

# REPORT OF THE CERTIFICATION CEREMONY FOR OGP FIRST NAP STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS CERTIFICATION CEREMONY AND COCKTAIL

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**Date:** Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2016  
**Venue:** State House  
**Time:** 1800 hours  
**Chairperson:** The Presidential Spokesperson, Mr. Abdulai Bayraytay

## 1. Participants

The ceremony and cocktail were attended by His Excellency, the Vice President Dr. Victor Foh Bokare, Cabinet Ministers, International Organisations, Donors, Media, Open Government Initiative (OGI) First National Action Plan (NAP) Committee Members, Presidential Advisors, OGP/OGI staff and residents representatives.

## 2. Objectives of the Ceremony and Cocktail

The ceremony and cocktail were done to;

- Present the Open Government Partnership (OGP) NAP1 Steering Committee with certificates to show His Excellency, the President's and Government's appreciation for their commitment and dedication to the development and implementation of the OGP NAP 1.
- To award individuals and organisations that exhibited their exceptional support to the OGP NAP1 development and implementation.
- To provide a platform of interaction for OGP stakeholders including Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, Donors, International Organisations and NAP 1 Committee Members.

### **3. CERTIFICATION CEREMONY**

#### **3.1. Call to Order by the Presidential Spokesperson**

The Chairperson, the Presidential Spokesperson Mr. Abdulai Bayraytay called the house to order and this was followed by the singing of the National Anthem,

#### **3.2. Prayers**

The Chairperson led the delegates into moments of prayers for both the Christians and the Muslims.

#### **3.3. Chairperson's Opening Remarks by the Presidential Spokesperson**

The Presidential Spokesperson began by providing a brief background of how the Open Government Partnership was established. He stated that in 2011, the United States of America was among the eight countries that came together to establish OGP as a way of promoting open government, transformational development and participatory governance.

The Chairperson further noted that the participation of Sierra Leone was a daunting process. As soon as His Excellency the President, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma assumed office in 2008 he registered his commitment towards open government by establishing the Open Government Initiative in his office to ensure that citizens are well informed of government's role, and provided a platform to hold the government accountable. Even during elections, His Excellency, the President underwent through a process of self-assessment implicit in the score card. The Chairperson also emphasized that, even at international level, His Excellency the President has exposed himself to monitoring and evaluation processes giving the example of the peer review exercise that the President subjected himself to, at the 2012 African Union Summit. All this, according to the Chairperson; has made Sierra Leone excel among other countries in promoting democracy, establishing a relationship with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and providing a conducive environment for them to effectively play their watchdog role. Sierra Leone registered its interest to join the OGP in 2013 when, his Excellency, the President submitted a Letter of Intent which was approved in the same year.

In addition, the Chairperson noted that the OGI is leading the OGP processes in Sierra Leone. At the onset of the First NAP, a Steering Committee composed of 17 Government Institutions and 17 CSOs was established. He applauded the Committee Members and the OGI staff for developing an ambitious First NAP and ensuring that most of the commitments under the plan were implemented. He also commented the CSOs for working tirelessly alongside Government in ensuring the implementation of NAP 1 citing that during the Mid-Term Assessment of the implementation of NAP1, the CSOs were available to clarify issues and defend the position of Sierra Leone, led by Ms. Marcela Samba of Campaign for Good Governance.

With reference to the NAP 2, the Chairperson emphasized that it factors issues that resonate well with the Sustainable Development Goals and congratulated the OGI and the Steering Committee Members for coming up with an excellent plan.

He welcomed His Excellency thanking him for dignifying the occasion and all the participants for attending.

#### **3.4. Introduction of Members of the Steering Committee by the Coordinator for Budget Advocacy Network, Mr. Abu Bakarr Kamara**

The BAN Coordinator, Mr. Abu Bakarr Kamara introduced all the 17 CSOs and 17 Government OGP Committee Members.

#### **3.5. Introduction of Dignitaries**

The Presidential Spokesperson introduced the Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, Presidential Advisors and Representatives of International Organisations that attended the event.

### 3.6. Overview of the Ceremony by Madam Khadija Sesay, the Director for OGI

Mr Chairman, the Hon Vice President, Ministers of Government, Members of Parliament, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished guests Good evening.

The obvious absence of communication between those who wielded power before and the ordinary citizens created a lot of mistrust, suspicion and misgiving that plunged the nation to a civil war that did not only deplete the economy but destroyed life and property.

About eight years ago His Excellency the President created a unique space to share activities of his government in the socio economic development of the country with the Sierra Leonean people, thereby bringing government closer to the people through facilitated discussions and dynamic participatory team sessions.

