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Addressed to:

1. The Country Director, World Bank  
Spur Road, Freetown, Sierra Leone
2. The Country Representative, UNFPA  
Signal Hill Road, Freetown, Sierra Leone

6<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

CONCERNS ABOUT THE WORLD BANK AND UNFPA'S ROLE IN PROMOTING THE 2021 MID-TERM  
POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS IN SIERRA LEONE

I write on behalf of the Consortium of Progressive Political Parties (CoPPP), a platform created by thirteen opposition parties in Sierra Leone that are committed to defend democracy, oppose, reject and condemn bad governance, all violations of the Rule of Law and of the rights of their fellow citizens by using democratic and lawful means.


Our organization would like to express serious concerns about the support that the World Bank and UNFPA have presumably been giving to the controversial so-called mid-term census that the Sierra Leone Government is insisting on conducting in this country. This project is fraught with so many irregularities that most opposition parties and civil society organizations have expressed reservations about the timing and true motives behind this census.

1. The decision to conduct a mid-term census was announced in a proclamation made by President Julius Maada Bio on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020. The census which was to have started on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020 was postponed to 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021. But rather than start, it was on that date that it was presented to Parliament for approval amid dramatic scenes of violent clashes between the Government side and the opposition MPs. The latter insist until this day that the Bill was not properly laid before Parliament; however, Government has now declared that the census will effectively begin on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

It is in the circumstances extremely difficult to accept that the missions of the World Bank and UNFPA are not aware of this situation, and that their continued support to this particular project of the current Government is likely to have negative consequences. International organizations cannot be seen to be financing future conflict in democracies as fragile as ours.

COPPP would therefore like to request clarification from both the World Bank and UNFPA on the status of their support to the mid-term census and ask that they distance themselves from such a project that does not have nation-wide buy-in and is therefore not likely to yield any credible results.

Yours faithfully,



Femi Claudius Cole

Chairperson, COPPP

Cc: The United States Ambassador

The U.N. Resident Coordinator

The British High Commissioner

The European Union Ambassador

The Statistician General, SSL