

**AN SDG ACCELERATION ROADMAP FOR SIERRA LEONE**

***Putting Sierra Leone Big 5s Into Action***



**GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE**

**MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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## **Table of Content**

### ***Acknowledgement***

### ***Summary of the Roadmap***

#### **1. Introduction and global context**

#### **2. The UN Call for SDG Acceleration Action Plan from Members States**

#### **3. Summary of Sierra Leone's SDG performance midway into implementation**

3.1. Macroeconomic performance

3.2. Incidence of poverty and hunger, SDGs 1 and 2

3.3. Integrated progress in others SDGs

3.4. Challenges and lessons learned during the first half of the SDGs

#### **4. Looking ahead to 2030: the SDG acceleration roadmap for Sierra Leone**

4.1. Data and consultation process on the SDG Acceleration Roadmap

4.2 Principle guiding stakeholder work on defining priority actions

4.3 Derived priority actions and SDGs for acceleration

#### **5. Institutional Arrangement for delivering accelerated plan**

### **Conclusion**

### ***Annexes***

## **Acronyms**

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

VNR: Voluntary National Review

ODA: Official Development Assistance

UNDP: United National Development Programme

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

## Summary of the Roadmap

Three priority SDGs have been identified through research and nationwide multi-stakeholder consultation for acceleration in the next 7 years remaining for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The roadmap formulation process spanned a period of two months, starting from mid-July to about mid-September 2023, involving more than 100 participants nationwide, including central and local government practitioners, development partners, civil society, the parliament and academia. The three priority SDGs identified are: *reduced poverty (SDGs 1)*, *zero hunger (SDG 2)*, and *reduced inequality (SDG10)*. Fifteen top priority actions were pulled out for accelerating the achievement of benchmarks underlying these SDGs. The Government of Sierra Leone's Big 5 Game Changers and the United Nations Guidance Note provided strategic direction in the consultation process and identification of the priority SDGs and actions to take forward; with the top among the state Big 5s deemed directly capturing the three top priority SDGs being: *Feed Salone (B5.1)*, *Human Capital Development (B5.2)*, and *Youth Employment Scheme*. Therefore, the leading SDG Acceleration commitments for Sierra Leone are: **1) Feeding Salone; 2) Leveraging Human Capital Development; and 3) Promoting Youth Employment Scheme**; which are perceived to be most imperative in reducing poverty and inequality and hence ensuring socioeconomic stability and sustainable development. The remaining two of the Big 5s (*Enhancing Public Service Architecture*, and *Advancing Technology, Infrastructure and Innovation*) are perceived to be enablers and multipliers to catalyse the delivery of the benchmarks underlying SDGs 1, 2 and 10. The ancillary SDGs identified as priority enablers in this direction are: *quality education (SDG4)*, *affordable and clean energy (SDG7)*, *decent work (8)*, and *peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16)*; which are also worth giving priority attention in the next 7 years.

## 1. Introduction and global context

1. In September 2015, Sierra Leone joined other member states of the United Nations to commit to a new global development framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The new agenda has been pursued around 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), building on and addressing the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals implemented from 2000 to 2015. The Government of Sierra Leone swiftly domesticated the 17 SDGs, integrating them into the country's national development plan and its medium-term expenditure framework informing the annual budget of the state.
2. In 2016, Sierra Leone was among the first 22 member states that presented Voluntary National Review (VNR) reports to the UN, indicating critical initial steps they had undertaken to implement the new global agenda. In 2019 and 2021, the country presented its 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> reports, detailing progress since 2016.<sup>1</sup> It has also done three Voluntary Local Reviews in the context of localising the SDGs, covering Pujehun, Kambia and Bonthe Districts.
3. Today, the globe is midway through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, taking stock of member state efforts in delivering the 17 SDGs in the last eight years. While nations have been steadfast in pursuing these goals, it has been discouraging to note that *a reversed development progress trajectory* was witnessed globally as a result of multiple and interlocking crises. These range from climate change challenges to pollution, biodiversity loss, the Covid-19 pandemic and geopolitical and economic tensions, as well as a global food and fuel crisis fueled by the war in Ukraine. In addition, government debt across the globe has risen to elevated levels. The increase in interest rates and the relative strength of the US Dollar has made borrowing costs a burden, thus squeezing the fiscal space of many developing countries and undermining growth. Consequently, the globe's ambitious hope of denting poverty everywhere and achieving prosperity for all by 2030 was dashed in the last eight years, risking those already left behind to remain there, and even falling further behind for many.
4. Principally, these challenges explain why we have seen very low development performance in the first half of the 2030 agenda across the world. Globally, only 12 percent of assessable SDG targets were achieved since 2015; with, for instance, more than 500 million people projected to still remain in extreme poverty (SDG2), while *two-thirds* of countries would fail to reduce national poverty by half by 2030 (SDG1), if the current trends continue. A few areas where notable progress was recorded during 2016-2023 included healthcare (SDG3). There has been some encouraging progress on global health, with 146 out of 200 countries or areas having already met or being on track to meet SDG3 target on under-5 mortality. Effective HIV treatment reduced global AIDS-related deaths by 52 percent since 2010, with at least *one* neglected tropical disease eliminated in 47 countries. Details on progress made in the implementation of the SDGs at the global level can be obtained at the UN website, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/>, for all reports since 2016, including the 2023 SDGs Special Edition Report that constitutes the mid-term review of the implementation of the goals since they were launched in 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> The three VNR reports (2016, 2019 and 2021) can be obtained from the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone, Freetown.

5. The generally off-track performance of the SDGs was highly attributed to the dwindling gross global output (GDP) during the multiple crises. Output had to contract by 4 percent in 2020, following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The dramatic growth recovery from the pandemic anticipated during 2021-2023 was made impossible owing to the start of the war in Ukraine. As growth was recovering to 5.5 percent in 2021, it was projected to continue to grow by 4.0 percent in 2022 and 3.2 percent in 2023. Yet, the rising geopolitical tensions produced by this war has exacerbated the already constrained global economy, leaving an output growth of 3.0 percent in 2022 and a forecast of 2.4 percent in 2023, below pre-Ukraine-war projections. Member states witnessed a precipitous decline in their revenues as a consequence, especially in the developing countries that faced high-debt risks and distress. While official development assistance registered record highs (mostly in response to refugee crises) during these challenging times, the SDG financing gap worryingly increased to almost two-fold from US\$2.5 trillion pre-pandemic gap levels.

## 2. The UN call for SDG Acceleration Action Plan from Members States

6. The forgoing bleak performance outlook in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda amidst multiple and overlapping crises motivated the call by the UN for member states to recommit to the implementation of the SDGs for the remaining half of the global agenda up to 2030. “The SDG Summit in September 2023 [during the UN General Assembly] provides an opportunity to change course and to secure the breakthroughs and momentum needed to achieve the goals by 2030....The Secretary-General [has] urged world leaders to help deliver a ‘Rescue Plan for People and Planet’ at the Summit, including by announcing national and global commitments at the Summit that will help drive SDG transformation for inclusion and sustainability in the years ahead.”<sup>2</sup> Essentially, all member states, including Sierra Leone are expected to present an SDG Acceleration Plan reflecting a roadmap embodying a set of commitments to deliver over the next *seven* years.