As the Director of the Open Government Initiative please permit me to mention some of the activities of the OGI which promote inclusion, participation, transparency and accountability in Sierra Leone;

- Our bottom top diagnostic tool is a mechanism through which service providers and citizens identify weaknesses in the delivery system and recommend improvement,
- Empower civil society and media organisations to play a watchdog role to monitor public service delivery and local government.
- Enable MDAs and planning departments to streamline and set priorities in budget allocation and monitor implementation.
- A mechanism for monitoring and evaluating service delivery performance, and platforms leading to publication of quality performance assessment. Thus obtaining efficiency in the system which satisfies beneficiaries and give confidence to providers.

Mr Chairman, after achieving much success in the early stages, certain development now fostered new opportunities to increase and improve OGI relevance to both the Government and the people of Sierra Leone, following the endorsement of the country as a member of the global Open Government Partnership in 2013. Such developments are inclusive of but, not limited to the following;

- the effective development of National Action Plans and implementation for the promotion of transparency, accountability, innovation and citizens participation in governance;
- the establishment of a National Open Data Portal to support the growth of Sierra Leone as an example of a data driven country in Africa;
- The enactment of the Local Content Act and Signing of Integrity Pacts to further enhance and broaden the scope of partnership in archiving some of the commitments in the OGP National Action Plan.
- Single Treasury Account

Mr Chairman, with the unflinching support of the Steering Committee to enhance the OGP process, Sierra Leone has been able to master the OGP practices compared to other countries around the world providing the opportunity for others to build on our successes and learn from them.

The OGP consultation process is driven by the Steering Committee that is made up of government and Civil Society representatives. Furthermore, this platform has been the cornerstone of the OGP process, and the Government of Sierra Leone ensured a participatory method that is legitimized by feedback from citizens whose priorities are in fact the priorities of the President.

The overriding function of the Steering Committee is to undertake an inclusive and participatory process that informs the development of the Action Plan. In the past two years the Steering Committee has embarked upon initiatives such as the reviewing of our good governance gains and telling the stories to Sierra Leoneans on our status of implementation, tapping into Diaspora resources and the international communities.

The OGP process in Sierra Leone has concluded its first action plan with over 70% successes in completion of the 11 commitments in the implementation processes, despite the challenges faced over a year ago. The Steering Committee continue to provide support in strengthening good governance mechanism that is producing a positive impact on poverty reduction through advocacy for greater accountability to citizens in Sierra Leone and in the Diaspora as desired by His Excellency the President.

In conclusion, we are now entering a new era in which the OGI/OGP is playing a vital role in incorporating governance and core principles of Civil Society collaboration to meet international best practices.

The Steering Committee has demonstrated exemplary, with strategies in our implementation process that we can now share at all levels using various performance indicators to compete in the global arena.

Mr Chairman, Distinguish guests, I hereby express my profound appreciation for the partnership between the OGI, the Steering Committee Members and the Development Partners especially the World Bank. The impact has been fruitful, beneficial, worthy and very well received by Sierra Leonean people as well as government. This has to continue to enable the OGI to disseminate the ideals and tenets of participatory Democracy in the President's Agenda for prosperity.

The OGP/OGI Secretariat has identified appropriate institutions from Government in addition to the current membership, which we believe will provide invaluable support and commitment to ensure the effective achievement of the objectives of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Action Plan which will end in June 2018. We are also proposing the Cabinet Secretariat to provide technical backstopping and strategic support to ensure timely implementation of critical commitments and effective monitoring and coordination across implementing agencies.

On behalf of the Open Government Secretariat in the Office of the President and my personal behalf, I wish to formally express my unreserved thanks and appreciation to the entire civil society and media community for their outstanding contributions, and support provided to the OGI through the years.

I thank you for your continued support towards the successful implementation of the Open Government Partnership process in Sierra Leone.

### **3.7. Speech by the Special Advisor to the President and Coordinator of International Benchmarks, Dr. Sam Sesay**

Dr. Sam Sesay stressed that all the commitments and milestones stated under the NAP 2 are similar to what the nation is trying to achieve under the International Benchmarks. He commended the OGI and the Steering Committee Members for leading participatory processes shown in soliciting information from CSOs, Government, citizens, international organisations and other institutions.

He advised that if Sierra Leone continues to work in the spirit of togetherness, involving representatives from all walks of life in planning and implementation, it will move forward.

In addition, the Special Advisor recommended that the focus moves from open government to open governance so that other institutions are also involved in ensuring transparency, accountability and citizens participation. He said that a lot of donor organizations pour resources into Sierra Leone through various Non-Governmental Organizations but no one is checking for transparency and accountability. In the spirit of mutual accountability, he called for systems to be put in place to ensure that donor funds are accounted for.

