



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF STATE



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SIERRA LEONE

U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PERFORMANCE PUBLICATION Fiscal Year 2009

FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS

Sierra Leone has made remarkable progress in consolidating peace, fostering democracy, and rebuilding infrastructure following its brutal 11-year civil war, which ended in 2002. However, the country's hard-won stability remains fragile, especially with the deteriorating political situation in neighboring Guinea. Sierra Leone is near the bottom of the United Nation's Human Development Index, with 70 percent illiteracy, among the world's highest rates of maternal and infant mortality, and 70 percent unemployment. The endemic corruption and weak governance that were causes of the civil war remain major challenges.

The goals of the United States Government (USG) in Sierra Leone are to support Sierra Leone's efforts to consolidate peace and achieve greater security, build democracy, improve Sierra Leoneans' health and food security, and spur the broad-based and rapid economic growth needed to create jobs. U.S. assistance is helping the Sierra Leonean military become more professional and more capable of protecting the country's territorial integrity and combating criminal activity; improving local governance; increasing food security, agricultural productivity, and commercialization; improving natural resource management; improving maternal and child health (MCH); and building HIV/AIDS surveillance and laboratory capacity. In addition, the USG is a major donor supporting the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The USG is using an integrated, multi-sectoral approach in many programs. For example, activities in agriculture, natural resource management, business development, and local governance are integrated, as are interventions focusing on food security, nutrition, and MCH. Program synergies are also being cultivated. For instance, some farmers who benefitted from USAID's Food for Peace program, which focuses on subsistence farming and food security, are now being helped by another program to "graduate" to farming and marketing more valuable, commercial crops. Fighting corruption, building institutional and human capacity, and empowering marginalized youth and women are concerns that cut across all assistance programs. Overall, in FY 2009, USG programs made significant progress.

HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Peace and Security

The USG supports the long-term objective of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), which is to build a small, affordable, and supportable force that respects civil authority. As a result of the civil war, the military lost its credibility as an institution designed to protect the territorial integrity of Sierra Leone. The RSLAF requires urgent assistance to strengthen a maritime wing and an army capable of policing the country's land and water boundaries. Illegal fishing and over-fishing by foreign commercial shipping fleets, illegal drugs shipped through Sierra Leone, and smuggling to and from Guinea and Liberia, which causes serious revenue loss for the Government, are some of the challenges facing the RSLAF.

In FY 2009, U.S. assistance:

- Continued to support the transformation of the military into a professional and apolitical institution whose primary allegiance is to defend the constitution and territory of Sierra Leone. With USG and other donors' support, the military was downsized from 16,000 in 2001 to 8,500 by September 2009 in compliance with the national mandate (in 2009, approximately 1,600 soldiers left the military). These measures, and the targeted trainings provided to military personnel, have improved both their capability and the public perception of the once-discredited Sierra Leonean military. The RSLAF are now being enlisted to serve in the current United Nations peacekeeping mission in Darfur.
- Signed the first comprehensive Maritime Security Agreement in Africa with the Government of Sierra Leone (GSL). This demonstrates the GSL's strong commitment to better oversight and policing of its waters, and its willingness to work with the United States in improving maritime security. U.S. assistance, in the form of in-country mobile training, has enabled military and civilian security officials to police crimes more effectively through border and maritime surveillance. The training promoted better understanding and implementation of the rule of law, transparency, and good governance. Seventy military and 35 civil servants were trained in maritime law, illegal drugs handling, and anticorruption. This enabled them to determine the conditions under which seizures can be made without a warrant. Generally, before the training, participants demonstrated a poor knowledge of maritime and illegal drug laws, and accepted corruption. While Sierra Leone has appropriate and well-written maritime, illegal drug, and corruption laws, the officials charged with implementing them had either not seen the laws, or lacked computer or internet access to refer to them. An immediate outcome of the course was that every participant was made aware of the laws and more importantly, was supplied with hard copies of the laws.
- Provided training for Sierra Leonean military personnel in the United States for the first time in six years. Eight maritime officers attended the International Maritime Officer Riverine Patrol Craft Commander's Course, learning operational concepts, planning, and interdiction skills. Six Army personnel also were trained in military police, intelligence, and military chaplain technical skills, learning new security doctrines and best practices. As a result, the Maritime Wing continued to show great capability in handling pirates attempting to attack and steal from commercial ships operating in Sierra Leone's territorial waters.

Although military performance to maintain the country's territorial integrity has improved, a more aggressive, comprehensive, and corruption-free approach is required from civilian counterparts,

especially the law enforcement agencies. In FY 2010 and FY 2011, the USG will continue to focus on building the capacity of the Ministries of Defense, Fisheries and Marine Resources, and Finance; Offices of National Security and Customs; the National Revenue Authority; and the Joint Maritime Commission to share intelligence and cooperate on security and law enforcement.