7. While acknowledging that member states have been steadfast in the implementation of the SDGs in the past 8 years, there is a need to further strengthen momentum and demonstrate “that every country has a clear path to SDG success”. Thus, countries are encouraged through a *UN Guidance Note*<sup>3</sup> to outline forward-looking results-oriented *National Commitments* for SDG acceleration and transformation at the Summit that focuses on the following areas:

- a. *Identifying SDG transitions and priority areas of investment*: - This is expected to draw from existing national development planning and implementation processes; VNR reporting and related exercises, and any other relevant analytic works (such as the UNDP integrated SDG Transformation analysis to help identify priority areas for SDG investment and priority policy changes that would yield the greatest multiplier effects across the goals going forward).
- b. *Benchmark for reducing poverty and inequality*: - Countries are encouraged to put forward at the Summit an ambitious national benchmark for reducing poverty and inequality

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<sup>2</sup> See the UN Guidance Notes for member states at: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Guidance%20Note%20on%20National%20Commitments.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Guidance%20Note%20on%20National%20Commitments.pdf>

between now and 2030 informed by investments made in the priority areas identified in (a) above, coupled with other investments. **This encourages member states to prioritise SDG1 (ending poverty), SDG2 (ending hunger) and SDG10 (reducing inequality) for benchmarking for the next seven years up to 2030 and to define acceleration actions that are deemed to directly impact these SDGs.**

- c. *National institutional arrangement to deliver the goals:* - While member states established specific institutional arrangements to oversee SDG implementation, it is critical to enhance these arrangements in the coming years to drive accelerated investments towards achieving the benchmarks in (b) and in other SDGs.<sup>4</sup>

8. The *UN Guidance Note* also calls for global commitments, especially from the developed countries to support the accelerated investment plans of developing countries to return the SDGs on track and increase their achievement by 2030. These commitments are expected to draw from the Secretary-General's proposal for an SDG Stimulus<sup>5</sup> reflecting the following key issues:

- a. *Scale up and fulfil ODA commitments:* Including to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to the least developed countries.
- b. *Re-channel all unused Special Drawing Rights:* Focusing on countries in need including through multilateral development banks.
- c. *Immediately suspend all pending debt payments.* To free up fiscal space for countries in more desperate situation.
- d. *Common Framework:* Commit to improve upon or replace the Common Framework with an effective sovereign debt workout mechanism.
- e. *Trade policies:* Align national and regional trade policies with the SDGs
- f. *Climate finance:* Deliver on climate finance commitments made in Copenhagen, Paris and Glasgow, replenish the Green Climate Fund and double adaptation finance before 2025.
- g. *Research and innovation:* Increase funding for SDG-related research and innovation on underlying social issues.

Before presenting Sierra Leone's SDG Acceleration Roadmap in the above context, we will present in the next section a summary of the country's performance in the implementation of the SDGs in the last eight years. This will highlight strengths to build on, specific challenges to address and lessons to learn from as we move forward, drawing additional direction from the UN guidance.

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<sup>4</sup> For the UN Guidance Note for the preparation of SDG Acceleration Roadmap, please refer to: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Guidance%20Note%20on%20National%20Commitments.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [SDG-Stimulus-to-Deliver-Agenda-2030.pdf \(un.org\)](#).



### 3. Summary of Sierra Leone's SDG performance midway into implementation

#### 3.1. Macroeconomic performance

9. Like many other countries in the developing world, there was high optimism in Sierra Leone for sustained positive growth and declining poverty after the inauguration of the SDGs and the successive integration of the goals into the country's national development plans. This hope has, however, been decimated by the multiple and repeated shocks witnessed by the global economy between 2020 and 2022. After signs of buoyant growth in 2019 at 5.3 percent, the economy contracted by 2.0 percent in 2020 following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which left several sectors, such as tourism, travel, and trade, hard hit. This situation significantly weakened domestic revenue collection efforts.

10. In an effort to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on particularly the poor and the vulnerable, the Government developed the Quick Action Economic Response Programme (QAERP). The QAERP was anchored on five clusters: (i) to build and maintain an adequate stock level of essential commodities; (ii) to provide support to businesses; (iii) to provide safety nets to vulnerable groups; (iv) to support labour-based public works and (v) provide assistance towards local production and processing of food items. Following the implementation of the QAERP and with support from Development Partners, including the IMF, World Bank, European Union, Islamic Development Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and other partners, the economy recovered, growing strongly by 4.1 percent in 2021. However, this recovery growth was constrained by the fallout of the Ukraine war and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economies of developing countries like Sierra Leone. With the country susceptible to the spillovers of the crises, constituting supply disruptions, rising food and energy prices, and unfavourable domestic developments, including lower-than-expected mining performance, growth slowed to 3.6 percent in 2022.

11. Recent reforms in Sierra Leone have come after the country's experience with the Ebola Virus Disease from 2014 to 2016, spiraling public debt (70 percent of non-iron ore GDP) in 2017 and expenditure overruns and piling up of arrears before the 2018 elections. In terms of budgetary receipts, the Government has been embarking on several tax reforms through the National Revenue Authority to boost domestic revenue mobilisation, while also seeking support for external grants. In 2018, domestic revenue and grants increased to Le5.1 trillion (15.7 percent of non-iron ore GDP) from 4.02 trillion (14.8 percent of non-iron ore GDP) in 2017. This further increased to Le6.7 trillion (18.0 of GDP) in 2019. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, domestic revenue and grants performed lower than earlier anticipated, reaching **Le7.8 trillion (19 percent of GDP)** in 2020. As the economy recovered from COVID-19, total domestic revenue and grants reached Le9.3 trillion (21.1 percent of GDP) in 2021. With all efforts to boost domestic revenues and mobilise grants, public expenditures have risen significantly due to general expansion in government programmes, an increase in the wage bill and rising debt service. Total Expenditure and Net Lending in 2018 was Le6.8 trillion (21.1 percent of GDP) in 2018, Le7.7 trillion (20.0 percent of GDP) in 2019 and Le10.0 trillion (24.4 percent) in 2020. This increasing trend reflects the need to finance priority programmes of the government and COVID-19-induced expenditures that emerged in 2020. In 2021, Total expenditure and Net Lending reached Le12.14 trillion, with wages and salaries accounting for 32.3 percent, while total interest payments accounted for 10.4 percent. It must be noted that the abrupt shocks to economic growth, sluggish domestic revenue

performance, and measures taken to contain the pandemic continue to create significant budgetary pressures, thus widening the fiscal deficit.

12. Sierra Leone has struggled to cope with rising inflation in recent years due to its vulnerability to global shocks and the persistent depreciation of its currency. Over several years, Sierra Leone's inflation has been higher than the average for Sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, while inflation in Sierra Leone was 10.83 percent in 2016, the Sub-Saharan African average was 10.26. Maintaining single-digit inflation in recent times has been extremely challenging, with rates ranging between 10 percent to 18 percent between 2016 and 2021. In 2022, inflation reached 27 percent, significantly higher than the 14.5 percent recorded in Sub-Saharan Africa. The rise in global prices of food and fuel, the strengthening of the Dollar against foreign currencies including the Leone and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have inflicted pressure on domestic prices.

### **3.2. Incidence of poverty and hunger, SDGs 1 and 2**

13. Following the outbreak of the pandemic in 2019, Sierra Leone's income poverty was reported to have increased from 56.8 percent in 2018<sup>6</sup> to 58.9 percent in 2020.<sup>7</sup> While rural poverty was reported far higher at 73.9 percent than urban poverty at 34.8 percent in 2018, the onset of COVID-19 saw the urban region proportionately more affected than the rural sector, according to the World Bank. For instance, Freetown (the capital city) recorded an 11 percent increase in poverty in 2020, from 17.7 percent in 2018; while registering slight increases for other urban settlements, from 45.2 in 2018 to 46.3 percent in 2020; the incidence was reportedly unchanged in the rural settings, "or may even have marginally declined".<sup>8</sup>

14. Restrictions in the movement of people during COVID could have disproportionately affected urban inhabitants. It was noted, "that casual non-farming employment was affected most. Markets closures and travel restrictions affected households whose income was reliant on trade and travel".<sup>9</sup> During this period, the population able to afford required meals per week declined "by 20 percent during April–July 2020...soaring up the food insecure to 63 percent in June 2020 from 53.3 percent in August 2019".<sup>10</sup> In absolute terms, the food insecure were estimated "at 5.1 million in July 2020, an increase of 41 percent from 3.9 million in January 2020".<sup>11</sup>

15. Despite some improvements in the nutrition and health situation in Sierra Leone from 2014 to 2021 as indicated in National Nutrition Survey, the country remains systemically affected by the various global and country specific crises and shocks that have destabilised the country over the last decade. The most recently available Nutrition Survey conducted in 2021 indicated a national prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) of 5.2 percent (4.2 percent Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and 1 percent Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). Overall, the acute malnutrition situation is deemed to be 'poor' according to the WHO (2006) threshold of 5-9.9 percent. An estimated 64,826 children under five years suffer from SAM and at highest risk of death in Sierra Leone, whereby more than 200,000 children under 5 and up to 20,000 Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW)s with moderate acute malnutrition are at risk of becoming severe cases.

