



ARMS FOR DEVELOPMENT

UNDP Sierra Leone

END of Year 2007 Progress Report

Project Title:	Arms for Development		
			Budget
Project Numbers:	00044698	Japan	1,803,408.22
	00052220	BMZ	460,643
	00014735	Sweden	652,737.06
Total Annual Budget:		US\$	2,916,788.28
Practice Area:	Peace and Development Unit		
Reporting Period:	January – December 2007		

I. INTRODUCTION:

Sierra Leone's horrible past, climaxed by ten years of devastation, was to be addressed through a number of initiatives including security reform, peace building, and development. Despite the conclusion of the war in 2002, illicit small arms control is up to date a relevant agenda in the development process of the country given that security is a necessary prerequisite for long term development prospects. Insecurity deters investment, aggravates economic and social exclusion, undermines good governance, places heavy burden on social services and diverts resources from development to fighting wars and crimes.

The Arms for Development (AfD) project is a joint initiative of the Government of Sierra Leone and UNDP. It is linked to "Pillar 1" (sub-sections 5.2.2 & 5.2.3) of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme (PRSP). The project aims to promote the conditions for lasting peace, human security and socio-economic development through the creation of opportunities for the voluntary surrender of weapons in exchange for development. The initiative seeks to link enhanced community security as a prerequisite to sustainable development. It focuses on: 1) raising community awareness through sensitisation activities; 2) institutional capacity building; 3) creating a forum for stakeholder's consultation over security matters; and: 4) ensuring long-term sustainability through grassroots empowerment and ownership.

The main areas of intervention include:

- Community arms collection through voluntary surrender in exchange for development projects;
- National institutional capacity building and
- support to border strengthening initiatives.

The partners in the project include the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), the District Councils, the District Security Committees (DISECs), the Provincial Security Committees (PROSECs), the Office of National Security (ONS), the Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA) and the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

The project's total budget is US\$6,782,738, reflecting contributions from several donors including Japan, Sweden, Norway and Germany

II. KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED DURING THE YEAR.

The project's output targets for 2007 include:

- 38 Chiefdoms sensitised;
- 37 Project Management Committees trained and transformed into Community Development Associations;
- 15 community projects completed and 22 new ones identified and initiated;
- Installed and computerized firearms registration system;
- Two integrated border post constructed, equipped and staffed.

Out of a target of 38 Chiefdoms to be sensitised in 2007, the Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA), a partner contracted for this purpose covered 15 Chiefdoms. GTZ, another partner for capacity building of the project management committees, has trained 45 of these committees; 8 more than the annual target of 37.

Project activities in 2007 were significantly affected by the electoral campaign and the ensuing first round and second round of elections. Firstly, around May 2007, senior officers in the Sierra Leone Police suggested that the actual weapons storage at the various SLP offices throughout the Districts should be centralised.¹ Detailed analysis of the weapon inventory established that a significant proportion of all weapons had in fact become unserviceable and local commanders judged that the relatively small proportion of serviceable weapons would not constitute a threat to security. Moreover, it was eventually realised that mass transportation of weapons ahead of the elections might in itself cause significant concerns. A second factor that affected the slow implementation in 2007 derived from the paramount concern to keep the election campaign and the elections free of violence. The project management, in consultation with UN Security officials, therefore decided to halt all weapon collection activities during the election campaign and throughout the first and second round of the elections to minimise chances of misunderstandings and any possibility of disturbance that the collection process itself might create.

With respect to implementation of community development projects, progress has been very slow due to a combination of factors including limited project allocation and “beneficiaries do it yourself” strategy defining the process as per initial project conceptualization. UNDP provided a block grant for the implementation of a community project of about USD\$14000 to the community as incentive for the voluntary surrender of weapons. A locally created Community Based Organization was trained to manage the project on behalf of the community. Members of the community in turn were to augment the limited project allocation through the provision of free voluntarily labour and local materials. The overall objective was capacity building of the CBO on one hand and to foster a sense of belonging and community voluntarism on the other.

The low capacity of stakeholders for community project management has remained a serious challenge. Considerably more effort and time is required to improve skills for effective delivery. Furthermore the willingness of the communities to provide voluntary labour has been uneven and is generally lower than initially expected. As a result, the community development project ceiling, set at US\$14,000 in 2003, proved to be in most cases grossly inadequate for viable community projects.

In the light of the above, a review of project strategy was carried out in April. Two important decisions arrived at in consultation with stakeholders were, except where the CBO is capable to manage the project and can implement it within a reasonable time limit, otherwise, it was agreed that implementation of community projects should be executed through contractors selected on competitive basis. Secondly it was agreed that the ceiling of UDS14000 per community project should be abolished and that the cost per project be now

¹ *Weapons collected by the Arms for Development Programme are stored in ocean freight containers which are parked in the compounds of the SLP offices in the districts. The containers are locked and the SLP and AFD have a joint monitoring protocol. The AFD weapons are stored and monitored separately from weapons stored in the SLP's armouries.*

determined on the basis of development needs and expected impact of the project in the local community. Such project types were agreed to be limited to four including schools, health centres, markets and community centres, which are the most common types of projects communities have selected in the past.

