

	<p style="text-align: center;">MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS UNIT EIGHTH FLOOR YOUYI BUILDING FREETOWN</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NEWSLETTER</p>
---	---

DATE	September 2021
EDITION	Volume 1 Issue 1

Topic	Activities
Summary	<p>The government of President Bio since its inception in April 2018, has scored monumental achievements and delivered on lots of manifesto promises.</p> <p>Under his astute leadership, the people of this country have witnessed significant improvements in critical national development aspirations.</p> <p>In this edition of the maiden Newsletter produced by the Strategic Communications Unit of the Ministry of Information and Communications, we highlight four areas for a start – education, mining, health and security. In subsequent editions, we will capture other areas and project the many good things happening there.</p>
Education	<p>There is no denying the fact that this is one sector that has witnessed a major turn around since the ascendancy of President Julius Maada Bio to power. He campaigned on a platform of checkmating the downward spiral education has taken over the decades and promised Free Quality Education. Indeed he has kept to his promise by making education the pivot his Human Capital Development program.</p> <p>Under the adroit leadership of President Julius Maada Bio, 21% of the country's Gross Domestic Product is allocated to education.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BASIC AND SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION</p> <p>The Basic Entrance Certificate Examination results were released in record time to enhance quality education. This academic year, SSS1 pupils will have the opportunity to start school in the first term.</p> <p>The early release of BECE results will prevent teenage pregnancy. According to Dr. Sengeh, he was committed to eliminating the slogan "after BECE na beleh" and give girls the chance to be educated and waste no time.</p> <p>The MBSSE has implemented a radio teaching service and also embarked on training of teachers.</p>

More schools had 100% pass rate while less schools got 0% pass rate in the 2021 BECE. Schools reopened in time this year on Monday September 6, 2021.



President Julius Maada Bio commissioning 100 renovated and constructed schools in Gerihun.

Ministry has deployed technology to improve learning such as the *846# to access dictionary on your phone, the 468 SMS facility to check results and placement in schools and also the 8060 toll free line to report and enquire on school activities.

The Ministry through the Vice President Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh on Thursday September 9, 2021 launched thirty (30) Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers across the country. This is to make provision for early learning and prepare the kids for entry into primary school.

The President of the Republic of Sierra Leone His Excellency Dr Julius Maada Bio on Friday September 10, commissioned 100 Junior schools that were built, renovated and reconstructed.

TECHNICAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Since 2018 technical and higher education in Sierra Leone has had impetus. This year, about six thousand one hundred and twenty five (6125) students applied for the Sierra Leone Government Grant-in-Aid in all 16 districts and two thousand seven hundred and fifty (2750) were awarded the scholarship. Unlike in the past when paper forms were filled, this year an online application portal system was used. Every District has a Scholarship Committee that includes ACC and CSO representatives.

Priority was given to students offering programs in the Sciences, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture and Mathematics (STEAM), Medicine, French and Tourism.

	<p>First year female students offering STEAM courses were granted government scholarship.</p> <p>STEAM applicants for this year were 520 and all were awarded the scholarship.</p> <p>100 teachers' beneficiaries applied for the award and 90 were awarded.</p> <p>The University Act 2021 has been signed by the President, therefore all universities will have their Chancellors as promised by His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio.</p>
Mining	<p>Thanks to the visionary leadership of His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio, the mining sector is presently undergoing radical transformation at accelerated pace. The young astute, committed, result-oriented Minister of Mines and Mineral Resources, Timothy Musa Kabba, is efficiently translating His Excellency's vision into reality by providing strategic policy direction. It is no gainsaying that mining is the bread basket or nerve center of Sierra Leone's economy.</p> <p>One of the key transformational strides this government has embarked on is enactment of the three mining policies. Artisanal diamond mining, for instance, has been taking place for over ninety years in Sierra Leone without any law or policy governing it. Also, there was no general mining policy or geodata which is referred to as the bloodline of mining as without it there will be no informed geological or economic decision on mining.</p> <p>It is against this backdrop that in 2018 these three policies – Artisanal Mining Policy, General Mining Policy, and the Geodata Policy - were formulated by the government of His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio, all of which served as feeder for review of the 2009 Mines and Minerals Act enacted ten years ago with a lot having happened in the sector since that time. Although the Act itself may be good, however aspects of it have to be amended to keep in tune with emerging issues in the sector. The review process has taken two years because the document is a very delicate and important tool for the governance of the sector.</p> <p>There are many good things in the draft Act and hopefully when enacted in this quarter it will serve as a basis for the governance of the sector. It will provide social safeguards for particularly women and children, strict environmental rules and guidelines to protect the environment, and generate</p>

