



Strategy Statement

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This Strategy Statement for Sierra Leone was assembled by USAID/Sierra Leone. This is a USAID planning document and does not contain budget information approved by the U.S. Government. Any budget information contained therein is for illustrative purposes only.

Additional information on the attached can be obtained from Sarah Swift USAID/AFR/WA.

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Acronyms

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
DACDF	Diamond Area Community Development Funds
DCOF	Displaced Children and Orphans Fund
DOD	Department of Defense
DRP	Development Relief Program
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives
ESF	Economic Support Funds
FFP	Food for Peace
GDA	Global Development Alliances
GOSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
KPSC	Kimberly Process Certification Scheme
LINKS	Promoting Linkages for Livelihood Security and Economic Development
NEC	National Electoral Commission
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
VOT	Victims of Torture
WARP	West African Regional Program

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2006-2008

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1. Program Rationale

1.1 Foreign Policy Importance

The primary U.S. interest in Sierra Leone is the consolidation of peace, stability and security in the country, and by extension, across West Africa. The fragility of the three states of the Mano River Union (Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone), as well as Cote d'Ivoire, is a substantial concern for the future development of all members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). A successful transition from conflict in Sierra Leone requires external investment and concerted internal commitment to improved governance which will help foster stability in West Africa—a region characterized by massive international interventions in recent years. This investment will also demonstrate the international community's commitment to address the challenge of failed states in Africa.

The USAID/Sierra Leone Strategy conforms fully with the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan and the USAID Strategic Framework for Africa. The State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan recognizes that development assistance is one of the three tools of the USG foreign policy and provides the over-arching rationale for the program.¹ The USAID Strategic Framework for Africa provides the conceptual framework for engagement in African Fragile States. The program outlined in this Fragile State Strategy Statement will focus on improving governance in order to promote stability, peace, security, recovery and democratic and economic reform in Sierra Leone and, thereby, advance the foreign policy interests of the U.S. in the region.

1.2 Country Context

Sierra Leone emerged from eleven years of violent civil war in January 2002. While its progress since then has been significant, the transition to peace and stability is fragile, and much work remains to be done. The scars of decades of poor governance and civil war manifest themselves both physically and psychologically. The war left 50,000 dead, 100,000 mutilated and 257,000 raped.² Charred-out buildings pockmark the country, limbless children and adults struggle to earn a living, and young mothers, with children resulting from rape, are often rejected by their families. A continued mentality of “survival at all costs”, linked to the prevalence of corruption, may prove to be one of the greatest impediments to a sustainable peace and can best be countered by the development and adoption of values that reinforce participation, good governance and democracy.

Sierra Leone, with a 2005 per capita GDP of only \$149, has the second lowest human development index ranking in the world, and the lowest ranking on women's empowerment. The erosion of national public and 'traditional' institutions from years of mismanagement and elite predation has resulted in numerous problems. Adult literacy is a mere 29.6% (20.5% for women and 39.8% for men); 43% of the population lacks sustainable access to an improved water source; 27% of children under five are malnourished (under weight for age); only 2% of children under 5 sleep under an insecticide-treated bed net; under five mortality is 284/1,000; and maternal mortality is 2,000/100,000.

At independence in April 1961, Sierra Leone was one of Britain's model colonies in Africa. It boasted a fine civil service, an uncorrupt judiciary, an educational system which was the pride of the country, and a free press that had been instrumental in the fight against colonialism. As a model colony, Sierra Leone played a key role in the spread of western education in British West Africa, and its social institutions were well respected in the region. However, these noble achievements would be undermined by the end of the decade. In 1968, Siaka Stephens took power under the All Peoples Congress party and his government slowly implemented policies that undermined the foundations of the judicial, administrative and social systems that the British had established. This trend was deeply reinforced during the 1970s, and by the mid-1980s, when Stephens handed over power to a hand-picked successor, the social, economic, judiciary

¹ The USAID program contributes directly to the State-USAID joint goals of regional stability, democracy and human rights, economic prosperity and security, enhancing food security and agricultural development and improving health, education, environment and other conditions for the global population.

