



NATIONAL YOUTH COMMISSION

(NAYCOM)

Youth Employment Technical Working Group

Background

The Government has placed youth employment as a core outcome of the national economic development strategy. The *Agenda for Change* prioritizes agriculture, infrastructure/transport, energy and human development as strategic sectors with the private sector as the engine for growth. These sectors have tremendous potential to create job opportunities. In the short to medium term, the Government has targeted job creation in the agricultural sector where large numbers of job opportunities can be created for youth.

During recent years, the Government has made significant strides in improving the environment for investment and private sector development including a 15-place improvement in the World Bank's *Ease of Doing Business Index*, the development of investment and export strategies, prioritizing the smallholder commercialization of agriculture and land tenure reform. There has been a 12-point improvement in the Corruption Perception Index¹. The Government has encouraged interventions in skills training and employment opportunities. It has created a new ministry which has the direct responsibility for youth employment, the Ministry of Youth Employment and Sports (MYES) and established the National Youth Commission (NYC) that will provide overall leadership on youth employment and empowerment in Sierra Leone.

While economic development can create employment in the longer term, the rise in GDP will take some time to have a significant impact on employment. It is estimated that there are 800,000 people (aged 15 to 25) who are unemployed, employed without remuneration or underemployed² and that it will take nearly

¹ Transparency International

² Peeters, Pia, Wendy Cunningham, Gayatri Acharya and Arvil Van Adams (2009), Youth Employment in Sierra Leone: Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities in a Post-Conflict Setting, Washington, DC: The World Bank, cited in "Youth Employment Support Project" (2010), page 2

a decade of steady 7% job-absorbing growth in GDP to provide job opportunities for this group³. Furthermore, maintaining such a high growth rate is unlikely. Thus, while economic growth forms the bedrock for employment initiatives through the private sector, international assistance will be required to accelerate the development of job opportunities in the short term.

In 2009, consistent with the programme of the Agenda for Change, a new Youth Employment Strategy was formulated by the Government of Sierra Leone, with the active participation of partners and stakeholders. The strategy articulates linking interventions in Labour supply, Labour demand and matching of supply and demand for synergies and sustainability. While the strategy remains valid, there is need for further elaboration.

There has been series of interventions in the sector for which key lessons have been learned and pilot projects completed and evaluated. Also, there are current projects being implemented, notably the World Bank supported MYES's Youth Employment Support Project (YESP), the UNDP's Youth Employment and Empowerment Programme (YEPP), GIZ's Youth Employment Promotion Programme (YEP), MAFFS's Smallholder Commercialization Programme (SCP), etc. The effectiveness of these interventions will be assessed during mid-term reviews. However, these interventions, and subsequent ones can only be effective if complemented with appropriate policy environment. Employment is influence greatly by the macro-economic policy environment as well as targeted regulatory instruments that creates the enabling environment for private sector growth. In other words, there is need for a holistic approach to youth employment and empowerment.

Because youth employment issues are addressed through a combination of activities, UN agencies, development partners, NGOs and the private sector, an important aspect to ensuring an impact in this area is coordination. Even though the National Youth Commission is charged with the overall coordination of the sector, the Youth Technical Working Group can contribute to set up the coordination mechanism as part of national institutional enhancement.

Objectives and Deliverables

Purpose and Objective

The Youth Technical Working Group is to be a network of agencies involved in youth employment sector in Sierra Leone to strengthen the mechanism of;

- Identification and development of synergy between youth employment projects to enhance

³ Ibid, page 2

- effectiveness and impact of project intervention;
- Identification and expansion of best practices for youth employment;
- Provide a forum for information sharing on research, assessment, evaluation and study reports for knowledge building on Youth Sector;
- Identify important topics for discussions and contribute to planning activities for the medium term;
- Development and regular update of National Strategy on Youth Employment.

The specific activities and deliverables

- To develop and update Youth Programme Map and Actor Map
- To set up “Knowledge Bank (research, assessment, study reports etc)”
- To set up a mailing list of participant members for multiple and frequent communication
- To hold a monthly technical thematic group meeting

I. Participant Members

- National MDAs
- International Organizations
- International/National NGOs
- Private sector
- Research institutions
- Youth Serving Organization/ Youth Organization

II. Secretariat

- National Youth Commission
- Technical and back support provided by UNDP and GIZ
- Responsibilities of NAYCOM
 - Focal point for communication
 - Development and update of Programme and Actor Maps
 - Management of Knowledge Bank
 - Management of Mailing List
 - Organizing monthly thematic group meeting (planning, invitation, venue, minutes)