	<p>significant revenue for the country. Responsible mining combined with increased revenue and protection of people's rights, Sierra Leone's minerals will now become a blessing rather than the curse it has seemed to be in the past.</p> <p>Mining companies now more than ever before thrive in a good and healthy business environment, creating thousands of jobs, undertaking their corporate social responsibilities and meeting their financial obligations to government in terms of taxes and royalties.</p> <p>Government's plan for the mining sector is for it to serve as a gold standard for the sub-region by enacting laws and regulations that will make it investment friendly and protect the interest of Sierra Leoneans.</p> <p>Meanwhile, government has increased engagement with mining communities and has been working with Community Development Committees to ensure that funds given to them by mining companies are used for the intended purpose. This has seen infrastructural development – schools, health centers, multi-purpose halls, etc – in mining communities to serve the people. There are now a lot of community driven projects across the country financed by the mining sector as President Bio remains determined in ensuring that Sierra Leoneans benefit from their God given resources.</p>
--	--



Mines Minister Timothy Kabba commissioning one of the mining companies operating in Sierra Leone

Health

Government has increased budgetary allocations for health to 11% of public expenditure in 2021 from 6% in 2018.

The President Bio administration gave concurrence for the recruitment of 4,000 health workers of all critical cadres to address the challenge of human resource gap in the sector. Out of this, 2000 have already been recruited by mid 2020 and the final batch is now at an advanced stage for recruitment.

Under the health system strengthening programme, supported by Global Fund, Ministry of Health and Sanitation has upscaled 200 State Enrolled Community Health Nurses (SECHN) to State Registered Nurses (SRN) and 20 SRN to Nurse and Midwife Tutors.

Also, Under the health system strengthening programme, supported by the World Bank, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation has elevated 200 certificate Midwives to Diploma Midwives and selected 50 of those for 1 year training as Tutors in Nursing/Midwifery.

	<p>Government has launched the National Emergency Ambulance Services with 167 ambulances repaired and put to use. 58 ambulances have been distributed and are actively used, plus one spare ambulance per district.</p> <p>To enhance vaccinations, 220 solar-powered fridges have been installed nationwide and 235 items of drugs worth US\$2.9 million have been distributed to every public health facility in the country.</p> <p>On health care infrastructure, over the last 30 months, President Bio's government has upgraded the Connaught hospital with the completion and opening of a new emergency triage, the construction of the Maternal and Children's Hospital at Hangha Road Hospital, Kenema, and the completion of the Makali Community Health Centre (CHC) that is provided with ultramodern equipment and a solar-mini-grid system.</p> <p>Ministry of Health and Sanitation has strengthened disease prevention, surveillance and control through the launch of the One Health Approach. A total of 293 motorbikes have been distributed across the country to enhance the surveillance function of districts and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation has obtained 14 acres of land to build the West African Tropical Research Institute, which will ultimately be part of the National Public Health Agency.</p> <p>Government has directed that all monies recovered by the Anti-Corruption Commission will be used as seed money to construct a National Diagnostic Centre which has recently been approved by Cabinet. Government is now mobilising additional financing for constructing and equipping the centre.</p> <p>Our Covid-19 response has been one of the most robust in the world and has received rave reviews by the international community. For the first time in a pandemic in Sierra Leone, the country prepared itself for the showdown with the virus. As a result of our swift response, the impact of the Covid-19 has been minimal on lives in the country.</p>
--	--