² 2003 Human Rights Report

and administrative systems had been severely compromised. Siaka Stevens's 17-year presidency was characterized by widespread corruption and gross mismanagement at all levels of the society. With rampant cronyism and nepotism, gross abuses of human rights and the rule of law, and disenfranchisement of citizens' political rights, the stage was set for civil unrest.

While Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war was ignited by the spill over effects of the war in Liberia, it was fueled by the lack of social services and employment which remain a problem. At current estimates, unemployment stands at close to 80% and inflation is gauged at 11.1%. About 75% of the population earns below \$1 dollar a day. The vast majority of the population ekes out a living in subsistence agriculture, informal production and petty trading. Despite some notable progress, Sierra Leone's economy is fragile with weak formal private sector development. At least 60% of the government budget is currently supported by the international donor community, primarily through direct budget support. However, schools and health centers are functioning, albeit imperfectly, and dependence on emergency humanitarian assistance has ceased. Likewise, macro economic and fiscal management are addressing inflation and Sierra Leone is solidly on a path towards meeting its HIPC decision point.

Analysts agree that the current situation in Sierra Leone has its roots in poor governance which, in addition to fueling civil unrest, crippled economic performance and created a fertile ground for illegal activities, ultimately resulting in the state's failure.³ Long-term improvements in the country's human development index require responsive and representative government institutions, with the will and capacity to implement reforms. This requires a cross-cutting approach that promotes accountability, transparency, best practices and good management. In accordance with its PRSP, civil service, judicial and parliamentary reforms are now underway. New legal codes are being developed and debated. New laws are being passed to encourage private sector investment and minimize money laundering. A Law Reform Commission, independent National Electoral Commission (NEC), a Political Party Registration Commission (also party mediation), an Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), a Privatization Commission and a Decentralization Secretariat have all been formed and are working under very challenging conditions to address newly-mandated responsibilities and tasks. Institutional reform and capacity building are progressing erratically with mixed success to date. These kinds of institutional changes require long-term commitment based on realistic expectations as to how and when they can be accomplished.

The security sector is also in the process of reform. The police are increasingly respected and the national army is standing on its own with the final withdrawal of the United Nations (Peacekeeping) Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) on December 20, 2005. However, partly due to inconsistent payment of salaries, the police and military are increasingly being accused of corruption and irresponsible behavior (e.g., policeman raping a female inmate while she was incarcerated). Equally important is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report that has been widely disseminated, and the GOSL is mandated to implement its recommendations. However, the GOSL has issued a responsive White Paper in which it disagrees with many points raised in the TRC Report and their implementation of the TRC recommendations have fallen far short of the expectations of the people of Sierra Leone and the international community.

1.3 Sources of Fragility

Poor governance has been the primary source of fragility in Sierra Leone (other sources of fragility are outlined in annex 1). As expressed by the 2004 Truth and Reconciliation report:

“Years of bad governance, endemic corruption and the denial of basic human rights created deplorable conditions that made conflict inevitable. Successive regimes were increasingly impervious to the wishes and needs of the majority. Instead of implementing positive and progressive policies, each regime perpetuated the ills and self-service machinations left behind by its predecessor. By the start of the conflict, the nation had been stripped of its dignity [sic]. Institutional collapse reduced the vast majority of the population into a state of deprivation. Government accountability was nonexistent. Political expression and dissent had been crushed.

³ 2005 World Development Report

Democracy and rule of law were dead. By 1991 Sierra Leone was a deeply divided country full of potential for violence. It provided only the slightest spark for this violence to be ignited.”

Of great concern is the fact that most Sierra Leoneans believe that the root causes of the civil war have not yet been adequately addressed. Immediate action by the Government of Sierra Leone and civil society, with the support of the international community, is needed to prevent backsliding. With the conclusion of the Consultative Group (CG) meeting in London in November of 2005, the Government of Sierra Leone promised to implement its well-vetted PRSP, and the international community pledged to support it within approved priorities and funding. Sierra Leoneans will be following this process closely and will expect results. Progress in the transition will depend on the extent to which people’s lives are impacted in the near term, and perceptions of the government’s willingness and ability to govern in the population’s interests. National Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, upcoming in 2007, and local elections in 2008, will test the political process, while action on anti-corruption, electoral reform, and devolution of power through the decentralization process, will test the government’s political will.

