He further told them that the history of those districts more particularly Falaba and Karene cannot be complete without mentioning their names. DG thanked and welcomed them to an epoch making event in the sense that, it has never happened in the history of the Sierra Leone Civil Service for the Establishment Secretary now Director General to leave his busy schedule and go down at district level to interface with Civil Servants. DG adding that, as the environmental manager of the Sierra Leone Civil Service, when he assumed office as DG, he realized that the Office is far removed from the people or clientele that he manages. Hence, told all present that his outreach programme is one among many other activities that HRMO will be implementing across the country as he has already visited Kailahun, Kenema and Bo districts.

In giving brief background of the HRMO, Ansu S. Tucker, Director General said, the Office presently known as the Human Resources Management Office (HRMO) used to be called differently at different times – before and after Independence. Prior to Independence, the HRMO was known as the Colonial Secretary's Office (CSO). The CSO was set up after Britain declared a Crown Colony over Sierra Leone in 1808. It was the nucleus of the Civil Service with basic function of carrying out the day-to-day administration of the newly created colonial state which included but not limited to police services, personnel and basic clerical duties, court administration, provision of public utilities and others.

After Independence in 1961, the CSO was transformed and renamed Establishment Secretary's Office (ESO). It was given the sole mandate for public personnel management. The ESO drew its mandate from a combination of documents such as, the General Orders, the Public Service Commission (PSC) Regulations then in force and the 1991 Constitution.

Also due to some challenges encountered by ESO, which ranges from organizational structure, functions and operational strategies made it difficult for it to respond to the needs of the service; coupled with the dramatic growth in the size of the service was creating severe budgeting constraints on Government; the lack of productivity, effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of services and many more led to the transformation of the Establishment Secretary's Office into a new Human Resources Management Office (HRMO) with a vision to be a Centre of excellence and expertise in HR management, developing high quality, relevant HR policies, and operating to high ethical standards. The overarching goal was and is still to develop an HR strategy, policies and service suited to future needs of the civil service

Against that backdrop, Director General also drew their attention to a host of activities or reforms implemented by HRMO and some underway in the Civil Service as highlighted below:

7.1. EU SUPPORT TO GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

In his statement, DG told participants that the Government of Sierra Leone is not in this alone. The EU under the 11TH EDF has entered into a financing agreement with Government of Sierra Leone for supporting Governance Sector Reform where several institutions such as National Electoral Commission, Parliamentary Service Commission, National Civil Registration Authority to name but a few, will benefit. DG said, HRMO and Public Service Commission (PSC) are benefitting from the Civil Service Reform Component of the EU support. This support, according to DG, HRMO, will look at institutional and legislative frameworks including capacity building, training, monitoring and Evaluation and gender mainstreaming in the management of human resources in the Civil Service.

Therefore, the EU project, according to DG, is addressing salient interventions. Key amongst the many is the revamping of our Rules and Regulations. The Civil Service as you are aware is guided by rules and regulations. The Public Service Commission is the parent body under Section 151 to 154 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone established to regulate Public Service Human Resource Management. PSC exists to appoint, promote, transfer and exercise disciplinary action against Public Servants. So from the constitutional provision, the overarching role of PSC is to superintend the entire Public Service Human Resource arrangement by regulating and providing oversight. But over the years, the role of PSC has

been eroded due to a number of parallel institutions such as Health Service Commission, Judicial and Legal Service Commission, Local Government Service Commission, Teaching Service Commission, etc. have been created that perform similar functions.

Also a number of sub vented agencies have been created where most of them were part of the Civil Service architecture but now they are independent. PSC who should manage Human Resource in the Public Service have lost most of it powers. So the PSC under this EU support is trying to come up with the Public Service Law. The PSC together with other stakeholders have done nationwide consultation in which most of the participants took part in order to get their views on the enactment of the Public Service Law that is meant to regulate Human Resource management practice in the Public Service and HRMO is providing technical backstopping to PSC.

Also, DG informed colleague Civil Servants that the Civil Service Code Regulations and Rules (CSCR&R) which serves as code of instruction on personnel matter, is also overdue for review. It is the responsibility of the Director General to review the Civil Service Code Regulations and Rules after every five years. However since 2011 to date, it has not been reviewed due to the Ebola and other factors. On that note, DG informed participants to hold themselves in readiness as resources have been provided through EU support to pay them a visit at their respective districts on consultation for the review of the Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules

7.2. DISPARITY IN PAY

On the issue of disparity in pay, DG informed his colleagues that over the years there has emerged a system of pay that is so distorted, unfair, inequitable across the Civil and Public Service. The reason responsible is that a number of commissions and sub vented agencies have been left to manage their human resource on their own. There is no central body to oversee the pay system. Hence, they determine their own pay. However DG told the gathering that HRMO is concerned because they manage the entire workforce. Therefore, HRMO and other stakeholders have been pushing for the establishment of the Wages and Compensation Commission, which has led to several consultations across the country. The

draft bill has been sent to parliament for their approval. Once that is past into law, the commission will now be set to address, among many others, the disparity in pay by harmonizing remuneration across the Civil and Public Service.