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<sup>6</sup> Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey (SLIHS2018).

<sup>7</sup> World Bank Update on Sierra Leone, 2021, pp. 38–9.

<sup>8</sup> (World Bank Update on Sierra Leone, 2021 p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> World Bank Update on Sierra Leone, 2021 p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Development Programme. 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

The situation remains unpredictable due to the multiple threats and external shocks including ongoing heavy rains and overall economic decline in the country.

### 3.3. Integrated progress in others SDGs

16. Despite the multiple global shocks to the economy of Sierra Leone in the last eight years of implementing the 2030 Agenda, the government strategically pursued the SDGs within the national development plan. It executed a series of recovery strategies to stem the effects of these shocks on the implementation of the country's medium-term national development plan and long-term sustainable development objectives. Recovery strategies included initiatives implemented under the Quick Action Economic Recovery Programme discussed above to stave off the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The progress presented in the following paragraphs is culled from series of review reports on the implementation of the national development plan and the SDGs, including the 2022 Mid-Term Review Report on the Sierra Leone MTNDP 2019-2021, the Sierra Leone's 2021 Voluntary National Review report on the SDGs, and the UN Annual Results Reports, which are all obtained from the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development.

17. The government chose **SDG4 (inclusive education)** and **16 (peace, justice and strong institutions)** as accelerator Goals for Sierra Leone, implemented with the greatest attention. The two Goals were perceived as most imperative to the transformation of the Sierra Leone economy, and deemed more impactful in propelling the rest of the SDGs.

18. For example, the Free Quality School Education Programme implemented under Goal 4 saw an immediate increase in school enrolment by more than 600,000 pupils in 2019, following the launch of the programme in 2018. To date, enrolment has increased in excess of **one million**, including for girls and pupils with disabilities, with sustained investment in the programme. School feeding, free tuition fees, and providing teaching and learning materials in government and government-assisted schools accompanied this programme. Additionally, the government provided special funding for girls' education; a substantial share dedicated to those offering Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in schools. Under SDG16, special focus was paid to increasing provision of free legal services for underprivileged persons. Since the country's Legal Aid Board was established in 2015, more than **one million two hundred thousand** less privileged persons have received free legal services from the Board.<sup>12</sup>

19. The provision of free school education and legal services for a large segment of society under these two Goals (promoting inclusive education and ensuring peaceful and just societies) yielded financial savings for the less privileged that they could have used to meet welfare needs covering other SDGs, such as basic food for hunger reduction (under SDG2), ending poverty in general (under SDG1), and healthcare needs (under SDG3).

20. In respect of SDG16 target on ending trafficking and all forms of violence against children (16.2), a total of 138 newly recruited social workers were trained and deployed in 2023 to support child protection related activities in Sierra Leone; the number of social workers increasing from 53 before 2023.

21. From a long-term standpoint, we did find the two accelerator goals to have generally been instrumental to reducing inequality under SDG10 in all dimensions: including addressing the exclusion of the underprivileged from basic services, covering persons with disabilities; coupled

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<sup>12</sup> Details on progress in the implementation of these accelerator SDGs can be seen in the 2019 and 2021 VNR reports of Sierra Leone, obtainable from the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Freetown.

with the impact of the accelerators in addressing gender inequality under SDG5, which was reinforced by the country's "Hands-Off Our Girls" campaign to end child marriage and reduce teenage pregnancy. To eliminate violence against women and girls, the country revised the National Referral Protocol on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (GBV),<sup>13</sup> scaled up the services of One Stop Centers, and became the first country to pilot the Interagency GBV Information Management System in non-humanitarian, government led setting.<sup>14</sup>

22. Indeed, scaling-up efforts on SDG5 target on elimination of harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriages is critical for Sierra Leone, as one of the high burden countries, with 30 percent of marriages before 18 years old, and 83 percent of girls and women having undergone some form of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting.<sup>15</sup> The passing into law with presidential ascent of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act in December 2022 has paved a way for strengthened female voice in critical decision making processes that is expected to scale-up actions for the development of the girl child and women.

23. Reduction of healthcare inequality was a major target, combining SDG3 and 10; pursued with the implementation of a *Free Health Care Initiative* for special population, including pregnant women, lactating mothers, and under-five children; alongside a functioning *National Public Health Agency* coordinating the implementation of strategies to prevent and treat infectious diseases such as Ebola Viral Disease, Tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS. The combined effects of these efforts are expected to be scaled-up through the planned implementation of a national *Social Health Insurance Scheme* to guarantee social protection in health services for all, including the less privileged. To date, integrated efforts under various SDGs, including 3 and 10, have seen us, for instance, recording a reduction in maternal mortality rate to less than 500 deaths per 100,000 live births, from more than 700 deaths in 2019 and more than 1,000 deaths in 2013. We note, however, that while there has been remarkable improvement in maternal mortality rates, the under-five mortality is currently 4<sup>th</sup> highest in the world, as reported by the UNICEF; newborn and post newborn mortality both remaining major concerns and needing an accelerated actions at facility and community level with continuous quality control measures.

24. We pursued various other angles to address inequality, including through the pursuit of *decent work* programmes under SDG8, with the employment of more than 10,000 youths in agricultural farms, regulated fishing activities, garbage collection and disposal operations, carwash centres, and various institutions for wage employment. At the same time, thousands more were trained in numerous skills.

25. In response to the ravages of Covid-19 pandemic, we expanded our Social Safety Net cash transfer programme from 35,000 to 100,000 households, with a dedicated quota for people with disabilities; and provided in-kind support to more than 11,000 persons with disabilities during two rounds of lockdown. This was over and above a credit facility launched by the Central Bank of Sierra Leone amounting to an equivalent of US\$50 million to support the production, importation and distribution of essential commodities towards meeting the minimum needs of our population, at the time.

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<sup>13</sup> [National-Referral-Protocol-on-Sexual-and-Gender-Based-Violence-report.pdf \(mbsseknowledgeplatform.gov.sl\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Gender Based Violence Information Management System Launched in Sierra Leone to Promote Response to Increased Risks Against Women and Girls in the Upcoming Elections \(unicef.org\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> Demographic Health Survey (DHS) Sierra Leone, 2019, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2017.

26. The progress highlighted above is significantly underpinned by strides made on SDG17 (means of implementation and partnerships for the goals). We scaled-up cooperation with our Development Partners including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) during the period under review, especially in stemming and recovering from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been critical to ensuring continued implementation of our National Development Plan and the SDGs in the multiple and overlapping crises we faced.<sup>16</sup>

27. There was an increased investment in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) through the establishment of a Directorate of STI in the office of the President, working in collaboration with related outfits in public ministries, departments and agencies; coupled with complementary and scaled-up operations in the private sector, including mobile technology penetrations. To date, the percentage of the population covered with mobile services is now more than 80 percent, on the back of more than 90 percent of national area covered by mobile voice services. This has steadily positively impacted digital financial services, including agency banking covering a large rural population. We witnessed increased digital applications in public sector management for effective and efficient service delivery.