Governing Justly and Democratically

U.S. assistance has helped Sierra Leone make significant achievements in consolidating democracy, including a series of fair and transparent elections; increased citizens' participation in governance, particularly at the local level; improved elections management; the development of a vibrant civil society that engages local and national government; and the development of an independent media. However, at the local level, challenges associated with lack of citizen participation, poor information sharing between citizens and local government officials, and the inability of local councils to provide public services persist. To help address the problem of pervasive corruption, the United States is ensuring that transparency and accountability measures are built into all U.S. interventions in Sierra Leone.

In FY 2009, U.S. assistance:

- Trained 207 councilors, traditional leaders, and officials of ward committees and local council administrations on the principles of good governance, local resource mobilization, and financial management. Civil society must become fully involved in discussions concerning resource allocations within their communities and in improving the effectiveness of their councils. This training supported the strengthening of the capacity of local councils to be more accountable and transparent, and to be more responsive to needs of their citizens.
- Conducted a social capital assessment of civil society organizations as a first step to strengthening their capacity to organize and advocate. The assessment found out that only 50 percent of local councils in U.S.-targeted areas solicited local participation in the creation of local development plans. In FY 2010 and FY 2011, the USG will help these councils and their communities to increase citizens' participation in community development plans.

Investing In People

The GSL recently adopted its first National Health Sector Strategic Plan, and is making progress in implementing the Reproductive and Child Health Plan. The implementation of these plans coincides with the devolution of health services delivery in line with the Local Government Act of 2004. In FY 2009, USG assistance focused on improving the quality of maternal and child health care and strengthening the HIV/AIDS laboratory in high quality surveillance activities.

In FY 2009, U.S. assistance:

- Trained over 90,000 health care providers, village development health committees, community health clubs, and women in newborn, infant, and maternal health and nutrition. The trainings enhanced access to outreach clinics for pregnant women and for children under five years of age. About 47,818 pregnant women and children attended U.S.-assisted outreach clinics. Children participating in U.S.-supported growth monitoring and promotion activities that were identified as moderately malnourished (32 percent) were enrolled in Positive Deviance/Hearth activities, a community-based nutrition therapy. Seventy-four percent of these children gained at least 600 grams after six weeks of attendance.

- Provided group feeding to 3,187 vulnerable people as one of the measures to address malnutrition in children under 5 years of age, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. In addition, 20,551 women (11,361 pregnant women and 9,190 lactating women) received health and nutrition education in outreach clinics and community health clubs. Messages included nutrition and dietary diversity, HIV/AIDS sensitization, prevention and management of communicable diseases, and environmental sanitation.
- In collaboration with the National AIDS Secretariat and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, reviewed and adopted protocols and procedures for the conduct of a high-quality antenatal care survey to determine HIV prevalence among pregnant women. The survey is used as an entry point in strengthening HIV/AIDS laboratory services and, ultimately, is an integrated public health laboratory service. The conduct of the survey and other ongoing support is an outcome of an assessment conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to determine the best use of limited President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief funding for Sierra Leone.
- Supported the participation of three senior health professionals in trainings to build their HIV laboratory skills. Two of these attended a conference to improve their professional and leadership skills in laboratory management and surveillance, while one received training in developing laboratory strategic plans.

Economic Growth

USG support focuses on improving livelihoods and food security and increasing employment opportunities, particularly for youth. The USG also promotes sustainable natural resource management. The USG supports the emphasis on agriculture as the main driver of economic growth in Sierra Leone's Agenda for Change. In FY 2009, the USG sustained gains in reducing food insecurity, increasing agricultural productivity, and providing employment opportunities, particularly for youth in agribusiness.

In FY 2009, USG assistance:

- Trained 11,494 people in agricultural productivity and business development. In addition, 1,575 youth groups were trained in identifying economic opportunities, enabling them to more effectively produce crops for markets and negotiate with market actors. These activities also built the capacity of farmer association, agribusinesses, and marketing associations to grow their businesses. The training targeted women and youth.
- Established 669 associations comprising 346 farmer field schools, 210 market associations, and 113 village savings and loan associations. As a result, crop yields of farmers have increased, market associations have been registered as limited liability companies, savings and loan associations provide minimal financial services to farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs, and incomes derived from farming and business are increasing.
- Worked with the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security and other key stakeholders to develop a shared vision and approach for forest resource co-management—an approach that requires a partnership between the state and communities. One hundred eighty-nine tree crop producers were trained in sustainable tree crop management, particularly focusing on shade cocoa.

- Supported the development of national policies and laws and the implementation of environmental sector reforms to promote improved natural resource management and stimulate agricultural and economic growth. In collaboration with the Sierra Leonean Law Reform Commission, other donors, and civil society organizations, engaged the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security to develop a comprehensive review of the current forestry and wildlife policies with a view to developing new legislation on forestry and wildlife. This process has fostered needed coordination among the various government ministries and agencies.
- Provided technical assistance for the formulation of an artisanal mining policy to forestall the negative effects of mining on the environment and maximize benefits to the miners and their communities