

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OFFICE

PHASE THREE REPORT ON NATIONWIDE OUTREACH PROGRAMME

WITH CIVIL SERVANTS

IN KAMBIA AND PORT LOKO DISTRICTS



28TH - 30TH September,
2021



MINISTERIAL BUILDING, GEORGE STREET, FREETOWN

SUPPORT TO THE GOVERNANCE SECTOR IN SIERRA LEONE



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- A. List of participants that need urgent attention from the Director General, HRMO due to stagnation

1. INTRODUCTION

The Director General, HRMO and Team's Nationwide Outreach visit at district level across the country has continued in its third phase, through a day Outreach Programme/meeting with Civil Servants in the District Headquarter towns of Kambia and Port Loko on 28th and 30th September, 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 two districts.

The 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 programmes in the Sierra Leone 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 are:

- To establish a direct line of communication with Civil Servants in the districts,
- To understand their grievances and challenges in the discharge of their duties
- To address some of their problems within the reach of the Director General, HRMO
- To engage MDAs leadership on issues that need collaboration
- To understand the ongoing reforms and efforts of Government of Sierra Leone in improving public service delivery.
- To enlighten colleague civil servants to know as to how to channel their request and grievances on specific HR issues.

3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES 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 programmes
- 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 Kambia and Port Loko started with calls to order, followed by prayers in Muslim and Christian ways and introduction of chairman.



From left to right, The District Officer of Kambia and the Senior District Officer of Port Loko Districts who chaired the outreach programme in their respective districts.

5. CHAIRMAN OPENING REMARKS

In their opening remarks, the Chairmen of both districts welcomed the Director General, Human Resource Management Office and his Team to their respective districts.

They expressed their admiration for the Director General's leadership style for bringing Human Resource Management Office to the districts which is a novelty as it has never happened in the history of the Sierra Leone Civil Service.

They encouraged their colleague Civil Servants to take full advantage of the history making event and make meaningful inputs by expressing their major concerns and challenges they are faced with in the discharge of their duties for the citizenry of Sierra Leone.

The Chairmen 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 Ag. Director Corporate Strategy and Administration, Mr. Ibrahim S. Kamara making statement

The Ag. Director, Corporate Strategy and Administration , Mr. Ibrahim S. Kamara in his statements across the two districts, started by thanking the Chairmen and colleague Civil Servants across various MDAs for leaving their busy schedules to attend the outreach engagements. He furthered by informing participants that HRMO is implementing a lot of reform programmes and one of these is the Outreach programmes which has been conducted in six districts.

The Ag. Director laid the foundation of the Outreach meeting by telling participants why the HRMO Team led by the Director General is in their respective districts. He advanced that, the Outreach 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.

The Ag. Director added that, 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. He described the Director General of the Human Resource Management Office as a visionary leader who wants to see meaningful reforms in the Sierra Leone Civil Service that will motivate Civil Servants to bring about effective and efficient public service delivery.

He encouraged participants to avail themselves the opportunity to have meaningful interactions with the Director General, HRMO and his Team.

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

7. STATEMENT FROM THE DIRECTOR, MANAGEMENT SERVICES



The Director, Management Service, Mr. Patrick Kawa Making Statement

The Director started his statement by thanking colleagues present and requested for him to continue his statement on existing protocols. He said the previous speakers had hammered home the broad spectrum of activities undertaken by HRMO. The Director informed participants that even though HRMO is implementing the Civil Service reform programmes, it is also part of the reforms as he said the institution had transformed from the Establishment Secretary's Office to the Human Resource Management Office.

He said HRMO is responsible for aligning the functions and activities of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to that of the Central Government Agenda through the conduct of the Management and Functional Reviews, Job Analysis, Job Evaluation etc. for MDAs.

He concluded by saying that every Civil Servant's contributions to national development is key that is why the Director General and his Team are in the districts to interact with them so that they are brought to speed on the reforms process HRMO is undertaking and to as well have a feel of what their successes and challenges are in executing their official duties. He wished the participants fruitful deliberations.

8. STATEMENT FROM THE DIRECTOR, PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT



The Director, Performance Management, Mr. Usman Cherry Conteh making statement

The Director, Performance Management thanked the Chairmen and colleagues present. He gave a brief history of the Human Resource Management Office. He said the initiative to move HRMO to Civil Servants in the provinces to interact with them at district level is a laudable one and commended the Director General for such initiative.