### **3.4. Challenges and lessons learned during the first half of the SDGs**

28. **Challenges:** - As many other least-developed countries, Sierra Leone encountered specific and common challenges in the implementation of the SDGs within the broad context of the ongoing global crises. These challenges can be found in the various review reports produced by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development on the implementation of the SDGs and National Development Plan.<sup>17</sup> The following are broad challenges encountered in the implementation of the SDGs, coupled with the multiple and interlocking global crises mentioned earlier:

- a. The country encountered inadequate funding to effectively implement planned development programmes. Limited funding could not permit meaningful implementation of its Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF), which presents a range of options to mobilise required financing for the SDGs.
- b. It struggled to overcome general governance challenges in the mobilisation of domestic resources, including underutilisation of available technology and innovation embedded in revenue collection strategies by the public. The continued dominance of the informal sector reinforced these challenges, complemented by business resistance to the use of automation mechanisms in mobilising state revenue.
- c. Illicit financial flows remain a problem of every African state, especially resource-rich nations like Sierra Leone requiring strengthened development cooperation and cross-

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<sup>16</sup> Details on progress in the implementation of these accelerator SDGs can be seen in the 2019 and 2021 VNR reports of Sierra Leone, obtainable from the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Freetown. . See also Sierra Leone's Mid-Term Review on the implementation of the country's Medium-Term National Development, obtainable from the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Freetown.

<sup>17</sup> Among these reports are a) the Sierra Leone's MTNDP 2019-2023 Mid-Term Review Report 2022; and b) the Sierra Leone's 2021 Voluntary National Review (VNR) report. Challenges can also be found in the reports produced by the various line ministries, departments and agencies of government, and those produced by development partners such as the UN agencies support the implementation of the national development plan and SDG in Sierra Leone.

border engagement to effectively resolve them. Additionally, more remains to be done on the general front of fighting corruption in the country.

- d. There are also constraints to unleashing the financing potential of the general population, including the rural/village economy that is yet to be realised owing to inadequate legal, policy and operational infrastructure for financial inclusion. Inadequate energy supply and ICT infrastructure add to these constraints, limiting access to the internet for masses in rural areas, coupled with high illiteracy in segments of the population.

29. **Key lessons learned:** - These include (but are not limited to) the following:

- a. Prioritising domestic production processes and revenue mobilisation is extremely critical to building national capability to respond to external shocks and hence in achieving sustainable development—*diversify the economy; reduce reliance on external market for domestic consumption.*
- b. It is also noted that, to grow sustainably requires optimal placement of the people at the centre of financing for development. That is, fully addressing the bottlenecks of financial inclusion, including overturning the perennial problems of the informal sector, and transforming them into formal operations, is exceedingly central to the transformation and sustainable development of the country—*mobilise the people and optimise financial inclusion to supply the resources required for sustainable development.*
- c. Development cooperation and multilateralism remains a critical resource for sustainable development for both developed and developing countries—*increase investment in this area.*
- d. Getting priority and sequencing right is extremely critical in furthering judicious use of resources and transforming the economy—*it suggests the need for integrated approaches and prioritisation of intervention with the most multiplier effects at any point in time.*
- e. Having an integrated financing framework informed by constant analytics of resource options is fundamental to the achieving the SDGs—*the pursuit of multiple financing options with a domestic lens as a priority.*

#### **4. Looking ahead to 2030: the SDG acceleration roadmap for Sierra Leone**

30. Against the above background, this section will present scaled-up actions to accelerate the implementation of priority SDGs for the remaining seven years of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The priority investment areas and SDGs derived therefrom came out of nationwide multistakeholder consultation process described in the following sub-section.

##### **4.1. Data and consultation process on the SDG Acceleration Roadmap**

31. The process started by preparing a background consultation document based on desk review and key informant discussions to guide the generation of priority actions to accelerate the SDGs in Sierra Leone. A technical team comprising key government technicians and UN agency experts was formed to review the draft consultation document and help provide technical direction to the process, under the leadership of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. The entire

process lasted for approximately two months to come up with the final acceleration roadmap, effectively beginning mid-July, till first week September 2023.

32. A one-day multistakeholder workshop was held in Freetown on 31<sup>st</sup> August for intensive discussions on priority actions, following smaller meetings at different stakeholder levels. The workshop mainly involved central and local government officials, civil society representatives, the academia, and UN agency representatives, summing up to more than 100 **participants** for the full day workshop on priority investment areas.

33. Actions for acceleration were generated from two broad sources: a) documented sources; and b) participant contributions during the workshops. The draft consultation document discussed at the workshop had listed a range of strategic and recommended actions from documented sources, which participants reviewed and validated. The following paragraphs summarise these sources.

#### ***Government of Sierra Leone Big 5 Game Changers***

34. The Government of Sierra Leone was concluding the implementation of its five-year MTNDP 2019-2023 and had begun preparations for the formulation of a new plan for 2024-2028. Accordingly, the government had articulated its Big 5 Game Changers as its current overarching strategic framework for consolidating and accelerating efforts towards achieving its middle-income status by 2035 through successive National Development Plans. Providing principal direction to the country's new MTNDP 2024-2028, the Big 5 constitute broad commitments for sustained poverty reduction and socioeconomic transformation consistent with the UN call for accelerated and transformative actions from member states towards achieving the SDGs by 2030. These broad commitments (the Big 5) are as follows:

- a. *Feed Salone*: Essentially aimed at boosting agricultural productivity to ensure food security and inclusive economic growth;
- b. *Human Capital Development*: Focusing on nurturing inclusive skills and a healthy population for the 21<sup>st</sup> century demands through scaled-up investment in human capital development;
- c. *Youth Employment Scheme as a Catalyst for Democracy, Economic Productivity and National Security*: Aimed at creating 500,000 jobs for youths in the next five years;
- d. *Enhancing Public Service Architecture for Empowering Democracy and National Development*: Aimed at ensuring effective service delivery, efficiency and professionalism in the public service architecture; and
- e. *Technology and Infrastructure*: Focused on increasing investment in infrastructure, technology and digitalisation.

#### ***The 2022 Mid-Term Review Report on Sierra Leone's MTNDP 2019-2023***

35. The following strategic areas of emphasis were identified going forward with the plan implementation 2022-2023 and in the formulation/implementation of the successor to the current development plans:

- a. Scaling-up investment in Human Capital Development
- b. Scaling-up investment in Presidential Infrastructure Initiatives
- c. Pursuing the Western Area Peninsula Local Economic Development Initiative
- d. Science, Technology and Innovation

- e. Gender and Climate Change
- f. Harnessing the Blue Economy potential of Sierra Leone
- g. Harnessing the Demographic Dividend potential of Sierra Leone
- h. Implementation of integrated national financing framework

### ***Sierra Leone's 2021 Voluntary National Review Report***

36. Among the key actions recommended for accelerating the implementation of the SDGs in Sierra Leone during the 2021 VNR process include the following:

- a. Diversify sources of financing the projects and programmes
- b. Scale-up implementation of the country's Integrated National Financing Framework.
- c. De-risk the economy to attract more private investment, strengthening property rights and good institutions; protecting the rule of law, pursuing peace and national cohesion.
- d. Strengthen e-governance in the public sector
- e. Increasing investment in enabling infrastructure, such as energy, water and ICT
- f. Scale up mobile network coverage to increase rural capture in the broadband, necessary for enhancing financial inclusion
- g. Increase fight against corruption and illicit financial flows.
- h. Strengthen and optimise development cooperation.
- i. Scale-up investment in human capital development, putting education at the centre.
- j. Scale up investment in providing legal aid for the less privileged and poor
- k. Increase support for monitoring and evaluation, national statistical system
- l. Enhance public sector capacity and performance.
- m. Increase the role of civil society/NGO in service delivery
- n. Deepen the decentralisation programme and localisation of the SDGs

### ***Other sources of secondary information on acceleration actions***

The process of developing the roadmap examined a range of other review reports on the implementation of the national development plan and the SDGs at various operational levels. See **Annex 1** for the entire range of secondary sources and a summary of recommended actions for SDG acceleration contained in those sources; including actions culled from numerous sector reviews within the government system, sector reviews related to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, analytic works such as the UNDP Integrated SDG Insights Reports, and district level development priorities.

