



20th October 2020

Statement by the Sierra Leone INGO Steering Committee, on behalf of the INGO Forum

On behalf of the INGO Forum, the INGO Steering Committee is pleased to issue this statement to staff working for INGOs in Sierra Leone.

The INGO Steering Committee, in place since 2013, is a structure of 10 INGOs elected by the INGO Forum, which constitutes all International NGOs that are registered and operate in Sierra Leone. The INGO Steering Committee represents the INGO community, particularly in constructive dialogue with the Government of Sierra Leone that promotes enhanced coordination, engagement, and complementarity with official development and humanitarian aid efforts.

The INGO Forum has reviewed a publication that was gazetted on 18th September 2020 on the regulation of wages and industrial relations. As a sector, INGOs are delighted to support efforts that promote just wages and working conditions for Sierra Leonean nationals. The work of INGOs in Sierra Leone, including a vast array of development and humanitarian response projects we offer, is made possible by the skills, knowledge, and leadership of our Sierra Leonean colleagues. Similarly, the INGO sector is a critical source of jobs for Sierra Leonean nationals and empowers staff to develop and progress in their careers, enhance their capacities, and enjoy the wages and benefits associated with formal employment.

The INGO Forum is in the process of seeking clarification of various provisions of the “Services Trade Group Negotiating Council - The Regulation of Wages & Industrial Relations Act No. 18 of 1971” gazetted publication and assessing the implications of changes to our donor-funded organisational budgets. NGOs do need some time to plan, budget and prepare for changes in wages regulations – especially given the difficult operating conditions caused by the current COVID-19 global pandemic. A number of international NGOs have had to carry out various measures to remain viable – including staff redundancies and the closure of country programmes, including in Sierra Leone,

The INGO Steering Committee, in representation of the INGO Forum, stands committed to engage in conversations around wages and regulations that affect our Sierra Leonean colleagues and how we can effectively ensure and maintain fair wages and working conditions for all employees.

We are kindly requesting the staff of INGOs for their patience as the INGO Forum obtains greater clarity on the regulation of wages and industrial relations, and we will share any updates with the Country Directors of INGOs on a regular basis, who will then cascade information to their teams. We hope to find a solution that benefits the people of Sierra Leone while also enabling INGOs to remain open and functioning, so as to continue serving the people of Sierra Leone who need our services most.

We thank you in advance for your understanding and support as we seek further clarity on the regulations.

Sincerely,

The Sierra Leone INGO Steering Committee, on behalf of the INGO Forum

Heather Marie Campbell

Austin Kennan

Co-chairs, INGO Steering Committee