

December 7, 2021

Hon. Dennis K. Vandj
Minister
Ministry of Finance
Freetown, SIERRA LEONE

Hon. Francis Kaikai
Minister
Ministry of Economic and Development Planning
Freetown, SIERRA LEONE

Dear Honorable Ministers:

Mid-Term Census

The World Bank earmarked financial support to help prepare and implement a mid-term population census in Sierra Leone—under the Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in West Africa (HISWA) Project (P169265) IDA Grant No. D584-SL—because these data are critical to inform economic development policy, planning and programs, and the 2015 population census exercise resulted in data of insufficient quality to do so.

Since September 2020 our task team has been providing technical support to help prepare Statistics SL to implement a mid-term population census that would result in good quality data. Much progress was made by Statistics SL in recent months and preparatory efforts further intensified recently. To that end a roadmap laying out the final remaining steps, actions and technical verifications required was prepared and multilaterally agreed (between Statistics SL, UNFPA and the World Bank task team) during the first week of November 2021.

To date, while work on most action points is underway with some completed, several critical action points require further technical work to be satisfactorily addressed including evaluation of the pilot census, the field operation plan for the enumeration, and ensuring enumerators are adequately trained. All these outstanding actions are necessary and must be addressed prior to commencing data collection to minimize the risk of inadequate and poor data quality. There is insufficient time between now and December 10, 2021 to satisfactorily address all pending actions.

Therefore, while our technical team remains available to provide continued preparatory support, regretfully we will be unable to provide further technical assistance nor disburse any further funds

under *IDA Grant No. D584-SL* to support the mid-term population census following the announced inception of data collection on December 10, 2021.

The undisbursed balance of funds earmarked to support the mid-term population census could be reallocated to other activities supported under the HISWA project following consultations with the task team.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Laporte', is centered below the closing. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Pierre Laporte
Country Director Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone
Africa West and Central Region

cc: Hon. Jacob Jusu Saffa, Chief Minister
Prof. Osman Sankoh, Statistician General, Statistics Sierra Leone
Mr. Taufilia Nyamadzabo, Executive Director, The World Bank

bcc: Agata Pawlowska (AWCW1); Anne Tully (AWCGH); Abdu Muwonge, Lydia Mesfin Asseres, Fatu Karim-Turay, Allan Dunstant Odulami Cole (AWMSL