



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

*BY*

**DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT  
AND ECONOMIC PLANNING  
HON. MR. IBRAHIM M. SESAY**

*AT THE*

HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE  
THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE HIGH COMMISSION  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*New YORK, 20<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2005*

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statements made by the distinguished Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the distinguished Representative of Ghana on behalf of the African Group.

My delegation wishes to thank you Mr. Chairman and the entire CSD-13 Bureau, for the support and efficient manner in which you conducted the preparatory activities for CSD-13.

Sierra Leone is pleased to participate with other nations in this August gathering to agree on policy options and possible actions to expedite the achievement of the targets set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, as well as those contained in the Millennium Development Goals (the MDGs).

Distinguished delegates, in spite of the daunting nature of the challenge, we believe that developing countries can meet the MDGs related to water, sanitation and human settlements by adopting concrete policy options and actions backed by the financial resources needed to achieve them.

In both our Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and national MDG report, which we just completed with the support of the UN Country Team, we have mainstreamed the issues of water, sanitation and human settlements as key priorities in our policy options. However, several critically important areas of needs have been identified in both documents. Permit me Mr. Chairman, to highlight some elements of these policies.

### **Water and Sanitation**

Our overall objective is to increase access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation for all in both urban and rural areas. The strategy in the medium-term is to continue to expand and strengthen the decentralised network of facilities for the delivery of safe drinking water and the improvement of general sanitation in both urban and rural areas. The policy options and actions we identified include among other things:

Provision of safe drinking water to deprived communities in the peri-urban communities, towns and rural areas, including the rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of existing water supply facilities damaged during the war (e.g. hand dug wells, spring boxes, traditional wells, gravity fed systems, etc)

- Provision of adequate liquid and solid waste disposal facilities;

- Increasing community awareness of good hygiene practices relating to collection and storage of drinking water, use and maintenance of sanitary facilities and other environmental sanitation issues;
- Strengthening and coordinating the operations of service providing institutions;
- Promoting sustainable management of water and sanitation facilities and sensitising communities and users to pay for services;

Adopting an integrated approach to service delivery emphasising the interlinkages between education, health, water, sanitation and the ecosystem;

- Maximising efforts to get international financial institutions to prioritise water and sanitation in their development assistance to poor countries like Sierra Leone;
- Encouraging the use of adaptable technologies at the household level on a self-sustaining basis for the delivery of safe drinking water, sanitation and a more cost effective water treatment that meets the needs of the poor;
- Strengthening south-south cooperation especially for the use of adaptive technology and;
- Devolving decision making on water and sanitation to local authorities.

### **Human Settlements**

The policy option in the area of achieving the MDG relating to human settlements for us will be:

- Building the capacity of communities for effective housing delivery through skills training in building materials production and housing construction;
- Facilitating access by the poor to affordable finance through micro finance institutions aimed at sustainable self-help housing construction;

Improving access to and ownership of land for housing by the poor, especially women and the vulnerable, in the urban areas;

Environmental upgrading of slum and squatter settlements in Freetown and other urban areas;

- Providing technical and other support services to communities and NGOs assisting them in the rehabilitation/reconstruction of homes destroyed in the ten-year civil conflict;
- Facilitating the development of housing estates for all income levels nationwide, thereby providing employment opportunities for the youth; and
- Developing a comprehensive housing policy that will focus on the needs of the poor and low-income families in the urban and rural areas.

Distinguished delegates, there is no doubt that for the policies and actions I have just highlighted, there are critical and important tasks we must undertake as countries. This notwithstanding, making a significant breakthrough in the achievement of the MDGs relating to water, sanitation and human settlements requires a significant increase in official development assistance.

In post-conflict societies like Sierra Leone, there is dire need for specific policies and strategies as well as appropriate responses and support to enable them address their extraordinary circumstances in order to achieve the MDGs, especially those relating to water, sanitation and human settlements. In their situation, these countries need more assistance and it is imperative that they be relieved of their debt burden. We therefore welcome the initiative of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury in advocating for the cancellation of the debts of these countries.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we look forward to concluding on policy options and possible actions capable of addressing the needs of the Least Developed Countries, the Land-locked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States which face the greatest challenges in achieving the targets set for water, sanitation and human settlements in both the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Declaration (MDGs). We look forward to cooperating with our development partners in achieving these objectives.

I thank you.

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