Mismanagement of natural resources and political instability are also linked in Sierra Leone, as ‘conflict’ diamonds provided a significant source of funding for all sides in the civil war. Illicit mining remains a serious problem (30-50% of diamonds are reportedly still smuggled across the border⁴) though progress is being made with the increasing value of legal diamond exports, at least in part due to the Kimberly Certification Process (KCP). In addition, local-level disputes related to diamonds persist as citizens are forcefully evacuated from mining sites, mining plots are unfairly distributed, and alternative uses of fertile lands compete with the diamond industry. Furthermore, mineral wealth is an incentive for corruption and continued smuggling, weakening the Government’s authority and increasing the prospect of future violent conflicts. The U.S. is committed to building transparency and accountability in the alluvial diamond sector, in order to ensure that government revenues are used for public good; to protect human rights; and to deny violent extremists (both international terrorist networks and regional interlocutors) access to financing.

Finally, incorporating the largely unskilled and unemployed 18-35 year age group (one third of the population) into a just and productive society is paramount. The challenge is made more difficult as young people have few good role models to emulate, have been profoundly affected by the war, and have had little or no exposure to either a functioning democracy or a society at peace. Youths form the labor base for the country and provide the human capital for political and economic stability. Yet, with an uncaring society with poor economic prospects, they have little to lose and can derail the precarious transition, particularly as the 2007 elections approach. In the absence of legitimate avenues for participation and engagement in productive activities, young people may fall prey to political parties of ill intentions or engage in criminal activities. Unless young men and women are empowered politically, economically, socially and culturally, their potential as a force for positive change will not be harnessed, making resurgent conflicts likely.

With its limited resources, the Mission will focus on one Strategic Objective, “Enhance Democratic Governance,” to target its future efforts on the most significant root cause of fragility in Sierra Leone where USAID can exercise the greatest leadership. Our efforts will be closely coordinated with other donors whose financial contributions dwarf USAID’s. Together we will help build the institutions and attitudes that can give all Sierra Leoneans, especially youth, hope for the future.

2. Program Structure

2.1 SO – Enhance Democratic Governance (initial obligation FY 2006 – final obligation FY 2008)

2.1(i) Stabilization Hypothesis

The Mission’s hypothesis hinges on the premise that civil unrest emerges in the absence of transparent governance. This risk increases where there are perceptions of public corruption and inefficiency, where citizens’ civil rights are denied, and where potential ‘spoilers’ have continued access to financing. Furthermore, the lack of democratic governance leads to marginalization of citizens, who end up adopting

⁴ EIU 2005

behaviors that are injurious to peace, security and stability. To address this situation, this strategy is designed around a single Strategic Objective (SO): “Enhance Democratic Governance.”

All earmarks and sectoral funding will be directed to accomplish the Fragile States governance objective while also achieving sectoral results.⁵ In addition to democracy and governance activities, health, biodiversity, and livelihoods programs will focus on strengthening social institutions, public and private, in a manner that expands participation and incorporates principles of accountability, transparency, and efficiency at the grassroots level. Emphasis will be placed on programs which empower formerly marginalized women and youth. Communities will be encouraged to develop and implement plans that promote democratic governance. Small grants will be made available to community-based organizations, while instilling principles of transparent management, and building capacity among civil society groups. Activities will be developed to expand the public’s access to government information, and facilitate processes for government to share information on services and amenities expenditures with local communities. These include face-to-face meetings between leadership and the community, and circulation of relevant public information within the media.⁶

Because the situation of war-affected youth is critical, activities will be developed to support income generation, broadened political participation, move citizens beyond the struggle for survival, and engage youth in productive activities. To address conflict diamonds, the mission will continue its work in the corruption-plagued alluvial diamond sector. Civil society will be empowered to monitor the diamond sector, and to help direct the equitable and transparent management and use of the diamond resources. USAID will support efforts of the Kimberly Process and the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) to further improve transparency and management, to limit the potential for civil unrest, to maximize respect for human rights, and to provide employment.