He went further to say that previously it was not so easy to interact with senior officers of the Civil Service like the Director General but due to the initiative of the current visionary leader of HRMO, Civil Servants of all categories now have the opportunity to interact with him.

9. DIRECTOR GENERAL'S OUTREACH MESSAGES IN KAMBIA AND PORT LOKO DISTRICTS



The Director General, Mr. Ansu S. Tucker, making statement

The Director General (DG), HRMO started by thanking the chairmen for the hospitality accorded to him and team across the two districts. He also delivered greetings from HRMO to the people of Kambia and Port Loko districts. He commended the hardworking Civil Servants for their resilient shown towards national service bearing in mind the difficult environment under which they are working.

The Director General added that, when he assumed office, he realized that the Office is far removed from the people or clientele that he managed at district level. He informed 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 six districts.

In his brief background of HRMO, the Director General informed participants that, the Office presently known as the Human Resources Management Office (HRMO) was used to be called differently at different times – before and after Independence. Prior to Independence, 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 is the nucleus of the present day 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, tax collection, 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 of 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
- Dramatic growth in the size of the service created severe budgeting constraints on Government;
- Lack of productivity,
- Effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of services

These and many more led to the transformation of the Establishment Secretary's Office into 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 on high ethical standards.

The overarching goal is to develop a HR strategy, policies and service suited to future needs of the civil service.

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

9.1. EU SUPPORT TO GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

The Director General told participants that the Government of Sierra Leone is not in this reform process alone. The EU under the 11TH EDF 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. Director General said, Human Resource Management Office and Public Service Commission (PSC) are benefitting from the Civil Service Reform Component of the EU support.

The Director General informed participants that 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.

He said the EU project is to address salient interventions. Key amongst the many is the reviewing of our Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules. The Civil Service is guided by this Code, Regulations and Rules.

The Director General informed colleague Civil Servants that the Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules (CSCR&R) which serves as code of instruction on personnel matter, is 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, he informed participants to be in readiness as resources have been provided through EU support to engage them at districts level on consultation for the review of the Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules.

9.2. DISPARITY IN PAY

The Director General informed 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 subvented 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, the Director General 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 for the Wages and Compensation Commission has been sent to parliament for approval. Once it is enacted 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.

9.3. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

The Director General informed participants that under the EU support, HRMO is working to deepen the knowledge of Civil Servants on Individual Performance Appraisal System (IPAS) by conducting trainings and monitoring at central, regional and district levels. In the past IPAS was limited to Civil Servants in Grades 7 to 10. However, in 2019, HRMO cascaded IPAS to Grades 1 to 6 across the Civil Service.

Furthermore, the Annual Confidential Report (ACR) which was used to assess the performance of civil servants has been replaced with IPAS. Hence, recommendations for promotion by MDAs to HRMO no longer countenance ACR but IPAS.

Over the years a good number of civil servants have benefited from HRMO trainings on Target Setting and Conducting Appraisals as a means of institutionalizing performance management system as it is now the vogue in modern day management.

9.4. PROCESSING OF END OF SERVICE BENEFIT

The Director General elucidated on 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. HRMO and partners have tried to review the processes involved and have been able to cut down on some of the processes and bureaucracies.

9.5. PAYMENT OF PENSION

The Director General briefed colleague Civil Servants on the payment of pension. He said the pension scheme had been reviewed. This happened when he was working at the Ministry of Finance as Principal Deputy Financial Secretary, where he chaired and steered the process of reviewing pensions. The review led government to increase the minimum pension to Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Leones (Le 250,000) in 2018. He further said that the increase to the said amount was not enough as the most comprehensive solution to the problem will be found when the Wages and Compensation Commission comes into fruition and whose process is at an advanced stage.

9.6. MIGRATION OF CLERICAL CADRE INTO FUNCTIONAL TITLES

The Director General, informed participants 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.

He said 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 Staff Superintendent in the Civil Service. The Cadre had been stagnated and they can hardly be promoted beyond First Grade Clerk.

However, over the years the leadership of the civil service observed that the Clerical Cadre seems to be losing its value. In that regard, HRMO is migrating the Clerical Cadre into Functional Titles to reflect the various skills that Clerks possesses.

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

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. He said the Civil Service is a place to learn. According to him, the qualifications only lay the foundation for individuals to learn and understand the job. The trainings the officer undergoes give him a solid foundation to effectively execute official duties.