### ***Primary inputs generated during the breakout session at the one-day multistakeholder consultation workshop on the roadmap development***

37. As indicated above, the workshop was held on 31<sup>st</sup> August in Freetown, bringing together a total of more than 100 different actors, including central and local government officials, civil society representatives, the academia, and UN agency representatives. Participants were organised into *five working groups* during the workshop to essentially review the secondary data on potential acceleration actions, while providing complementary perspective inputs to fill the gaps in the required priority actions to accelerate SDG implementation.



### *Determination of priority actions*

38. Accordingly, all priority actions identified for acceleration of the SDGs from research and consultation process were integrated with the government’s Big 5 initiatives, including the perspective inputs from various stakeholders, including those of civil society. At the consultative workshop, participants were asked to debate and select the *top five actions* deemed most impactful from each of the information sources reviewed; and to fill the gaps where necessary by critically proposing complementary actions. These were all integrated with the Big 5 initiatives. Those that did not directly fall under any one of the Big 5s were accordingly treated as enablers, expected to broadly catalyse the implementation of the Big 5 initiatives (*see the next section and Table 1 on the importance of the Big 5 as a guiding principle and the role of enablers in achieving the strategic objectives of the Big 5*).

## **4.2 Principle guiding stakeholder work on defining priority actions**

### *The primacy of the Big 5*

39. It should be noted as alluded above that, the Government of Sierra Leone had already identified evidence-based priority action for accelerating implementation of national programmes for poverty reduction and sustainable development for the period up to 2028. The actions are arranged around the Big 5 aforementioned, reflecting broad commitments to principally guide the next National Development Plan 2024-2028 and by extension for accelerating the implementation of the SDGs and African Union Agenda 2063 in Sierra Leone (**see Annex 2**).

40. Furthermore, moving into the preparation of the new National Development Plan 2024-2028 which officially commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023, the Big 5 will constitute the strategic results areas of the new Plan, while underpinned by four defined *enablers* to catalyse the implementation of initiatives aimed at directly impact the strategic objectives of the Big 5 (**see Table**).

**Table 1: Proposed strategic oriented of the Sierra Leone New National Development Plan**

<b>The Big 5 Game Changers</b>
<b>1: Feed Salone</b>
<b>2: Human Capital Development</b>
<b>3: Youth Employment Scheme</b>
<b>4: Enhancing Public Service Architecture</b>
<b>5: Technology and Infrastructure Initiative</b>
<b>The Enablers</b>
<b>1: Diversifying the Economy and Promoting Growth</b>
<b>2: Presidential Initiative on Climate Change</b>
<b>3: Governance and Accountability for Results</b>
<b>4: Financing, Partnerships and Implementations</b>

41. Generally, therefore, the scale-up actions derived at the stakeholder workshop for accelerating the SDG implementation in Sierra Leone for the next 5 to 7 years have been aligned to government strategic focus areas, which are the Big 5 in Table 1 above. The most paramount of the 5s is FEEDING SIERRA LEONE (B5.1); followed by HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT (B5.2) and YOUTH EMPLOYMENT (B5.3).

*United Nations guidance note on SDGs 1, 2 and 10*

42. The United Nations guidance note encourages member states to prioritise SDG1 (ending poverty), SDG2 (ending hunger) and SDG10 (reducing inequality) for benchmarking for the next seven years up to 2030, as noted earlier. And these *three SDGs* are clearly consistent with the *first three Big 5s* of GoSL. **Therefore, among the scaled-up actions consistent with all Big 5s, those actions mapped to the first three 5s could be considered as most critical.**

43. The initial alignment of the SDGs to the Big 5 done by MoPED can be seen in **Table 2**, with the overarching SDGs 1, 2 and 10 appearing as expected; 2 and 10 mapped to B5.1, 5.2 & 5.3, while SDG1 linked to these three Big 5s, as well as the rest of the other 5s, presented as cross-cutting.

**Table 2: Linking the SDGs to the “Big Five” of the 2023 People’s Manifesto**

The Big Five	Related SDGs	Cross-Cutting SDGs
Feed Sierra Leone	   	
Human Capital Development	    	
Youth Empowerment Scheme-500,000 jobs creation	  	
Revamping the Public Service Architecture	 	
Technology and Infrastructure	   	

*Continued centrality of Sierra Leone’s Accelerator SDGs 4 and 16*

44. As noted earlier, the government had chosen SDG4 (inclusive education) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) as accelerator Goals for Sierra Leone, implemented with the greatest attention. The two Goals have been perceived as most imperative to the transformation of the Sierra Leone economy, and deemed more impactful in propelling the rest of the SDGs, including SDG 1, 2 and 10 specially prioritised by the UN for acceleration going forward.

45. Accordingly, special attention was given to reporting progress on these Goals in the last two VNR report presented to the UN in 2019 and 2021. The two goals remain central in the remaining seven years of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and beyond, and both are clearly aligned to the Big 5 of the government.

46. Therefore, scaled-up actions relating to these goals have also been prioritised in the consultation process leading up to the finalisation of this SDG Acceleration Roadmap.

### 4.3 Derived priority actions and SDGs for acceleration

47. **Annex 2** presents the *consolidated priority actions* advanced during the consultation and research process informing the roadmap. They have been integrated within the government's Big 5 as presented in the annex, which also shows the priority SDGs (results) to focus on in the next 7 years up to 2030.

#### *Priority SDGs for acceleration*

48. **Table 3** presents these SDGs, classified into those perceived to be the most strategic objectives of sustainable development, and those (serving as enablers/multipliers) perceived to catalyse the achievement of the most strategic objectives/results. The most strategic are: reduced poverty (SDG1); zero hunger (SDG2); and reduced inequality (SDG10). The others (enablers/multipliers/catalysts) are: quality education (SDG4), affordable and clean energy (7), decent work (8), and peace, justice and strong institutions (16).

**Table 3: Priority SDGs derived from the consultations**

<b>Most strategic for Human Development</b>
<b>SDG1:</b> Ending poverty
<b>SDG2:</b> Zero Hunger
<b>SDG10:</b> Reduced Inequality
<b>Enablers/multipliers/catalysts for 1, 2 &amp; 10</b>
<b>SDG4:</b> Quality Education
<b>SDG7:</b> Affordable & Clean Energy
<b>SDG8:</b> Decent Work & Economic Growth
<b>SDG9:</b> Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure
<b>SDG16:</b> Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

#### *The topmost prioritised actions for the most strategic SDGs/results: SDG 1, 2, and 10*

49. From the **Annex 2**, the topmost prioritised actions for achieving SDGs 1 (reduced poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), and SDG10 (reduced inequality) corresponding to the relevant government Big 5 are presented in Table 4, here. **The top among the government Big 5s deemed directly capturing these three SDGs are: Feed Salone (B5.1), Human Capital Development (B5.2), and Youth Employment Scheme. That is, these three among the Big 5s will be focused on mostly for accelerating implementation of the three top priority SDGs, as shown in Table 4.**