2.1(ii) SO Description

The SO will build on the success of the old SO to “Strengthen Democratic Governance” which seeks to broaden community-based political participation in national dialogue through a variety of mutually reinforcing activities. The program is working to enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of newly formed local government councils and civil-society organizations by promoting open debate, through general capacity building, training in advocacy skills, and education of citizens on their rights and responsibilities. Training and mentoring programs for Paramount Chiefs, Members of Parliament and newly-elected local leaders will enable and encourage informed dialogue.

USAID has used mass media to alter the way government, citizens, and civil society work and interact at all levels. Media programming will continue to be employed in a cross-cutting fashion to ensure that citizens have full access to information and are better able to voice their concerns and participate in the democratic process. USAID’s assistance will advance the establishment of community radio stations and effective media networks, while also supporting radio programming and other media materials designed to support the nascent local councils and promote a national dialogue on good governance.

The SO will also build on successful approaches developed under the DA-funded LINKS Program, which has been operational over the last year. LINKS promotes unity and reconciliation, and encourages resettlement by rebuilding vital public infrastructure in devastated communities, stimulating economic activity and enabling socially marginalized youth, both young men and women, to become gainfully employed through new or expanded economic activities. Isolated farm communities are being integrated into the mainstream of society and they participate in good governance practices through community-based organizations such as farm associations, cooperatives, and field schools. In addition, LINKS is building on the foundation created by the Food for Peace (FFP) Development Relief Program to improve health status and establish agriculture-based livelihood activities. Activities pursued through LINKS include micro-credit lending to entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth, business skills development, and agro-

⁵ USAID/Sierra Leone will use program components and indicators to demonstrate impact in USAID’s respective earmarked sectors.

⁶ Access to transparent and accurate information is a specific recommendation of the TRC.

processing enhancement, and strengthening linkages between the community and district and national input supply and produce markets. Beneficiaries include private sector entrepreneurs, public sector entities, local farmers' organizations, women's and youth groups or cooperatives, and small-scale businesses. This activity also promotes an interactive dialogue between different communities as well as between communities and the local leadership responsible for advocating for development and infrastructure projects. The initial focus will be on the sale of staple crops of rice, cassava and vegetables, given their importance to the livelihoods of the target groups. In the coming year the program will be expanded to include other commercially viable products such as oil palm, cocoa yam, cashews and ginger.

The diamond sector, after agriculture, is the largest employer in Sierra Leone and revenues from the legitimate alluvial diamond trade have the potential to contribute substantially to the national budget, thereby increasing government resources to implement the PRSP. The integrated Diamond Management Program aims to improve governance of the Sierra Leone diamond sector by ensuring that both government and communities derive increased benefits through addressing corruption, and promoting equitable and transparent management of the resource. The U.S. continues to support the Kimberley Process, a voluntary agreement between industry and national governments to encourage legitimate and transparent trade in diamonds. Nationally, USAID will work with the relevant Ministries and senior government officials to promote management of the industry in a manner that encourages investment and reduces the opportunity for criminal exploitation. USAID will also support the innovative Diamond Area Community Development Fund, which directs funds from diamond export taxes toward community development within diamond producing chiefdoms. These measures strengthen the effectiveness of the Kimberly Process. Locally, USAID builds the capacity of citizens, cooperatives and civic organizations to participate in the diamond market, and to demand fair treatment and payment for their labor and diamonds. Alternative marketing outlets (sales) are also being created by involving more international players. USAID is also facilitating the involvement of commercial banks to eliminate the role of untraceable cash in the purchase of diamonds.