The need to ensure viability and real impact of project intervention necessitated a re-assessment of the 22 community projects under implementation leading to the decision that additional facilities should be provided to upgrade most of them. Five have so far been completed, 4 others will be completed by February 2008, while the remaining 13 have been absorbed to be upgraded and completed through competitive bidding. A tender notice for 18 community project including 4 old projects was issued on the 27th November 2007. Another set of 18 new community projects has been identified for tendering in January 2008 which will include 5 old ones making a total of 23 projects. It is expected that a total of 49 community projects will be completed by mid 2008 since the inception of the AfD in 2003.

In collaboration with the Sierra Leone Border Strengthening Programme, two strategic border crossing points were identified for the construction of two integrated border posts including staff quarters. The two locations are at Jendema (Liberia border) and Koindukura (Guinea Border). Construction activities have started in both locations with current progress indicating that both projects could be completed by the first quarter of 2008.

Politically, a significant milestone was reached in Sierra Leone's disarmament programme when the Parliament ratified in June of 2007 the ECOWAS² Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and Other Related Materials.³

In late October 2007, the new President announced that Sierra Leone will proceed with the establishment of a National Commission on Small Arms, as provided for in the Convention and in December, the Commissioner was appointed.

The Arms for Development strategic goals are improved security and enhancing opportunities for socio-economic development in rural areas. These are to be achieved through grassroot empowerment and awareness raising to promote the voluntary surrender of arms in exchange for development. Support to the Sierra Leone Border Strengthening Programme and national institutional capacity building are complementary objectives to achieve sustainable disarmament in the long term.



Community sensitization on the dangers of illicit small arms

The impression of partners and beneficiaries, speaking to visitors is positive. During a discussion with the Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), the Police, DISEC and community beneficiaries endorsed the AfD as an effective initiative, complementing the efforts of the Police to attained improved security in country and that of

² ECOWAS: *Economic Community of West African States.*

³ *Only Niger and Sierra Leone have so far ratified the convention. Ratification by nine of the fifteen ECOWAS members is needed for the Convention to enter into force.*

the District Councils in promoting opportunities for socio-economic development in rural areas. The success of the project relies on effective strategy for stakeholder's consultation, participatory decision-making and community ownership of the process.

The Principal of the new junior secondary school in Gbanty Kamaranka chiefdom, David Kargbo, speaking to journalists, commended the AfD initiative saying *"before this time we used makeshift buildings as classrooms. Now with UNDP's support, our community can now boast of a school building which can accommodate 400 pupils."*

Another community that has benefited from the project is the Tane Chiefdom in the Tonkolili District, where a multipurpose community centre has been constructed and provided with DSTV facilities. The centre can hold up to 200 people at any one time. Youth leader Morlai Bangura, speaking to journalists said that *"the new community centre will boost social activities in the township and thus will encourage the youngsters to stay in the community. Proceeds generated will be used to maintain the valuable community centre."*



In Mapaki town, 10 miles from Tane, a multipurpose community centre was constructed, provided with DSTV and is now in full use. Paramount Chief, Mansa Paki Kebombor, explained the importance of his chiefdom choosing a community centre in return for the peoples' surrender of arms; *"the entire community wanted a community centre because we had no place for meetings and social recreation."*



Safroko Limba Chiefdom benefited a four classroom building for 120 pupils and toilet facilities which are now in use for senior secondary school classes. This

decision was unanimously taken and mostly championed by the women who raised concern that due to lack of proper supervision, their teenage girls often get pregnant as they relocate into urban towns for senior secondary school education. Therefore additional infrastructural support to their community school by UNDP was indeed great opportunity for their girl child education.

III. CHALLENGES

The Arms for Development project was evaluated in March 2006. Among the major issues highlighted in the evaluation report were lack of verifiable indicators of achievement, absence of an evaluation framework for capacity building and sensitisation, need to improve collaboration with state security actors, the slow rate of delivery of community projects and improper storage of collected weapons. The evaluation acknowledged the objective constraint posed by the limited achievement to enact the new firearms legislation.

During the remainder of 2006 and continuing into 2007 several steps have been taken to address the issues flagged by the evaluation exercise. However, as indicated earlier in this report, the project continues to face significant challenges. Enthusiasm is dwindling among gun owners to voluntarily surrender their weapons because of continued delays on the part of the Government to enact the new firearms legislation, which will provide new eligibility criteria for private possession of firearms in the country. Gun owners are now becoming reluctant to voluntarily surrender their weapons because of uncertainty about the return of their licensable weapons, given the absence of new legislation.

The low capacity of stakeholders for community project management, also mentioned above, remains a serious challenge. Considerably more effort and time is required to improve the skills for effective delivery of community-based projects. The willingness of the communities to provide voluntary labour has been uneven and is generally lower than initially expected. Furthermore, the community development project ceiling, set at US\$14,000 in 2003, is now in most cases inadequate for viable community projects. These two issues should be considered in combination: the monetary ceiling in itself should have been adjusted for inflation, but would still be moderately adequate with the initially anticipated degree of community voluntarism. The much lower levels of voluntarism that were encountered in practice however, caused projects to have to rely much more on commercial and thus far more expensive arrangements for implementation.

