

Consultative Meeting for Sierra Leone Statement by the Swedish delegation

Honourable President

Your excellencies ministers,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be able to participate in this Consultative Group meeting regarding Sierra Leone.

Developments in Sierra Leone during the last few years have been promising. The situation in the country has gradually improved. In March this year, conflicts related to local elections were solved in a way that demonstrated good leadership from involved stakeholders. The situation in Sierra Leone seems to be quite stable at the moment. However, the turbulent regional situation could have a serious negative impact, also on Sierra Leone.

We have noted that the strategy on the way forward, Agenda for Change, after having been approved by Parliament, was launched in May, which marks an important step forward. Nevertheless, the crucial phase of implementation has begun. Emphasis should be given to joint planning, implementation and monitoring to support the priorities of the Agenda for Change. We find it crucial to work on the monitoring and evaluation framework in order to ensure effective implementation.

Sweden is a new partner to Sierra Leone, ready to provide support to its development endeavours. Sweden will be supporting the implementation of the Agenda for Change.

Swedish development cooperation with Sierra Leone is based on a country strategy which covers a five year period (2009 – 2013). In April this year, an agreement on development cooperation was signed between Sweden and the Government of Sierra Leone with reference to this cooperation strategy.

Swedish support to Sierra Leone will be focused on the education sector, a choice based on Sierra Leone's own priorities and on the importance of supporting youth empowerment and employment, in order to ensure capacity building and democratic consolidation. It is also a choice which supplements the commitments by other donors. Sweden will not have any office set up in Freetown, meaning that cooperation will be managed from Stockholm and through regular visits to Sierra Leone.

The over-riding objective of the cooperation strategy is to strengthen respect for human rights and ensure greater socioeconomic welfare and security, particularly for women and girls.

The objectives of the Swedish assistance to the education sector are to support

i) access to basic education of good quality for all

and

ii) increased access to market driven vocational training and higher education for women and unemployed youth

Regarding the processes linked to the cooperation in the education sector, Sweden aims to promote aid effectiveness, including greater coordination capacity and ownership on the part of the Sierra Leonean government. We would very much like to see a GoSL led initiative to set joint GoL-Donor targets for the implementation of the Paris declaration in Sierra Leone.

Two main issues are important for us in the dialogue:

i) to ensure that the education sector is informed by a human rights perspective

ii) to improve systems designed to ensure accountability and transparency in the education sector

The Swedish development cooperation with Sierra Leone for the period 2009 – 2013 will amount to 20 MSEK for 2009 and to 40 MSEK for each of the years thereafter, i. e. a total of 180 MSEK for the strategy period. This corresponds to about **5.7 MUSD per year and about 26 MUSD in total for the period.**

The above mentioned support will include support to the government's Basic Education Development Programme has been prepared and an agreement between Sweden and Sierra Leone will be signed in early December. This support will amount to 20 MSEK for per year.

Programmes and costed action plans need to be prepared for the other mentioned sub-sectors, vocational training and higher education. Swedish support will subsequently be provided to these programmes.

In addition to support to the education sector, **humanitarian support** will still continue for some time. Currently it amount to about 4 MSEK per year (**0.6 MUSD**).