Furthermore, participants were informed that information was being collated under the international benchmarks system creating a platform for citizens to discuss and engage on issues related to the international benchmarks. A report will be presented and distributed to citizens for their inputs. Thus, he urged members to ensure wide circulation of information related to the international benchmarks.

### **3.8. Presentation from the United States Embassy by Mr. Scott Risneg**

The United States Embassy representative, Mr. Scott Risneg appreciated the Government of Sierra Leone for availing the Embassy the opportunity to attend the event. He provided the background of OGP noting that the United States of America alongside other seven countries joined at the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly meeting in 2011 to formally launch the OGP. The OGP is a multilateral initiative that seeks to secure ambitious plans from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.

Several advantages of open government were cited, chief among them being empowering citizens to hold government accountable, hence promoting accountability and transparency for effective and efficient implementation of government programmes and projects. He congratulated Sierra Leone for being an excellent member of the OGP and wished the government the best in the implementation of NAP 2. Importantly, on behalf of the embassy, he pledged their diligent commitment to the OGP process indicating that the Embassy will work with the Government of Sierra Leone in ensuring the implementation of NAP 2 and beyond.

### **3.9. Interlude by Madam Millicent Rhodes**

Madam Millicent Rhodes entertained the participants by singing two songs from her collection.

### **3.10. Key Note Address by His Excellency the Vice President, Hon. Ambassador, Dr. Victor Bokarie Foh**

His Excellency the Vice President, Hon. Ambassador, Dr. Victor Bokarie Foh thanked the OGI Director and her team for organizing such a successful function. He applauded the Committee Members for working together emphasizing that prior to the OGI there was no inclusiveness and participatory development. It was through the vision of His Excellency, the President Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma that citizens' engagement became a reality.

His Excellency, the Hon. Ambassador, Dr. Victor Bokarie Foh congratulated the OGI and Steering Committee members for the successful implementation of NAP 1. He emphasized that the diversity of the Steering Committee shows that the government is open and represents every fabric of society. He urged the OGI to ensure the inclusion of other critical issues such as child marriages in the NAP process to fast track positive changes.

In addition, His Excellency, the Vice President Hon. Ambassador, Dr. Victor Bokarie Foh noted that he was glad that the international partners are providing support to the OGP processes. He further encouraged international partners to continue supporting OGI. The Vice President Hon. Ambassador, Dr. Victor Bokarie Foh also indicated that Sierra Leone is showing the world that democracy is practical and leading in setting an example to even older democracies. He encouraged the OGI Director to continue working hard and motivated her to continue soliciting for support from various institutions and individuals.

In conclusion, the Vice President noted that, it was a pleasure for him to attend the event representing the President who would have loved to attend the event but failed due to other pressing commitments.

### **3.11. Presentation of Certificates by the Chief Executive Officer of the Millenium Challenge Coordinating Unit (MCCU)**

The Certification process was led by Mrs Ndeye Koroma, the Chief Executive Officer of the MCCU. The Vice President handed over the Certificates to the all the Steering Committee Members as follows,

<b>No.</b>	<b>Institution</b>
1	Millenium Challenge Coordinating Unit
2	Public Sector Reform Unit
3	Coalition of Civil Society and Human Rights
4	Budget Advocacy Network
5	Human Rights Commission
6	National Public Procurement Authority
7	Anti-Corruption Commission
8	Audit Service Sierra Leone
9	World Bank Sierra Leone
10	Non-State Actors (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development)
11	National Youth Coalition
12	Transparency International – Sierra Leone
13	Economic Policy and Research Unit (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development)
14	Parliamentary Service Commission
15	Performance Monitoring and Service Delivery Unit
16	Citizens Committee
17	Women’s Forum Network
18	National Federation of Civil Society and Media Organisations
19	Rogbangbe Farmers and Traders Association
20	Society for Democratic Initiatives
21	Campaign for Good Governance
22	Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law
23	Sierra Leone Reporters Union
24	National Civil Society Forum
25	Sierra Leone Union on Disability Issues
26	Network Movement for Justice and Development

27	Inter-Religious Council
28	Access to Information Commission

### **3.12. Presentation of Awards by the Executive Director, Transparency International, Madam Lavina Banduah**

The following awards were presented by the Executive Director for Transparency International;

<b>No.</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Award</b>
1.	Campaign for Good Governance	Award for exceptionally leading the CSOs in the OGP Steering Committee and sponsoring the OGP process.
2.	Budget Advocacy Network	Award for providing outstanding technical support and sponsoring the OGP process.