7.3. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

The Environmental Manager of the Sierra Leone Civil Service, Mr. Ansu S. Tucker also told participants that under the same EU support, HRMO is trying to deepen the knowledge on Individual Performance Appraisal System (IPAS) by conducting trainings and monitoring at central, regional and district level. In the past IPAS was limited to Civil Servants in Grades 7 to 10. However in 2019, HRMO has cascaded IPAS to Grades 1 to 6 across the Civil Service. Also, the Annual Confidential Report (ACR) has been replaced with IPAS. So in terms of recommendations for promotion HRMO can no longer countenance ACR but IPAS. Over the years a good number of participants present have benefited from HRMO trainings on Target Setting and Conducting Appraisals as a mean of institutionalizing performance management system as it is now the vogue in modern day management.

7.4. PROCESSING OF END OF SERVICE BENEFIT

DG also spoke about the issue of benefit administration as another major concern. He said that most times hard working Civil Servants retire and they have difficulty in accessing their benefits due to the several processes that are involved. So HRMO and partners have tried to review the processes involved and have been able to cut down on some of the processes and bureaucracies.

Another concern he discussed was the issue of Civil Servants who die in active service for their benefactors to easily access their benefits. A system is also going to be put in place where all Civil Servants will be required to fill a Next of Kin Form which will be updated annually. The essence of this is that in a case a Civil Servant dies, the person who serves as next of kin immediately receives the money as it is the wish of the deceased worker and at the same time to avoid different parties showing up to claim benefit rights in the gratuity committee meetings.

7.5. PAYMENT OF PENSION

The Director General also briefed colleague Civil Servants on the payment of pension. That for the past two years, they have reviewed the pension. This happened when he worked at the Ministry of Finance as Principal Deputy Financial Secretary, where he chaired and steered the process of reviewing pensions. DG, adding that it will interest participants to know that the gap between the least paid pensioner and the highest is unimaginable. The least paid pensioner however earned as low as Twenty Thousand Leones (Le 20,000) whereas the highest paid pensioner earned up to Thirty Millions Leones (Le 30,000,000) per month. This is as a result of the salary that we earn. The salary you earn translates into your benefit. Somebody who is earning more salary get more pension than the person earning low salary. In that regard, they were able to convince government to increase the minimum pension to Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Leones (Le 250,000) by then and it was approved in 2018. So now the least pensioner gets Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Leones (Le 250,000). DG told them that the solution is not enough as the most comprehensive solution to that problem is the Wages and Compensation Commission which according to him is at an advanced stage.

7.6. MIGRATION OF CLERICAL CADRE INTO FUNCTIONAL TITLES

The Director General, Mr. Ansu S. Tucker, also informed the august gathering that the Clerical Cadre in the Sierra Leone Civil Service is one of the oldest cadres which had existed since colonial era. The Clerical Cadre performs a lot of important jobs and some of them due to their experience in the job had become institutional memory of their respective MDAs. Adding, DG said that the career path for this Cadre is narrow as prior to this time they had a chance of being promoted to Staff Superintendent (SS), but the Human Resource Cadre had eroded SS in the Civil Service. So this Cadre had been stagnated and they can hardly be promoted beyond First Grade Clerk. However, over the years the DG and top management have observed that the Clerical Cadre seems to be losing its value. In that regard, HRMO is migrating the Clerical Cadre into Functional Titles. For instance a Third Grade Clerk who has a skill in accounting can now be called an Account Clerk and has a career path up to Account Assistant etc. DG told them that the migration into Functional Titles process has

started in the Western Area and it's going to be rolled out in Phases. He admonished heads of MDAs to identify these staff and the skills they possess for recommendation as he wants to complete the migration exercise before the end of 2021.

7.7. TRAININGS/ CAPACITY BUILDING OF CIVIL SERVANTS IN SOFT SKILLS

On the aspect of training, the Director General underscored the essence of knowledge transfer in the Civil Service for effective and efficient service delivery. He said people come into the Civil Service with basic qualification or degrees that are not related to the Civil Service. As you are aware, the Civil Service is a place to learn. So these qualifications according to DG are just helping you to learn and understand the process and due to the trainings undertaken, today Civil Servants are doing wonderful jobs. Also he informed them about the resuscitation of the Sierra Leone Civil Service Training College but also noted that a lot of trainings have been centralized in Freetown. He affirmed that HRMO is going to start organizing basic training programmes on soft skills for Civil Servants across all the districts. Skills like processing of retirement documents, how to report absence from duty, how to address payroll issues and even management training for senior officers who are professional or heads of units. He also informed participants about the recently completed induction training. He said HRMO has conducted induction training for 646 newly recruited staffs from grades 7 and above including Civil Servants in the regions.

