



SLNBCC

Sierra Leone Netherlands Business & Culture Council

Sierra Leone Covid-19 Status, Nov 29th, 2020

Confirmed cases: 2,411
Recovery: 1,836
Death: 74

Source: <https://mohs.gov.sl/>

DEAR READERS,

With the gradual lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, there comes a greater responsibility on us to make sure we don't undo the gains we have made in the fight against the virus. We are therefore encouraging everyone including the entire membership of SLNBCC to please be cautious and follow all the appropriate procedures.

IN THIS ISSUE

- SLNBCC proposed end of year lunch event cancelled
- Sierra Leone improves its 2020 MCC performance by two scores
- European Union Capacitates the Parliament of Sierra Leone
- What developing countries can teach rich countries about how to respond to a pandemic
- Procurement notices
- How to protect yourself from Covid19

SLNBCC proposed end of year lunch event cancelled!

**EVENT
CANCELLED**

The Sierra Leone Netherlands Business and Culture Council is a subsidiary of the Ghana Netherlands Business and Culture Council. The institution was established primarily to promote trade and bilateral relations between Sierra Leone and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Over the years, we have been holding series of annual events including lunch and dinner for our members and other relevant partners. Such events allows for our guests to network with each other, and discussed issues relating to the achievement of our common business oriented goals.

For the year 2020, SLNBCC have decided to called off its annual end of year event due to several reasons stated below:

- The outbreak of the Covid 19 which has significantly affected businesses
- The dire economic situation of the country
- Most member contacted not willing to participate in the event
- The cost for hosting the event which SLNBCC alone cannot meet
- No member who will be willing to co-sponsor the event

We expect that 2021 will be a positive year again and that the Covid virus will be defeated. We hope in that same year we can restart our networking events soon in order for our Members to interact and create business opportunities among themselves.

SLNBCC has been set up through its fellow chamber from Ghana with the financial assistance of the Netherlands. By joining and interacting with our Chamber you are also tapping into the Dutch network.

When you join SLNBCC, you can network with other member businesses. By networking, you get to know others in your community, develop partnerships, and support other businesses. If your business is ever in need, you'll have a community of business owners to turn to for help.

The SLNBCC chamber of commerce will also host professional development events in 2021. These events include training or meeting opportunities. These opportunities help you learn or improve upon skills that are essential to running your business. You can use the professional development events to better your company without breaking your budget for business.

Sierra Leone improves its 2020 MCC performance by two scores



The United States Ambassador to Sierra Leone – Maria Brewer, called on President Dr Julius Maada Bio, to congratulate his government after passing thirteen out of the twenty Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) scorecard indicators for 2020. In 2019 the Bio-led government passed eleven of the twenty indicators, still a long way to achieving the performance of other African countries that are receiving hundreds of millions of dollars in MCC funding support. Addressing President Bio, Maria Brewer said: “Thank you, Mr President, for seeing us this morning and I have the honour and privilege to formally hand over to you the scorecard and to congratulate the government and people of Sierra Leone for passing not just the scorecard but actually passing 13 of the indicators.

“By passing two additional indicators from last year as well as increasing your control of corruption score to 81% from 79% last year, you do us proud. So, congratulations Mr President,” she said. This is the best performance Sierra Leone has ever scored on the MCC scorecard since it was created sixteen years ago. Vice President Dr Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, who supervises the activities of the Millennium Challenge Coordinating Unit in the country, said the MCC team have worked very hard in the last twelve months to achieve this performance.

Receiving the scorecard, President Bio thanked the American Ambassador and the MCC for what he called a more objective evaluation of his government’s performance. “As a country, we are happy for this progress, especially as it relates to energy and water, which are very important components. The threshold programme of the MCC has been of great help and we hope that the foundation laid by this programme will actually help us in those two sectors,” President Bio said. The Millennium Challenge Corporation is an independent US foreign assistance agency established in 2004 to work towards alleviating poverty. Its core principles include: competitive selection, country led solutions, country led implementation and a focus on results. Since 2016, Sierra Leone has been implementing a \$44.4 million Threshold Programme to improve the financial viability of the electricity and water sectors in Sierra Leone. The programme will conclude on 31st March 2021.