### **3.13. Presentation of Awards by the Deputy Minister of Mines**

The following awards were presented by the Deputy Minister of Mines Honourable Abdul Ignosi Koroma to the following implementing agencies;

<b>No.</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Award</b>
<b>1</b>	Anti-Corruption Commission	Exceptional performance in the implementation of OGP NAP 1 that led to 100% accomplishment of all milestones under Commitment 1.
<b>2</b>	Ministry of Trade – Local Content Unit	Exceptional performance in the implementation of OGP NAP 1 that led to the accomplishment of most milestones under Commitment 8.

### **3.14. Presentation of Gift to the Director for OGI; by the Executive Director of DADA SL, Mr. Foday D.M Sesay**

On behalf of the CSOs Committee Members, Mr. Foday D.M Sesay noted that the CSOs were grateful towards the exceptional leadership skills that the Director for OGI exhibited since the establishment of the OGP. He highlighted that as CSOs they appreciate her exceptional commitment that led to Sierra Leone performing remarkably well under the OGP setting an example for other democracies. Thus, a special gift was officially handed over to the Director for OGI, Madam Khadija Sesay.

#### **4. Vote of Thanks by Mrs Marcela Samba of Campaign for Good Governance**

In her vote of thanks, Mrs Marcela Samba thanked His Excellency the Vice President for gracing the occasion and indicated that she was very excited to be part of the process.

She noted that the relationship between Government and CSOs in the Steering Committee started with mutual suspicion. However, over the years the Steering Committee grew to be a family of reformers. She highlighted with delight that the Sierra Leonean model is unbeatable especially because of the commitment and dedication of Steering Committee Members from both Government and CSOs. She informed participants that, as Steering Committee Members they are meeting every month and mostly at State House.

Mrs Marcela Samba, thanked His Excellency, the President, Dr. Bai Koroma for signing up to the OGP in 2013 essentially because he saw the need for transparency, accountability, citizens engagement, innovation and technology in governance. She noted that despite the voice of the detractors who say Sierra Leone is only good at planning not implementing; its achievements under NAP 1 are a manifestation that Sierra Leoneans can indeed move forward.

In addition, she thanked the MDAs for supporting the development of the NAPs and their implementation. She expressed gratitude towards the implementing MDAs and encouraged them to continue working for the development of the nation.

Furthermore, Marcela Samba thanked the Director for OGI for her exceptional leadership skills in leading the OGP process. She noted that the Director provided the crucial link between CSOs and MDAs that was vital in the development and implementation of NAP 1 and going forward. She then thanked all the participants for attending the event.

## 5. Cocktail

After the certification ceremony all the participants took part in a cocktail where they managed to interact, network and discuss. Snacks and refreshments were served.

## 6. Participants

No.	Name	Organisation	Designation
1.	Charles Keif-Kobai	SDI	Governance Director
2.	Charles Kamara	NCSF	Director
3.	Scott Risneg	United States Embassy	Economic Officer
4.	M.B. Taneh	NMA	Deputy Director General
5.	Saudatu Fojan Bah		Diaspora
6.	Amb. Dauda Kamara	State House	Special Presidential Advisor
7.	Santigie Karbgo	SLUD 1	National Youth Coordinator
8.	Steven Daramba	Vice President's Office	Camera-man
9.	Sheila Max Macarthy	AGD	Head IOGAS
10.	Mohamed Sillah	Action Aid	Executive Director
11.	Abu Bakarr Kamara	Budget Advocacy Network	Coordinator
12.	Sheikh A.Y Sesay	World Bank	Country Manager
13.	Tsitsi Muvunzi	OGI	Volunteer
14.	Abdul Ignosi Koroma	MMMR	Deputy Minister Mines
15.	Alimatu Tofanah	OVC	Head of Press, OVC
16.	Hon. Ibrahim Buidah	Parliament	Leader
17.	Marcella Samba Sesay	CCG	Director of Programmes
18.	Ibrahim S. Sesay	Parliament	Clerk of Parliament
19.	John P. Bangura	Timap for Justice	Programme Manager
20.	Abdulai Bayraytay	State House	Presidential Spokesperson

21.	Joseph Kamara	HRCSL	Executive Secretary
22.	Foday D.M Sesay	DADA-SL	Executive Director
23.	David J. Allieu	CCSHRA-SL	Coordinator
24.	Joseph Sam Sesay	State House	SAP
25.	Hawanatu Conteh	SLBC	TV Producer
26.	David Williams	SLBC	Camera-man
27.	Sup. Mira Koroma	FSU/ SLP	National Head
28.	Isaac Konteh	SC	CD
29.	Abudulai H. Charm	Judiciary	Chief Justice
30.	Emmanuel Gbonda	NMJD	Project Officer
31.	Lavina Banduah	Transparency International SL	Executive Director
32.	Ndeye Koroma	MCCU	Chief Executive Officer
33.	Tamba Deen	NYC	Sec General
34.	Martin Jimmy	MMMR	Deputy Secretary