**Table 4: Consolidated priority actions for accelerating the SDGs in Sierra Leone**

<b>GoSL Big 5 Game Changers</b>	<b>Priority actions</b>	<b>Priority SDGs</b>
1. Feed Salone	1. 1. Augment the Government’s budget allocation to agriculture to a minimum of 10%; prioritising youth and women support	SDG 1 (No Poverty) SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)
	2. Expand the cultivated area and increase production of local food crops especially rice by adopting mechanisation and irrigation techniques in the nations rice	
	3. Adopt one product one village/one chiefdom system to boost competitiveness in local rice production	
	4. Invest in research to enhance yields for priority crops/products such as rice, cassava, cocoa, coffee, cashew, fishing and livestock productivity	
	5. Improve Fisheries Production and Maximise the full potential of the Blue Economy	
2. Human Capital Development	1. Scale-up investment in Human capital through continuous allocation of substantial government budgetary resources to Education (3)	SDG 1 (No Poverty) SDG10 (Reduced inequality)
	2. Expand access to primary and Secondary education and investing in foundation learning to establish strong educational foundations (2)	
	3. Establish technical and vocational training fund for universities and Government-sponsored training institutions (3)	
	4. Formulate a robust plan for effective implementing of the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) Policy 2020 and the GEWE Act 2022 (2)	
	5. Digitize the Human Resources for Health (HRH) system to ensure effective human resources planning, management, and decision-making (2)	
3. Youth Employment Scheme	1. Establish Youth Opportunity Centres in every district headquarter town	SDG1 (Ending Poverty) SDG2 (Zero Hunger) SDG10 (Reduced Inequality)
	2. Facilitate access to capital for aspiring youth entrepreneurs seeking to establish their ventures	
	3. Create a comprehensive database to monitor and track youth employment across public and private sector	
	4. Provide targeted incentives, encompassing both tax and non-tax benefits, to encourage private sector employment of Youths	
	5. Introduce special incentives tailored for youth within the information, communications and technology (ICT) and creative industries	

### ***The Results Framework for the most strategic SDGs to prioritise: SDG 1, 2, and 10***

50. Table 5 presents *Results Framework* for the *three most strategic SDGs in Table 4* with monitoring indicators, against baselines and targets for 2025 and 2030. These will be mostly focused on in the next 5 to 7 years, consistent with the United Nations guidance and as endorsed during the nationwide consultations. They will be given special attention in tracking the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Sierra Leone for the remaining years up to 2030.

51. The overall *Results Framework* for all 8 SDGs earmarked during the consultation is presented in Annex 3, capturing the most strategic SDGs and accompanying enablers and multipliers.

## **5. Institutional Arrangement for delivering accelerated plan**

52. In line with the need to greatly increase efforts to drive SDG transformation, the following arrangements will be adapted and improved by the Government in the remaining years of the SDG implementation:

- a. ***SDG-aligned Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) and budgeting:*** The ongoing multiple crises have made it difficult for the country to mobilize the resources to finance basic service delivery and have derailed development, threatening progress towards the SDGs. Sierra Leone's government has prioritised domestic revenue mobilisation through key policy reforms, including measures to strengthen the country's tax administration and revenue collection. Despite some progress, challenges remain and need to be addressed as financing the SDGs will continue to be at the centre of Government's agenda for the remaining 7 years, emphasising on national domestic resource mobilisation.

In this regard, the Government will pursue the implementation of INFF-related initiative and strengthen the institutional mechanism by enhancing the national INFF oversight committee to effectively and coherently steer strategic decisions, oversee implementation and maximise the flow of resources towards sustainable financing of development programmes.

The MoPED had worked with the UN RCO and UNDP to implement an INFF-related project, *Strengthening Domestic Resource Mobilisation for the Implementation of the SDGs in Sierra Leone*. This project, financed through the UN Joint SDG Fund window, supported the promotion of financial literacy and digitalisation, the operations of the National Revenue Authority, the expanding of the social security coverage of the informal sector by the National Social Security and Insurance Trust, and boosting capacity of local councils in the monitoring of revenue flows and expenditure management. However, this has just been a small aspect in the range of financing options contained in the country's INFF. Therefore, more project resources will be required to implement these options as new ones will be explored.

Recently, GoSL in collaboration with the UNDP concluded the following studies and assessments within the country's INFF: a) a study on *barriers and enablers of women participation in the domestic resource mobilisation in Sierra Leone*; b) a study on *diaspora investment potential in Sierra Leone*; and c) an *SDG Investor Mapping* to identify and propagate market incentives and signals for private investment. Once these studies are

launched, it will be critical to develop and implement projects to scale-up financing for the SDGs in the country.

Given the projected fiscal and financial constraints faced by Sierra Leone, possible financing options for the investments derived from the identified SDG interlinkages are: tax and revenue reform, debt for SDGs, climate finance, blended and public-private finance, SDG aligned business environment and investment, accessing financial markets and insurance, remittances, philanthropy and faith-based financing. Looking ahead to the future and in response to emerging challenges that are impacting the sustainable development gains, the Government of Sierra Leone and its partners will need to continue their fruitful cooperation and joint efforts to bring innovative financial mechanisms to scale to enhance sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development, focusing in particular on women, youth and rural communities at risk. The Government will continue to explore optimal financing instruments to leverage and channel private and Diaspora investments into national and local SDG aligned priorities.

- b. ***Aligning the SDG Acceleration Roadmap to the New National Development Plan 2024-2028 that is underway***: The acceleration roadmap to inform the successor of the current national development plan to ensure further that national commitments to SDGs are reflected and operationalised in national and sectoral development plans.
- c. ***Strengthening the coordinating role of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development***: The capacity of MoPED will be strengthened in respect of its role in coordinating the implementation of the SDGs in the country. In the last 7 to 8 years, the planning ministry has coordinated follow-up efforts in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the voluntary national reviews that Sierra Leone has done three times.
- d. ***Development cooperation***: Strengthening development cooperation and coordination mechanisms in Sierra Leone to foster development effectiveness and accelerate progress towards the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs.
- e. ***Capacity to develop bankable projects***: There is need for a sustainable project preparation fund (PPF) to finance the development of viable projects within the public sector that are financially and economically sound. Technical and financial capacity in this area is currently acutely limited, thereby narrowing the absorptive capacity to utilise earmarked resources for national development programme. A well-managed and implemented PPF will be developed..
- f. ***Sectoral coordination***: Strengthen sectoral coordination to minimise duplication of activities.
- g. ***Strengthening local capacities***: Accelerating the implementation of SDGs requires strengthening the capacity of local authorities to finance and advance SDGs, including enhancing capacity in revenue and expenditure forecasting, revenue collection strategies and reporting for fiduciary staff of local councils, enhancing the national statistical system and harnessing SDG-related monitoring and evaluation system at national and sub-national levels to track progress in implementing the agenda across the country. Strengthening the functionality of the District Development Coordination Committees in the process is also critical.

- h. ***Policy effectiveness***: Increasing the effectiveness of policy and regulatory frameworks and provision of adequate business development services for the implementing ministries/entities. More attention should be given to policy/programme prioritisation and sequencing.
- i. ***Monitoring and evaluation***: The government and the UN will continue its efforts towards the establishment of a National Digital SDG Monitoring and Evaluation Platform anchored in the national statistical office, Statistics-Sierra Leone. There is need to revamp the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and strengthening national statistical systems for the SDGs within this proposed.

## **Conclusion**

53. Three SDGs (SDGs 1 *reduced poverty*, SDG 2 *zero hunger*, and SDG10 *reduced inequality*) have been on top of the priority results Sierra Leone seeks to focus actions most principally in the next 7 years of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Fifteen top priority actions have been identified through nationwide consultation process and research to deliver the three SDGs. Several other actions (see **Annex 2**) for scaled-up were identified to support the delivery of the accelerated roadmap for achieve the SDGs in the coming years up to 2030. The Sierra Leone Big 5 Game Changers and the United Nations Guidance Note provided strategic direction in the consultation process and identification of the priority SDGs and actions to take forward.