2.1(iii) Expected Impact of SO

SO programs will focus on both increasing Sierra Leonean's knowledge and expectations of good governance, as well as increasing the responsiveness, transparency, will and capacity of selected government institutions at all levels to deliver. This will involve work at the local level with citizens, ward, city and district councils, including the Paramount Chiefs and their related traditional/tribal governance structures. Disenfranchised youth and women will be a particular focus with the aim of reducing discontent, ensuring engagement of more citizens and promoting a more equitable distribution of national resources. Specifically, the SO will address decentralization in selected sectors, corruption, accountability, increased access to information, and better management of natural resources with special attention to the alluvial diamond sector. The SO will also promote respect for human rights to combat attitudes and practices that condone the abuse of workers and gender-based violence. Mission activities will ultimately contribute to the development of a democratic culture where women and youth are equal participants in the country's economic, political, social and cultural life, where tolerance is promoted and non-violent dispute resolution is developed. Over the long term, it is anticipated that communities and government systems will have the capacity and will to make democratic decisions based on ethical values that will lead Sierra Leone to transformational development.

Specific sectoral results include but are not limited to job creation, increased revenue generation from alluvial diamonds, growth in the number of hectares under sustainable natural resource management, increased micronutrient supplementation, improved girls retention in schools, strengthened organizations, and trained leadership. These will be reported on annually using USAID's common program components and indicators listed in annex 3.

2.1(iv) Obstacles and Remedies

Obstacle: Lack of political will

Remedy: 1) increase citizens' knowledge of and demand for better governance to complement the collective action of donors to promote democratic and ethical values to improve the GOSL performance, 2) proactively engage and support the pro-reform government officials, ministries and local institutions.

Obstacle: High levels of illiteracy and ignorance

Remedy: 1) incorporate literacy and awareness raising programs into the program design.

Obstacle: Patriarchal and male dominance of society

Remedy: 1) highlight and provide support to women in all program activities, including as council members, political candidates and active members of political parties, 2) ensure their active leadership and participation in all forums, 3) where/when necessary and possible, augment their training and work experience, 4) embed focus group discussions on gender in every aspect of the program, 5) sensitize men and raise their awareness to the benefits of supporting women's' increased engagement and leadership in political, economic and social activities.

2.2 Cross Cutting Themes

Gender, youth/urbanization and HIV/AIDS are the cross-cutting themes discussed below and will be elaborated in an operational plan.

2.2(i) Gender

Gender-based discrimination, which is sanctioned by traditional custom and law, is rampant in Sierra Leone. Exemplified by the inferior economic, social, cultural and political status of women, gender-based discrimination has been further documented in the PRSP as a major determinant of poverty. Specific challenges faced by women include: (1) gender-based violence (60% of the children abducted during the war were girls and 50% of all women have been victims of sexual violence⁷); (2) barriers to economic empowerment especially in terms of access to markets, training, finance, infrastructure, technology, education (only 21% of the students in primary secondary, and tertiary education are girls⁸); (3) absence of counseling and entrepreneurship in development; barriers to political empowerment (only 107 of 1115 candidates contesting local elections in 2004 were women; 14.5% of seats in parliament are held by women and 13% of ministerial level positions have been given to women); and (4) Gender-based discrimination, exploitative and hazardous forms of livelihood of poor unskilled women. In addition, there has been inadequate sensitization on gender and development issues at all levels.

The USAID program will address equity and efficiency issues by ensuring women, (over 50% of Sierra Leone's population), equal access to information, training, resources, influence and political power, thereby involving more marginalized women in political and economic activities. In addition to assuring 50% participation of women in program activities, emphasis will also be given to sensitizing men on gender issues.

2.2(ii) Youth

Prior to the war, youths were largely unskilled, uneducated and unemployed, and lacked opportunities. In addition, they were largely excluded from political processes. The resultant hopelessness and despair, characterized by an attitude of "nothing to lose," made them pawns of the various warring factions. As a result, war-affected youth are still a potential threat to stability. Their situation has been worsened further by high unemployment, the rising cost of living, and widespread perceptions of government and private-sector corruption. In the absence of legally productive activities, these young people resort to unscrupulous and violent activities in order to survive.

⁷ Human Rights Watch "We'll kill you if you cry: sexual violence in the Sierra Leone conflict" NT January 2003

⁸ *ibid*

The 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections present an opportunity to engage youths and to deal with their most pressing needs in urban and rural areas. To this end, emphasis on youths will be a major focus of all programming in the strategy; in particular those dealing with productive livelihoods and engagement in political processes. In addition, unemployed and unskilled youth in urban areas will be supported through opportunities for micro-credit and agriculture programs, thereby promoting the transition from subsistence agriculture to cash crops.