By mid-2007, the ceiling of US\$14,000 was abandoned in favour of a flexible ceiling of approximately US\$30,000 which is being assessed on a case-by-case basis, given the specificities of the communities and the actual objective needs of the communities.

Modest communication activities have been deployed during 2007, mainly limited to a few radio interviews. Significant exposure for the project was obtained through the July 2007 visit of the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, who visited a recently completed community centre in Mapaki, to the north of Makeni and the Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) who paid a visit to the same project in November. UNDP is preparing a news magazine for publication in December. The Arms for Development will be featured. Furthermore the UNDP Website will be revamped to ensure more visibility for the Arms for Development project. Other material is being prepared that can be used on an ongoing basis for inclusion in the monthly newsletter of UNDP Sierra Leone. Regular Press Releases will be prepared with the Communications Unit of UNDP to coincide with the award of contracts for new community projects and the opening or handing over of projects. These communication activities will particularly highlight the important role of donor funding in the project's activities and achievements.

Continued under-investment and lack of maintenance of the road network has resulted in ever poorer road conditions, which is seriously hampering project activities. The wear and tear on the rolling stock of the project has been enormous and in practice access to remote

communities in the east and south of the country is often very difficult and very time-consuming. Particularly during the rainy season, many communities in many parts of Sierra Leone are close to inaccessible especially for deliveries of building materials.

IV. THE WAY FORWARD

A significant concern for 2008 will be to consolidate achievements made so far in national capacity building, policy development, community-based project management, and joint cross-border security.

The early establishment of a National Small Arms Commission will be important. The Commission will be the focal point for ensuring proper coordination of all small arms control interventions at the national level, including follow up on the enactment of the new firearms legislation, policy development, reporting on the United Nations Programme of Action, and activities related to the implementation of the ECOWAS Convention. UNDP, through the Arms for Development project will continue to facilitate the process and to further provide technical and financial support to the Commission.

An important issue to be addressed and one that has already been reviewed in consultation with senior staff of the SLP and the ONS, concerns the public and verified destruction of the many arms that the project have so far collected and that are unlikely to be returned to their owners, given their unserviceable status.

The approach to capacity building of grassroots communities for disarmament and development is currently under comprehensive review. It is clear that the initial premises and assumptions by the erstwhile project leadership have become untenable. The peace consolidation process no doubt requires the continued promotion of social cohesion and participatory processes to improve community security. However, it is clear that mere sensitisation by the Arms for Development project will have limited impact in the absence of effective strategies to complete reintegration of former combatants and the war wounded. Lawlessness, a poorly paid and equipped Sierra Leone Police and significant levels of Gender Based Violence (GBV) are other factors preventing significant progress on issues like social cohesion. The dire physical circumstances of most rural communities, without good roads, schools, health centres, power supply and often no safe source of water supply, further magnify the challenge.

The project will have to reorient its focus in 2008 to work more effectively with the security forces to seek to remove weapons from the Chiefdoms that so far have not been served by the project. This support will also need to be re-structured to ensure that the capacity of the Sierra Leone Police to detect arms, collect arms and to detect and intercept arms trading is strengthened.

Otherwise the approach to the implementation of community projects should change even further by abandoning the arduous process of setting up special committees which are then to be converted to project implementation agencies. Increasingly, the project will work with existing civil society organisations or faith based groups and will progressively narrow the range of projects to a limited number of structures or interventions that are critical in any community, such as health centres, community centres, court houses, water supply systems and schools.

The project will require new management processes and techniques, including improved resource deployment planning, improved arrangements for consultations and

involvement of partners, as well as robust arrangements for monitoring and evaluation. Projects will be given out to contractors through a competitive process fully in line with UNDP Rules and Regulations. A special process will be initiated during the next months to design such a robust monitoring and evaluation system that will fully take into account the responsibility of the project management to UNDP Senior Management, to the Government, to the donors and to the communities at large. It should also seek to ensure that beneficiary communities and District Councils fully participate in these monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

Above all, the project requires a good communication strategy to ensure that project objectives are understood by all stakeholders and that the many actual and potential partners can identify and associate with the objectives and activities. While giving up arms for development remains important, it is also important to ensure that those who have been wounded and traumatised by arms are brought back into the pursuit of meaningful development. In as much as this should not become a specific objective of the Arms for Development project, the project should however work much more closely with other projects and programmes that seek to mitigate the other consequences of the civil strife and violence.

V. FINANCIAL EXPENDITURES

Activity	JAPAN	BMZ	SWEDEN	Total
Project Coordination	113,365.84	222,698.00	111,977.54	448,041.38
Improved security	134,252.66	112,873.58	53,769.68	300,895.92
Community Development Projects	16,784.25	96,348.00	56,388.60	169,520.85
Border Strengthening	253,088.85	0.00	0.00	253,088.85
Total Expenditure	517,491.60	431,919.58	222,135.82	1,171,547.00
Budget balance	1,285,916.62	28,723.42	430,601.24	1,745,241.28