54. It is highly hoped that all development actors (including the government, development partners, the private sector and civil society organisation) will prioritise investment areas identified in this roadmap to maximise delivery of the SDGs in Sierra Leone by 2030.

55. In the coming years, follow-up efforts and progress reporting will be highly focused on this priority results contained in this roadmap.

### ***Risk and risk management***

56. As we pursue this SDG Acceleration Roadmap, we are aware of the ongoing multiple and overlapping crises engulfing the world that continue to negatively impact on growth, revenue and general socioeconomic context of Sierra Leone. Therefore, we will be monitoring the global situation and its implications for the Sierra Leone economy as we implement this roadmap, given special priority to strengthening development cooperation and coordination among all actors and sector, as well as scaling-up domestic resource mobilisation. Implementation of the country's integrated national financing framework will be especially critical in responding to financing risks going forward.

# **Annexes**



**Annex 1: Sources of information for constructing the SDG Acceleration Roadmap**

## **Review reports on the implementation of the SDGs/NDP**

1. Various Annual Progress Reports on the MTNDP 2019-2023: *Source MoPED*
2. Mid-Term Review Report on MTNDP 2019-2023: *Source MoPED*
3. Annual sector reports: *Source various MDAs*
4. S/L Voluntary National Review Reports on the SDGs, 2019 and 2021: *Source MoPED, UN*
5. UN Annual Results Reports: *Source UN*
6. Presidential reports to parliament: *Source State House and Parliament*
7. Government report on manifesto commitments accomplishment: *Source State House*
8. Other review reports

The review reports highlight milestones achieved, as well as challenges

**Annex 2: Consolidated priority actions for accelerating the SDGs in Sierra Leone**

<b>GoSL Big 5 Game Changers</b>	<b>Priority actions</b>	<b>Priority SDGs</b>
1. Feed Salone	1. Augment the Government’s budget allocation to agriculture to a minimum of 10%; prioritising youth and women support (3)	SDG 1 (Ending Poverty) SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)
	2. Expand the cultivated area for rice by adopting mechanisation and irrigation techniques in the nations rice bowl	
	3. Adopt one product one village system to boost competitiveness in local rice production (2)	
	4. Invest in research to enhance yields for priority crops such as rice, cassava, cocoa, coffee, cashew, fishing and livestock productivity (2)	
	6. Establish no less than five farmer Services and Agri-business Centres across in the country in three years, fostering knowledge transfer and providing critical service to	
	7. Establish a domestic institutional feeding program encompassing educational institutions, military establishment, and health care facilities, thereby stimulating	
	9. Diversify Local Food Consumption & Nutrition especially for Women & Kids (2)	
	10. Complete devolution of the agriculture sector	
	11. Strengthen agricultural value chains and related facilities including research and the seed systems	
	12. Improve Fisheries Production and Maximise the full potential of the Blue Economy	
	13. Strengthen the fisheries sector with regulations and quality management infrastructure for the entire	
	14. Provide financing options that mitigate risks for private sector investment in processing and value addition.	

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GoSL Big 5 Game Changers	Priority actions	Priority SDGs
2. Human Capital Development	1 Scale-up investment in Human capital through continuous allocation of substantial government budgetary resources to Education (3)	SDG 1 (Ending Poverty) SDG4 (inclusive education) SDG10 (Reduced inequality)
	2 Expand access to primary and Secondary education and Investing in foundation learning to establish strong educational foundations (2)	
	3 Continuous Support and Expanding Access to Free Quality Education and Improve Foundational Learning Increasing Access to The Girl Child	
	4 Allocating technical and vocational training funding in universities and Government-sponsored training institutions (3)	
	5 formulating a robust plan for effective implementing the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) Policy 2020 and the GEWE Act 2022 (2)	
	6 Digitizing the Human Resource for Health (HRH) system to ensure human resources planning, management, and decision-making (2)	
	7 Health systems strengthening for provision of quality and comprehensive maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition services complemented with effective community networks	
	8 Upgrade the Quality of Education Through Teaching Training and Capacity Building and Sustain Public Investment in Education (22% Budget Allocation)	
	9 Strengthen the Public and Private Labour Force Sector and Empowering Workers Disadvantaged Workers (especially those with disabilities)	
	10 Improve Access to Basic Health; expanding Specialized Health Care and Implementing Health Insurance Schemes to broaden healthcare and alleviate out-of-pocket expenses.	
	11 Strengthen tech-voc education and STEM for middle level man-power and career dev’t	
	12 Review curriculum and upgrade teaching and learning facilities at universities and other tertiary education institutions to more practical training	
	13 Implementation of Primary Health Care Optimization model for UHC in all districts	
	14 improve access to safe drinking and improved sanitation in schools, healthcare facilities, communities and other public places	
	15 Institutionalize the Sierra Leone’s national Digital Health Roadmap for Universal Health Coverage	

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GoSL Big 5 Game Changers	Priority actions	Priority SDGs
3. Youth Employment Scheme	1 Establish Youth Opportunity Centres in every district headquarter town, serving a vital support hub for youth pursuing employment (3)	SDG1 (Ending Poverty) SDG2 (Zero Hunger) SDG8 (Decent Work) SDG10 (Reduced Inequality)
	2 Facilitate access to capital for aspiring youth entrepreneurs seeking to establish their ventures (3)	
	3 Create a comprehensive database to monitor and track youth employment across public and private sector (2)	
	4 Design a targeted program to generate employment opportunities for young girls out of school	
	5 Providing targeted incentives, encompassing both tax and non-tax benefits, to encourage private sector employment of Youths (3)	
	6 Introduce special incentives tailored for youth within the information, communications and technology (ICT) and creative industries (2)	
	7 Create 500,000 Jobs for Youths with the consideration of rural area to attract youth into rural communities	
	8 Provide training and Incentives (Start up kits and Loan Schemes) and support the involvement of Youths in Agriculture, Aquaculture and Various Value Chains	
	9. Establish a graduate incubation facilities and entrepreneurship opportunities to stimulate job creation by young graduates	
	10 Establish District Youth District Youth Opportunity Centers and Tech-Voc to create middle level profession and life skills-design targeted programs to generate employment opportunities for youths	
	11 Intensify training and empowerment schemes for the youth in the informal sector	
	12 Embrace a government policy promoting youth inclusion in public works and infrastructure projects.	
	13 Enhancing the capacity of the Ministry of Labour to provide certification for technical Vocational Skills training and establish a Labour Management Information System (LMIS)	
	14 Harnessing the Demographic Dividend in Sierra Leone	
	15 Provide training initiatives and incentives to attract the vibrant energy of our youth towards the realm of agriculture.	

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GoSL Big 5 Game Changers	Priority actions	Priority SDGs
4. Enhancing Public Service Architecture	1 Enhance incentives to promote productivity and a merit-based workforce recruitment and progressive system (3)	SDG4 (Inclusive Education)
	2 Strengthening the performance management of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) by reviewing existing frameworks and developing a robust performance management policy (4)	SDG16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)
	3 Implement the Wages and Compensation Commission Act of 2023 to spearhead the welfare of the public service and safeguard the well-being of its dedicated members (4)	
	4 Establish a centre of Government Delivery unit within the Presidency, fostering a cohesive connection with smaller delivery units within line Ministries (2)	
	5 Develop an Electronic Personnel Management System to efficiently track the recruitment and management of professionals within the Public Service (4)	
	6. Conduct a comprehensive review of the policy and legal framework governing the public service, ensuring its professional appeal to Sierra Leonean professionals who aspire to serve the Government (3)	
	7 Introduce standardized examinations for recruitment within the public service, ensuring a fair and transparent selection process.	
	8 Harmonization of salaries	
	9 Support establishment of the Public service academy to provide equal training opportunities for both genders in the public service workers	