Understanding the MCC Scorecard

The scorecard is made up of 20 indicators in 3 broad categories: economic freedom, investing in people and ruling justly. The scorecard is compiled annually using data from third party assessing institutions such as UNESCO, World Bank, Freedom House, WHO and Heritage Foundation. The Government does not submit any information directly to MCC that affects the outcome of the scorecard. In the case of indicators like Control of Corruption, Rule of Law, and Government Effectiveness, these are based on aggregated data compiled by the World Bank- World Governance Indicators (WGI) which includes a combination of household surveys, desk reviews and perception surveys. For instance to use an example we are familiar

with in Sierra Leone, in the Afrobarometer Report (a sub-source for the World Bank World Governance Indicators) there is a survey question titled “trust in the presidency,” this is an input for the Control of Corruption indicator following a rationalization of the response to ensure comparability.

Not every question asked in the survey is considered by WGI, including questions like the overall perception of corruption in the country. The point is, there are many parameters, many sub sources that are used to calculate an indicator like control of corruption. In the case of Sierra Leone, there are about 12 sub sources used with over 50 questions considered. The year when the data is collected is reflected in the scorecard for each indicator. For a country to pass the scorecard, they must meet the following minimum criteria: Pass at least half of the indicators (10); pass the hard hurdle of control of corruption; pass the hard hurdle of democratic rights (must pass either civil liberties or political rights); pass at least one indicator in each category.

To pass most indicators, a country should perform above the median, which is established within their income category. In the case of Sierra Leone, the income category is Lower Income category. To pass an indicator, you have to perform above the median. There are other indicators like inflation that have a maximum score. A country must perform below that maximum score of 15% in this case in order to pass the inflation indicator. Essentially, this suggests that performance on the scorecard is relative, depending on how other countries score, the median may go up or down from year to year. This also implies that the median moves from year to year, so it is incumbent on the Government to set targets that ensure that they will comparatively continue to perform better than other countries.

Analysis on the FY2021 scorecard

The scorecard that will be released on 9th November 2020 is entitled “FY 2021” scorecard. This year, Sierra Leone passed an additional two indicators, passing a total of 13 indicators on the scorecard. The two new additions include immunization rates and inflation. 13 passed indicators is the highest Sierra Leone has ever scored on the MCC scorecard since the scorecard was created. This is also the first time that Sierra Leone has passed the scorecard for two years in a row. Further, in the Mano River Union, Sierra Leone is the second best performer, with Cote d’Ivoire passing only one more indicator than Sierra Leone has.

In the case of Control of Corruption, Sierra Leone has not only passed this indicator for the past three years, it has also made steady progress. In 2017, Sierra Leone was at the 49th percentile (failing the indicator), then started to pass; 71st percentile in 2018, 79th percentile in 2019 and 81st percentile in 2020.

Sierra Leone is amongst the top 10 performers on control of corruption in its income category. In the area of education, Sierra Leone has made great progress on primary education expenditure from spending less than 1% in 2017. After the F&Q education initiative was launched, Sierra Leone has improved by more than 200% on this indicator, with current expenditure at 2.99% of GDP. Sierra Leone is amongst the three highest investors in primary education in West Africa. Sierra Leone has also moved from scoring about 80-84% on immunization rates over the last five years to reaching 94% immunization rates this year for measles and DPT 3 (Diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus).

Selection process

Based on performance on the scorecard, a country can either be selected for a threshold program or compact program. Sierra Leone is currently implementing a Threshold program. Even though a country passes the scorecard, it does not necessarily mean that they will be selected for a compact. Other factors such as performance on previous programs with MCC, available funds and the pool of other countries that pass the scorecard all impact MCC’s selection process. Further, selection is made by the MCC Board which is chaired by the US Secretary of State. MCC is a member of the Board.

Source: [<https://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/sierra-leone-improves-its-2020-mcc-performance-by-two-scores>]

European Union Capacitates the Parliament of Sierra Leone



The European Union (EU) Country Office in Sierra Leone, through its support to the good governance process in the country, is supporting the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, in the areas of capacity building, infrastructural needs, and general improvement in the legislative process. EU support to Parliament is divided into two components, the first component deals with capacity-building and training of MPs and staff and the second component focuses on the critical infrastructure and technological needs of Parliament.