2.2(iii) HIV/AIDS

Sierra Leone which, has emerged from years of civil war, characterized by widespread rape, sex servitude and unsafe sex, has all the conditions for a potentially rapid and devastating spread of the HIV/AIDS virus. Furthermore, there is little knowledge about the HIV/AIDS virus and there is widespread practice of indiscriminate sex among young men and women. The Government is currently formulating a comprehensive policy that will address HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care, but the social impediments are immense. USAID/Sierra Leone will continue working with DOD, DOS, USAID/Washington and WARP to capitalize on existing HIV/AIDS activities, including developing awareness programs on the causes and consequences of HIV/AIDS, promoting the ABC method, promoting awareness about methods for living effectively and responsibly with the HIV virus, and developing programs to mitigate the negative stigma of the disease on people living with the virus. Given adequate funding, the program will support treatment programs to encourage people to get tested. In addition, USAID/Sierra Leone will use its position of leadership to leverage technical support from the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB.

The work with the national HIV/AIDS Secretariat and local NGOs and communities will bring renewed focus and emphasis to good governance, transparency and equity. Through the holding of community and local/District Council meetings and promoting of media coverage, international and national information and perspectives will be brought to local communities and by the same token communities' concerns, fears and needs will be brought to the national government for action.

2.2(iv) The Role of Indigenous Organizations: Expertise in Design and Implementation

To build institutional capacities, stronger partnerships and take advantage of appropriate local expertise, the GOSL, local partners and Sierra Leonean consultants from different institutions and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) will be invited to participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of all SO activities.

2.2(v) Efforts at Donor Coordination/Harmonization

USAID/Sierra Leone is a key member of a very proactive international donor community and donor/GOSL group that holds monthly and weekly coordination meetings respectively. One result from these meetings has been a concerted donor approach for advising and/or putting pressure on the GOSL to undertake reforms to enhance good governance. High level GOSL/civil society/international donor and diplomatic community meetings (DEPAC) are held quarterly to review GOSL progress in meeting objectives. In addition, Annual Consultative Group meetings are planned and miscellaneous donor/GOSL/civil society meetings are also held frequently. Furthermore, transparency of donor programs and easing the management burden of donor programs on the GOSL are concerns that are being explored by the donor community at the request of the GOSL.

The USAID/Sierra Leone Strategy is consistent with the GOSL PRSP which is also supported by other donors. The GOSL preferred assistance mechanism is direct budget support to a "PRSP Trust Fund" to which donors contribute and which is managed by the World Bank. USAID/Sierra Leone does not provide direct budget support to the GOSL, the Trust Fund, or the UN managed "Election Basket." (See Annex 4)

2.2(vi) GDA Strategy and Leveraging Resources

In addition to leveraging the resources of other actors, USAID/Sierra Leone will engage the private sector in making the alluvial diamond mining sector more socially responsive, especially with regard to meeting the needs of youths. An alliance with UNDP will be further developed to support micro-enterprises for women and youth currently through USAID/Sierra Leone's agriculture/job creation initiative), and Global Development Alliances (GDAs) will be pursued with companies such as Kraft, Mars, Coca Cola, or Nestle to further address youth unemployment.

USAID/Sierra Leone will also leverage the resources of other donors to help fund the three-year Election Plan (Presidential and Parliamentary in 2007, Local elections 2008). This will allow the Mission to amplify its impact to continue improving good governance, empowering local communities through access to better information and youth employment. In addition to economic benefits, youth involvement will also expose members of this group to the principles of good governance, accountability and transparency.

3.0 Global Issues and Special Concerns

The USAID Program in Sierra Leone coordinates with all USG actors where possible and supports joint State/USAID goals and activities (e.g., health, trafficking in persons,⁹ natural resource management, trade and industry, political, public diplomacy). The Program coordinates with DOD on HIV/AIDS,¹⁰ and with other health and some infrastructure activities. In addition, the Strategic Framework for Africa has identified the following global issues to be addressed through programming in Sierra Leone: Biodiversity, TB, Malaria,¹¹ Polio, and micronutrients.¹² USAID/Sierra Leone also works with the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF), and Victims of Torture (VOT), to ease the trauma and suffering of war victims by providing prostheses, psycho-social therapy, health, and livelihoods assistance. Direct support for health initiatives and international trade agreements¹³ is being provided to Sierra Leone through the USAID/West Africa Regional Program.

