



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MDG-based needs assessment in Sierra Leone

The report details Sierra Leone's needs assessment to align the national development plan with the MDGs. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), drawing from the Millennium Declaration, are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions- income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion- while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. These commitments were re-affirmed at the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development (March 2002) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (August 2002). More recently, the world's commitment to alleviating poverty was captured at the 2005 UN World Summit in the Outcome document calling on all countries "To adopt, by 2006, and implement comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals."¹

For Sierra Leone to achieve the MDGs, they should be treated not as abstract ambitions but practical policy objectives. As Sierra Leone prepares its medium term national development strategy, the Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction (SGPR) which should be MDG based, the country commissioned a study to assess needs and costs of meeting the MDGs. Two central questions guide the MDG needs assessment study:

- Given Sierra Leone's commitment to the MDGs, and the repeated international commitments to achieve them, what is the required sequence of investments and policies? and
- What constraints, financial and otherwise, need to be overcome?

To answer these questions, the Government of Sierra Leone has conducted a detailed inventory of the full range of public and private interventions and investments needed to meet the MDGs and their associated costs as well as the most feasible way(s) of financing these interventions.

¹ Article 22(a) of the World Summit Outcome document found online at:
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/487/60/PDF/N0548760.pdf?OpenElement>

The UNDP MDG needs assessment approach is used and the process assessed the financial, human resources and infrastructure that will be needed and how much they will cost for 12 sectors. The selected sectors are the priority sectors identified by the Government of Sierra Leone. These include agriculture, gender, health (including child and maternal health, TB, malaria, health systems), HIV and AIDs, environment, transportation (roads), energy, education, water and Sanitation, science, innovation and technology, private sector development and job creation and public sector management. The exercise is meant to provide the Government of Sierra Leone a comprehensive diagnostic tool and long-term investment strategy to meet the International Goals.

The Government of Sierra Leone, supported by UNDP took the central role in leading the collaboration, under the primary responsibility of the Office of the Vice President in undertaking the MDG needs assessment and costing. The Coordinator in the Office of the Vice President in collaboration with members of the Steering Committee² was responsible for coordinating the work across the Government. The Government convened a Technical Working Group, each sector represented by a senior technical staff from the respective MDA. The technical working group met regularly during the exercise to update members on progress with the MDG NA and the steering committee met on a monthly basis to review work of the technical working group. Two consultants were hired, one for the situational analysis and the second to guide the needs assessment and costing exercise. The second consultant was based in the Office of the Vice President and reported directly to the Coordinator in the Office of the Vice President. The consultants worked closely with the staff of the Office of the Vice President, Development Assistant Coordinating Office (DACO), Ministry of Development and Economic Planning, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office of the President, the Bank of Sierra Leone, Line Ministries, Parliamentary Committees, as well as liaise and network with other relevant Government and non-Government actors, UNCT and other multi- and bilateral development agencies.

² All heads of relevant sectors including Ministers of these sectors.

For each sector, a comprehensive situational analysis is done to show the status of the country with respect to each MDG. Also, current efforts and strategies to improve the sector, policies and priority actions are presented. The study also presents challenges experienced in each sector and finally the needs of the sector are identified followed by associated costs. Some of the sectors identified for this study are not necessarily MDG sectors but are believed to accelerate the achievements of the MDGs. They include Roads, Science, Innovation and Technology, private sector development and job creation and public sector management.

From the study, it is observed that to achieve the MDGs, Sierra Leone needs to make significant investments in human resources, capacity building, infrastructure, institutions and financial resources. The needs assessment and costing of the twelve sectors revealed that the country will need to invest a total of about \$19 billion from 2007 to 2015 on infrastructure, human resources and financial resources for the country to achieve the MDGs. These resources spread across the years means the country should be spending about \$1.2 billion in 2007 gradually increasing that to \$1.8 billion in 2010. The amount of resources required in the medium term (2008-2010): amounts to about \$4.9 billion. For the next five year plan, 2008-2012, the country should spend about \$9.2 billion dollars. The study also attempted a rough estimate of the resource gap given current donor commitments in the various sectors and found out that the financing gap will run close to \$17.6 billion (this excludes government commitments for these sector over the years and private sector and household contributions) over the nine-year period. However, close to 60% of the costs to meet the MDGs is driven by expenditure on infrastructure especially on building and maintaining roads.

The study also observed the importance of sustained economic growth for Sierra Leone to reach the MDGs. As a result, the study recommends investment in agriculture as a priority since agriculture remains a major contributor to national economic growth. Also, the poor heavily represent the agriculture sector. Achieving the goal of increased income for the poor will have a positive spill over on the achievement of other goals especially the social sector goals of education and health.

The second priority sector recommended is roads. Having good roads is both good in itself but more so for the ease of transportation as it reduces both the financial costs and time costs of transportation.

Finally, preceding the implementation of the MDG NA is the preparation of a macroeconomic framework and growth strategy. The macroeconomic framework should estimate the implications of MDG investments on growth, income poverty reduction and other macro variables (foreign exchange, prices, wages, exchange rates, employment etc.). This study can now be used in a macroeconomic framework to assess these impacts.

In addition to the required resources, Sierra Leone should also strive for growth based on systematic and long-term planning and implementation of short to medium-term strategies that encompass its long-term goals. The Needs Assessment exercise has determined the full range of resources expected from various actors. The remaining challenge is to draw up a 5-year detailed action plan to support the MDG goals and national objectives.

Through the development of clear sectoral objectives and well-specified action plans, the MDGs needs assessment can significantly contribute to improved coordination between donors and alignment behind clearly defined government priorities. It is expected that this report, detailing the needs-assessment exercise, will help to promote in-country dialogue and advocacy regarding MDGs, thereby offering evidence and a framework to mobilize targeted and sufficient international support to implement the MDGs.