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GoSL Big 5 Game Changers	Priority actions	Priority SDGs
5. Technology and Infrastructure	1. Increase investments in road construction within key agricultural production and fish processing zones throughout the country (3)	SDG7 (Affordable and clean Energy)
	2. Fulfill the electrification of district capitals in all 16 locations (2)	SDG9 (Industry, Infrastructure and Innovation)
	3. Enhance investment in tourism-focused road infrastructure, particularly in areas surrounding or traversing tourist attractions within the country	
	4. Identify and construct economically strategic bridges across various regions of the nation	
	5. Develop the requisite infrastructure to support and facilitate digital payment options and e-commerce initiatives	
	6. Establish a national data Centre and cloud computing infrastructure for hosting Government data and content (2)	
	7. Ensure the completion of the Southern and Northern Communication Transmission Line Project, (Mamamah-Songo-Rotifunk-Bauya-Moyamba-Rutile-Pujehun) and increase investments in road construction within key agricultural production and fish processing zones and tourist attractions throughout the country	
	8. Increased investment in lands, housing and country planning access to water supply, improved sanitation and protection of the environment.	
	9. Improve universal access to digital services and infrastructure and expand and support digital innovation and entrepreneurship, e-commerce and e-governance	
	10. Promote specialized training programmes to match high level technologies	
	11 Encourage private (esp mining) companies to invest in community infrastructure	
	12 Safeguard personal data in digital transactions and communications by implementing a robust Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) and Certificate Authority, cultivating trust in online transactions.	
	13 Commence power importation from the CLSG(Cote d'Ivoire-Liberia-Sierra Leone-Guinea) transmission network via Guinea, introducing an additional 120MW power.	

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**Annex 3: Results framework of 8 priority SDGs (SDG Benchmarks)**

The Goals	Sierra Leone Indicators	Current	Source of Current Data (Date)	By End 2027	By End 2030
Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere	1.1.1 Proportion of national population in absolute poverty	57% 56.7%	Jan -June SLIHS (2018)	35.30%	26.50%
	1.1.2 Proportion of extremely poor population by national food poverty line	10.8%	Jan -June SLIHS (2018)	4.60%	0.00%
	1.2.1 Proportion of national population in multi-dimensional poverty	64.8% 58.0	MICS6 (2017) DHS 2019	50.00%	30.00%
	1.2.2 Proportion of female-headed households in multi-dimensional poverty	60.40%	MICS6 (2017)DHS 2019	45.00%	30.00%
	1.2.2 Proportion of male-headed households in multi-dimensional poverty	51.40%	MICS6 (2017)DHS 2019	38.00%	25.00%
	1.2.2 Proportion of child population (under 18 years) in multi-dimensional poverty		MICS6 (2017)		
Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	2.1.1 Proportion of national population in food poverty	52.60%	SLIHS (2018)	15.90%	0.00%
	2.1.6 Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population)	25.50%	SFS&N (2018)	12.37%	7.40%
	2.2.1.a Proportion of children under-5 who are moderately stunted (minus two standard deviations)	26.4	MICS6 (2017)	10.00%	0.00%
	2.2.1.b Proportion of children under-5 who are severely stunted (minus three standard deviations)	6.9	Health Information Managemnet System 2018	6.30%	6.00%
	2.2.2.a Proportion of children under-5 who are moderately underweight (minus two standard deviations)	11.7	MICS6 (2017)	5.00%	0.00%
	2.2.2.b Proportion of children under-5 who are severely underweight (minus three standard deviations)	3.7	MICS6 (2017)	3.30%	3.00%
	2.2.3.a Proportion of children under-5 who are moderately wasted (minus two standard deviations)	5.1	MICS6 (2017)	5.00%	0.00%
	2.2.3.b Proportion of children under-5 who are severely wasted (minus three standard deviations)	1.7	MICS6 (2017)	1.90%	0.70%
	2.3.1 Rate of national food self-sufficiency	52.1	MAFS (2018)	95.70%	100%
	2.a.1 Proportion of national budget allocated to agriculture	5.00%	GoSL Budget (2019)	10.00%	10.00%

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The Goals	Sierra Leone Indicators	Current	Source of Current Data (Date)	By End 2027	By End 2030
	4.1.1 Proportion of girls completing primary education	79%	Annual School Census 2018	88.50%	100.00%
	4.1.2 Proportion of boys completing primary education	77.0	Annual School Census 2018	88.90%	100.00%
	4.1.3 Proportion of girls completing junior secondary education	48%	Annual School Census 2018	82.90%	100.00%
	4.1.4 Proportion of boys completing junior secondary education	49%	Annual School Census 2018	84.50%	100.00%
	4.1.5 Proportion of girls completing senior secondary education	16%	Annual School Census 2018	71.70%	100.00%
Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	4.1.6 Proportion of boys completing senior secondary education	19%	Annual School Census 2018	73.90%	100.00%
	4.1.7 Net primary school enrolment rate	62.7	MICS6 (2017)	100.00%	100.00%
	4.1.8 Net junior secondary school enrolment rate	81.8	MICS6 (2017)	76.70%	100.00%
	4.1.9 Expected years of schooling (years)			10.93	12.10
	4.2.1 Net pre-primary school enrolment rate	8.0	MICS6 (2017)	69.50%	100.00%
	4.5.1 Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	81.8	Annual School Census 2018	=/> 1	=/> 1
	4.5.2 Ratio of girls to boys in junior secondary education	36.2	Annual School Census 2018	0.98	1
	4.5.3 Ratio of girls to boys in senior secondary education	28.6	SLIHS (2018)	0.93	1
	4.6.2 Adult literacy rate (literacy rate ages 15+)			65.20%	75.00%
	4.6.2 Adult female literacy rate (literacy rate ages 15+)	41.5%	MICS6 (2017)	65.20%	75.00%
4.6.2 Adult male literacy rate (literacy rate ages 15+)	58.3%	MICS6 (2017)	70.00%	80.00%	

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The Goals	Sierra Leone Indicators	Current	Source of Current Data (Date)	By End 2027	By End 2030
Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	7.1.1 Proportion of households using electricity for lighting	23.0	MICS6 (2017)	38.33%	46.00%
	7.2.1: Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption	77.7	SDSN/Africa SDGs Report (2017)	83.00%	87.20%
Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	8.1 .1 Rate of per capita economic growth	1.5	World Bank Databank - Global Economic Prospects 2018	=/>7%	=/>7%
	8.5.3 Labour participation rate	58.9	World Bank 2016	85.00%	
	8.7.1 Proportion of children (5-11 years) engaged in child labour	44.0	MLSS 2019	29.60%	22.20%
	8.7.1 Proportion of children (5-17 years) engaged in child labour	39	MICS6 (2017)	29.60%	22.20%
Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	9.1.2 Logistics performance index (1-5)	2.2	SDSN/Africa SDGs Report (2016)	2.90	3.1
	9.1.3 Quality of overall infrastructure (1-7)	3.3	World Bank 2016	3.87	4.6
	9.c.1 Proportion of the population using the internet (%)	13.2	SDSN/Africa SDGs Report (2017)	54.10%	80.10%
Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries	10.1.2 Share of income of the bottom 20% income earners in total household income	8.10%	SLIHS (2018)	8.60%	9.00%
	10.2.1 Ratio of rural to urban absolute poverty	2.3	SLIHS (2018)	1.71	1.5
	16.1.3 Feel safe walking at night (%)			71.87%	80.10%
	16.3.7 Proportion of persons on remand without indictment in the capital of Freetown			30%	25%
	16.5.1 Corruption perception index (0-100)	30.0	Transparency International (2018)	49.73	60.10
	16.6.1 Government Efficiency (1-7)			4.13	4.60
	16.6.2 Property Rights (1-7)			4.17	4.60
	16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority (%)	81.1	MICS6 (2017)	91.40%	98.10%

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