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 assured them that HRMO is working on starting to organize basic training programmes on soft skills for Civil Servants across all the districts. He said Skills like processing of retirement documents, handling disciplinary cases, Manpower Planning, addressing payroll issues, etc. will be organised.

9.8. GOVERNMENT ELECTRONIC TIME AND ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (GeTAMS)

The Director General informed participants on the introduction of the Government Electronic Time and Attendance Management System (GETAMS) in the Civil Service.

He reiterated Government's concern on attendance as it undermines productivity. He said, he has realized that time and attendance management is very poor at MDA level.

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.

9.9. PROMOTIONS

The Director General informed the participants that one of the challenges he has observed in the course of his nationwide outreach is stagnation of officers in one position. He said he observed that a lot of Civil Servants 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, he has started engaging some of the MDAs heads to see how best they can recommend at least those people who are due for promotion for which vacancies exist.

The Director General reiterated that he is in the districts to disseminate government policies and at the same time inform civil servants about the reforms undertaken and those underway.

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 come up with as many issues and as well ask as many questions as possible for the intervention of the outreach team.

The Director General concluded by thanking and congratulating all participants present in the outreach meetings for their audience and the wonderful turnout on such a quick notice.

Below are some of the pictorial evidences of Civil Servants attentively listening to Director General and Team outreach message in their respective districts.



Participants listening attentively to the Outreach message from the Director General and his Team in Kambia District



Participants attentively listening to the Outreach message in Port Loko District

10. DISCUSSION

After the Director General, Mr. Ansu Samuel Tucker's Outreach messages in each of the two districts, Colleague Civil Servants were given the opportunity to come up with issues that affect them in the discharge of their official duties. The discussion sessions 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:-

- The Ministry of Social Welfare do not have a Regional Director in the North-Western Region

- Risk/ remote allowance to officers transferred in hard to reach areas not given;
- Lack of accommodation for staff in the districts
- The issue of study leaves not been process on time
- Lack of office accommodation for officers at district level
- HRMO to engage MDAs to link transfers of officers to the provinces to the school calendar
- HRMO to engage the Ministry of Finance to be given relocation allowances to officers transfer to the provinces
- The issue of how the Electronic Time Attendance capture officers on duty outside their duty stations/field
- Lack of office equipment in the provinces
- Lack of mobility for officers at district level
- Issue of Annual Vacation Leave Allowances for officers at district level
- HRMO to improve on their Monitoring of MDAs on performance and attendance
- Issue of stagnation of officers in the provinces.
- Lack of manpower especially the junior cadre to do the job across key MDAs at districts and chieftdom levels.
- The issue of disparity in salary for Civil Servants with same designation and grade was strongly discussed to be demotivating,
- Also staff posted to some districts without accommodation and office space,
- HRMO and the Civil Service Leadership to speed up the harmonization of salaries for civil servants

11. 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 and have to do with other MDAs and high level policy for solution.



The Director General and Team responding to Civil Servants concerns and comments in Kambia District



The Director General and Team responding to Civil Servants concerns and comments in Port Loko District.

12. 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 had noted all their concerns. 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.



Group photo of participants in Kambia District



Group photo of participants in Port Loko District

13. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- HRMO to engage heads of MDAs to consider the school calendar when doing internal transfers to the provinces

- 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.
- HRMO to engage the Ministry of Finance on providing rent allowances to officers posted in the provinces
- HRMO to engage the Ministry of Finance on relocation and risk allowances to officers posted in the provinces
- 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 abreasted 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.
- Heads of MDAs at district level to recommend Clerical staffs for migration into functional titles in line with their skills and jobs that they perform

14. ACTION POINTS FOR DG, HRMO

- To engage the Ministries of Finance on relocation allowances for officers transferred to the districts
- To engage the Ministry of Finance on accommodation allowances for officers in the districts,
- To engage MDAs Leadership to consider the school calendar when doing internal transfers
- 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.

15. NEXT STEPS

1. Continuation with outreach programme to remaining districts

Submitted by:

Ibrahim S. Kamara

Director,

Corporate Strategy and Administration

14th October, 2021

ANNEX

A. List to be acted upon by HRMO

NO	NAME	DESIGNATION	PINCODE	MDA	DOFA	REMARKS	ACTION
1	Aminata Naminatu Bangura	Social Services Worker	190386	MSW	1 st Sept. 1986	No promotion	To be recommende d by MSW
2	Mohamed Sillah Kamara	Social Services Assistant	190399	MSW	2 nd April 1991	Salary do not reflect the new promotion	To be placed in the new salary grade