USAID/Sierra Leone will address biodiversity and tropical forests in a manner that supports its strategic objective through advances in responsible governance at the local level. USAID proposes to work with local communities (e.g. community-based resource management committees, local and District councils and civil society) to improve management of resources and benefit the environment. Communities will participate in discussions with local governments to identify and prioritize land-use needs, while town meetings and the media will help to disseminate information on the process. Miners and farmers will be exposed to environment-friendly means of advancing their livelihoods. The program will also address deforestation, over-cutting and over-grazing on sloping forest landscapes, and watershed degradation. The result will be improvement in governance as well as in the areas of food security, income generation, conflict-mitigation, and poverty alleviation. USAID's activities in protecting tropical-forest resources and biodiversity, especially for vulnerable species such as chimpanzees, will also provide important opportunities at the local level to highlight the benefits of forest-related land-use planning and management.

3.1 Linkages to Initiatives and Earmarks

USAID/Sierra Leone benefits from several initiatives and earmarks, which will, to the extent possible, go toward enhancing inclusive government, in particular, the empowerment of women and youth: 1) The

⁹ A trafficking in persons assessment has been completed for the country and the US Mission in Sierra Leone is developing initiatives to address issues given the country's placement in Tier 3, of particular concern is child trafficking.

¹⁰ HIV/AIDS civilian prevention activities are currently both funded and managed by the WARP. In addition DOD has a ground breaking program with Sierra Leone's military.

¹¹ USAID does not currently directly fund Malaria or TB activities however the USG is a major contributor to the Global Fund.

¹² USAID's bureau for Global Health, the Bureau for Africa's office of sustainable development and Food For Peace provide funding and management for micronutrient supplementation, polio eradication, and child survival programming.

¹³ WARP has provided AGOA assistance to both the Government and private sector entrepreneurs.

Presidential Africa Education Initiative and the Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Program will focus on promoting basic literacy and improving educational opportunities in order to build leadership capacity among women and youth, especially young girls; 2) The Ambassador's Fund for HIV/AIDS will continue to work with local communities and the HIV/AIDS Secretariat to build institutional capacity. It will focus at the national level on the transparent management and implementation of the fund, and at the local level, ensure the proper functioning of the decentralized part of the system. This will include capacity building to ensure that local NGOs and/or councils have the skills and capacity to implement the programs effectively and equitably at the local level. This work will continue to be done in collaboration with the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which provides \$11 million annually; 3) The West Africa Regional Program will implement the Global Competitiveness Initiatives and the Leland Initiative.¹⁴

3.2 Humanitarian Assistance

The World Food Program, with USAID support, is providing food aid to vulnerable populations including lactating mothers and children under five. Food for work and a school feeding program are also being implemented through Food for Peace and are integrated into the governance objective through their inclusive and participatory approaches linking vulnerable groups to emerging community and local government structures.

3.3 Relevance to the National Strategy Papers – the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)

Sierra Leone's PRSP, "A National Program for Food Security, Job Creation and Good Governance (2005-2007)," builds on an earlier national recovery strategy. The PRSP recognizes that the cause of the country's historical political instability lies in its history of extremely poor governance, widespread corruption and the marginalization of rural and urban communities. Weak commitment to devolution, and reform, as well as limited capacity and exogenous negative factors associated with the world economy, are noted as potential threats to successful implementation of the PRSP. The Government of Sierra Leone is committed to reform and implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP). However, its capacity to implement is weak, and it has therefore requested capacity building in order to improve its ability to deliver results. All USAID activities are consistent with the PRSP and will focus on strengthening good governance, while empowering and engaging local citizens, especially youth and women.

¹⁴ The current focus of ICT activities is to connect civil society organizations throughout the Mano River Union to enhance their peace building and stabilization capacity.