7.8. GOVERNMENT ELECTRONIC TIME ATTENDANCE MONITORING SYSTEM (GeTAMS)

Another issue the Director General touched on is the introduction of Government Electronic Time and Attendance Management System (GETAMS) in the Civil Service. DG reiterated Government's concern on attendance as it undermines productivity. He told them that to whom much is given, much is expected. He said, he has realized that time and attendance management is very poor at MDA level. He said everybody is yearning for better pay but this has to be translated into our output. In that regard, HRMO in collaboration with the Ministry

of Information and Communications has designed a Biometric Attendance System that is going to be piloted across 20 MDAs in the Western Area. This system is going to be directly linked with the payroll as it will be able to identify staff that are committed to work and those that do not come to work. Also after the pilot phase it will now be rolled out to all MDAs which will serve as a kind of checks and balances.

7.9. PROMOTIONS

Another major issue that DG spoke about which he has noticed in the course of his nationwide outreach is stagnation for promotion. He has observed that a lot of people have been stagnated in one position and they have complained of not being recommended by their heads of MDAs. In order to address some of the complaints, the Director General, HRMO has started engaging some of the MDAs heads to see how best they can recommend at least those people who are due for promotion and if there are vacancies just recommend them. The issue of stagnation for some cadre in the Civil Service is not good to write home about. As Human Resource practitioners, these are welfare issues and should be treated with the seriousness they deserves. He admonished them to make good use of the opportunity that they have by ensuring that they elevate their colleagues.

Concluding, the Director General again thanked and congratulated all present in the outreach meetings for their audience and the wonderful turnout of Civil Servants on such a quick notice. As stated earlier, DG reiterated that he is in the districts to disseminate government policies and at the same time inform them about the reforms undertaken and some underway to colleague Civil Servants. Also to get their views on the emerging issues discussed and their challenges they are faced with in the discharge of their duties. He said the outreach is to have empirical evidences that he will use to engage key stakeholders in addressing some of their challenges. He encouraged them to feel free to interact and ask as many questions as possible for the intervention of the outreach team.

Finally, DG also told them that his outreach visit is just one among the many visits that HRMO will be doing across the districts. He asked them to hold themselves in readiness as HRMO Team will soon pay another visit to consult them on the review of the Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules.



The Environmental Manager of the Sierra Leone Civil Service, Mr. Ansu Samuel Tucker delivering his Outreach message to Civil Servants in Falaba, Koinadugu and Karene districts.

Below are some of the pictorial evidences of Civil Servants attentively listening to Director General's outreach message across their respective district.



8. DISCUSSION

After the Director General, Mr. Ansu Samuel Tucker's Outreach message across the three districts which was very much applauded, Colleague Civil Servants were given the opportunity to express themselves. This discussion session created a lively debate as several issues/concerns they are faced with were raised for the attention of the Director General and Team. Key among the many concerns/ comments raised were but not limited to the following:-

- Shortage of required manpower to do the job across key MDAs in the regions

- The issue of disparity in salary for Civil Servants with same designation and grade was strongly discussed to be demotivating,
- Concern that has to do with giving of a token before one gets his/her Annual Vacation Leave was also brought to the fore,
- Also staff posted into some districts without accommodation and office space,
- The timely availability of resources for programme implementation;
- Issue of disciplinary action recommended by Heads of MDAs at districts level not acted upon by MDAs leadership at Headquarters undermines their authority,
- Concern of MAF Staff that have worked for over 20 years on payroll but no appointment letters,
- Concern of staff who were deleted from payroll due to NCRA exercise but have done the correction still not reinstated ,
- Concern of internal promotions done by MDAs but not reflected on their salaries
- Issue of delay in accessing end of service benefit for retired Civil Servants,
- Concern for a speedy harmonization of salaries for civil servants
- Issue that boarder on non-allocation of fuel to some officers who have been given government bikes across the districts.
- Risk/ remote allowance to officers transferred in hard to reach areas not given;
- Issue of compensation not given to officer who get injured or dies whilst in active service
- Issue of officers whose confirmation is long overdue but still not issued confirmation letters,
- Concern over different grades for CHO's some on grades 5 whilst others on grades 6,
- Concern over patients suing medical practitioners due to mistakes done in the discharge of their duties as a result of the Patient Right Act.

- Lack of promotion for good number of staff that have stayed in one position for more than 10 years more particularly for professional staff
- Frequent and unplanned transfers of staff for some MDAs without recourse to the Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules
- Officers have upgraded themselves academically but still stagnated in the same position,
- Issue of volunteers holding/performing key task in some MDAs in the districts.