	<div data-bbox="656 218 927 352" data-label="Text"> <p>INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CENTRE SIERRA LEONE</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1045 218 1349 352" data-label="Text"> <p>HOSPITAL SERVICES TRAINING RESEARCH PROJECT BY THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY</p> </div> <div data-bbox="574 411 1430 915" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="574 915 1430 999" data-label="Text"> <p>The proposed ultra modern hospital that government hopes to construct to address critical health issues in the country.</p> </div>
<p>Security</p>	<p>Under the government of President Julius Maada Bio, the security sector has been given fillip. This sector has been critical in providing jobs for young people while building on their capacity to address crucial areas of national security.</p> <p>For the first time in the country's history an exclusive female recruitment was done with about 300 women recruited into the armed forces.</p> <p>The Grand Commander of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces President Dr. Julius Maada Bio on Friday September 3, 2021 commissioned sixty (60) Cadet Officers into the Armed Forces at the Armed Forces Training Center, Benguema Barracks, Waterloo.</p> <p>The cadet officers were selected among thousands of applicants across the country and 73 of them started training nine months ago. Eleven specialists (5 doctors, 2 pharmacists, 3 nurses and 1 priest) amongst the 73 were Commissioned three months ago. Emmanuel Kargbo one of the cadet officers qualified to continue his training at the Sandhurst Military Academy in the UK, whilst one of them dropped off program.</p> <p>The President in his keynote address, expressed delight at the progress of RSLAF and thanked them for the training of the fine military men and women. He congratulated the 60 cadet officers for going through the rigorous process in transforming from a civilian to a soldier.</p>

	<p>The President shed light on the inclusion of women in the Armed Forces, as a critical objective of the RSLAF. "As a nation we have recruited more women into our Armed Forces over the past three years, and our recruitment of women is far above the threshold specified in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1425. My government has been guided by our commitment to gender equity and recognition of the critical role of women in the future of RSLAF and the Republic of Sierra Leone. As in all aspects of national life, women's voices and representation matter in our country's Armed Forces and my government will stay committed to recruiting and retraining women in RSLAF," President Bio said.</p> <p>The President went on to recognise the United Kingdom, United States of America, The People's Republic of China, France Canada, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Egypt, Ghana Russia, Pakistan, Turkey, Liberia, Guinea for their immense support in building the capacity of the RSLAF. The President said that, "over the last three years my government has engaged new and existing partners and advocated in the best interest of RSLAF for training and equipment needs,"</p> <p>The Commander-in-Chief explained that as a nation, Sierra Leone has come a long way and has a proud tradition of gallantry in various theatres of war and peace keeping all over the world.</p> <p>The President disclosed that plans are now in progress to secure the necessary equipment to reconstitute a quick reaction force company to complement peace keeping operation to the United Nations. He continued to say this move will be good financially and personally for the country's brave men and women in the Armed Forces.</p> <p>"We accelerate ongoing efforts to construct standard and conducive barracks accommodation for our officers, soldiers and their dependants across the country. Along with our partners, the People's Republic of China, our work on the ultra modern Myong Officers Mess and five story single officers quarters at Wilberforce stands as a testament. It will be a site where young officers will build camaraderie and be nurtured into the traditions and ethos of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces. They will soon commission these edifices and other construction projects right across the country including billets and four patrol bases," the President assured.</p> <p>He reminded the new officers that, they have now sworn to serve the nation, and told them that it is their duty to respect, uphold and protect the Constitution of the Republic of Sierra Leone and to obey all lawful orders from their superiors without question. "You are soldiers first and always; you are not tools in the hands of politicians and you must never be. Your duty is to protect our peace, our democracy and to support our national development; so professionalism is not an option, it is a way of life for an officer. It</p>
--	--

involves discipline, loyalty, respect compassion and character," President Bio admonished the officers.
The President later inspected military vehicles.



Brand new military vehicles were inspected by President Julius Maada Bio. These vehicles will improve mobility of the forces.