9. DIRECTOR GENERAL AND TEAM RESPONSE TO ISSUES AND CONCERNS RAISED

The Director General and Team adequately responded to all the questions, issues and concerns raised by the participants for which they appreciated very much. The DG promised to look into those concerns that he can address directly and to engage other stakeholders on issues or concerns that are systemic that has to do with high level policy for solution.



Above pictures of DG and cross section of his team responding to colleagues concerns, comments and questions

10. CLOSING REMARKS

In their closing remarks across their respective districts, the chairmen cautioned their colleague Civil Servants to be patient as the Director General and Team has noted all their concerns. Adding, the chairmen emphasized that even though things are difficult for them in the provinces, the visit of the Director General and Team to their districts speaks volume. They thanked the Director General and Team for the opportunity given to them to be part of the epoch making event as the first crop of Civil Servants at district level to interface with the Director General of Human Resource Management Office, the Environmental Manager of the Sierra Leone Civil Service. They also thanked the DG and Team for bringing them up to speed on the reforms and operations of the Human Resource Management Office.

Finally, they expressed hope that the meetings of such nature will continue and wished the Director General and Team travelling mercies.



DG's group pictures with Civil Servants across Falaba, Koinadugu and Karene districts

11. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the issues, concerns and comments raised participants across the three districts; the following recommendations have been proffered:

- The Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service and the Director General, HRMO to ensure heads of MDAs to include in their PTTs one nationwide outreach visit at district level for staff of their respective MDAs in order to get first-hand information and experience of working conditions in the regions
- Adequate and timely provision of funding to MDAs for implementation of programmes so as to enable them achieve their set targets;
- HRMO to ensure that Transfer Committees be established in all MDAs that do internal transfers with HRMO been represented in order to reduce the many concerns on malice, politics and unplanned transfers.
- The Ministry of Works and Public Assets to consider constructing a building at least in the regional and district Headquarter Towns that can house several MDAs so that the huge sum provided for renting of offices in those areas can be minimized
- MDAs in collaboration with Ministry of Finance to consider paying relocation and risk allowances to officers posted in the provinces or hard to reach areas
- HRMO to continue with the outreach exercise so as to be abreast with challenges the officers are faced with in the provinces
- Government to speed up with the salary harmonization process so that the many concern raised on poor condition of service and disparity in salary can be addressed.
- Heads of MDAs whose staffs have been stagnated in one position and have promotion outlet to recommend them for promotion to the DG, HRMO.
- Civil servants to forward names of officers with evidence to DG, HRMO that request for token for the processing of their AVL.
- Heads of MDAs to recommend Clerical staffs for migration into functional titles in line with their skills and jobs that they perform

12. ACTION POINTS FOR DG, HRMO

- To engage the Ministries of Finance, and Works and Public Assets on a number of welfare issues that has to do with salary harmonization, accommodations and office space, risk and relocation allowances and many more,
- DG in collaboration with HoCS to hold a leadership meeting of Permanent Secretaries and Professional Heads to brief them on his experiences during the outreach.
- HRMO to cascade specialized skills training programmes to Civil Servants in the provinces
- To ensure that staffs of MAF who have worked for over 20 years be absorbed and giving appointment letters before retirement
- To look at the Patient Right Act for further details and advise on HR matters,
- To ensure that the Migration of Clerical Cadre into Functional Tittles be completed before end of 2021.
- To look into issue of upgrading and confirmation of staffs staying in the regions

13. NEXT STEPS

1. Continuation with outreach programme to remaining districts
2. Recruitment of a consultant for the review of the Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules
3. Conduct of Nationwide consultation at district level on the review of the Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules

Submitted by:

Ibrahim S. Kamara

Corporate Strategy and Administration Directorate

1ST July, 2021

ANNEX

A. List to be acted upon by HRMO

NO	NAME	DESIGNATION	PINCODE	MDA	DOFA	REMARKS	ACTION
1	Fatmata Koroma	Agriculture Instructor	142369	MAF	10/6/1986	On payroll but no appointment letter	To issue appointment letter
2	Abu Bakarr Sheriff	Agro- Technician	140733	MAF	1/11/1982	On payroll but no appointment letter	To issue appointment letter
3	Abdul Rahman Jalloh	Agriculture Instructor	142419	MAF	10/12/1988	Over 10 years in one position and have done related advance courses	MDA to recommend him for Upgrading
4	Daniel K. Gibrilla	Agro- Technician	143522	MAF	27/06/1980	On payroll but no appointment letter	To issue appointment letter
5	Foday P. Koroma		142326	MAF		On payroll but no appointment letter	To issue appointment letter
6	Martha Tarawallie	Field Enumerator	42469	MAF	1/2/1987	On payroll but no appointment letter	To issue appointment letter

Note, record of service and other related documents are available for the above names.