On the Technical Component, the EU supported the Fifth Parliament to hold the first-ever leadership and staff retreat geared toward strengthening the operational efficiency of the House. EU also supported and facilitated the first-ever “Parliament Open Day”, with a view of making Parliament open, accessible, accountable, and transparent to the citizens. This International Partner had also Supported Parliament on the establishment of its first-ever communication strategy. Currently, a consultant has been hired to review the strategic plan (2021-2024) for Parliament.

A good number of MPs and staff have benefited from human capacity-building training supported by the EU to strengthen the legislative process with a special focus on legislative drafting, parliamentary practice, and procedure, legislative research, Parliamentary Budget Office and the committee system. The Female Parliamentary Caucus has also benefited from the technical component by strengthening women’s representation and gender equality issues. In light of House rules and procedures, the EU is supporting the review of systems and processes to enhance inter-committee relations for legislative strengthening – support measures for increased openness and transparency of the legislative process and Identify key areas of action, arising from Parliament’s Strategic priorities.

On the critical infrastructural and technology needs; the EU has supported Parliament on the Improvement of the Parliamentary website including its structure and content, establishes a mechanism for contacting MPs, upgrade in the ICT infrastructure, payments for the hosting of the website, provide ICT materials for the chambers and roll-out general improvement in the ICT infrastructure in Parliament. On the infrastructural development component also, the EU is supporting the refurbishment of the Main Building of Parliament, construct a walk way and a ramp linking the main building to the Administrative Building, refurbish the age-long electrical system of the main building, upgrade the toilet system, and the extension of the offices of the Leadership of Parliament.

The infrastructural project is also designed to construct an elevator from the House Chamber to the Upper Galley, construct a major water reservoir and a security post, and provide a new generator plant for the House. The overall objective of the project of which this contract will be a part; is strengthened democracy and governance in order to enhanced legislative process, institutional relevance and effectiveness of Parliament. The Leadership of Parliament and staff appreciated the support from the European Union Country Office in Sierra Leone, for their remarkable support on the development and effectiveness of Parliament. The Leadership of Parliament vowed to work with EU in making Parliament open and accessible for its citizens.

By [<https://www.ayvnewspaper.com/index.php/2020/11/16/eu-capacitates-sierra-leone-parliament>]

What developing countries can teach rich countries about how to respond to a pandemic



Nine months into the pandemic, Europe remains one of the regions worst affected by Covid-19. Ten of the 20 countries with the highest death count per million people are European. The other 10 are in the Americas. This includes the US, which has the highest number of confirmed cases and deaths in the world. Most of Africa and Asia, on the contrary, still seems spared. Of the countries with reported Covid-related deaths, the 10 with the lowest death count per million are in these parts of the world. But while mistakes and misjudgments have fueled sustained criticism of the UK's handling of the pandemic, the success of much of the developing world remains unsung.

Of course, a number of factors may explain lower levels of disease in the developing world: different approaches to recording deaths, Africa's young demographic profile, greater use of outdoor spaces, or possibly even high levels of potentially protective antibodies gained from other infections. But statistical uncertainty and favorable biology are not the full story. Some developing countries have clearly fared better by responding earlier and more forcefully against Covid-19. Many have the legacy of Sars, Mers, and Ebola in their institutional memory. As industrialized countries have struggled, much of the developing world has quietly shown remarkable levels of preparedness and creativity during the pandemic. Yet the developed world is paying little attention.

When it comes to managing infectious diseases, African countries show that experience is the best teacher. When looking at successful strategies, it's the experiences of other developed nations like Germany and New Zealand—that are predominantly cited by journalists and politicians. There is an apparent unwillingness to learn from developing countries – a blind spot that fails to recognize that “their” local knowledge can be just as relevant to “our” developed world problems.

With infectious outbreaks likely to become more common around the world, this needs to change. There is much to learn from developing countries in terms of leadership, preparedness, and innovation. The question is: what's stopping industrialized nations from heeding the developing world's lessons?
African leadership

When it comes to managing infectious diseases, African countries show that experience is the best teacher. The World Health Organization's weekly bulletin on outbreaks and other emergencies showed that at the end of September, countries in sub-Saharan Africa were dealing with 116 ongoing infectious disease events, 104 outbreaks, and 12 humanitarian emergencies.

For African nations, Covid-19 is not a singular problem. It's being managed alongside Lassa fever, yellow fever, cholera, measles, and many others. This expertise makes these countries more alert and willing to deploy scarce resources to stop outbreaks before they become widespread. Their mantra might best be summarized as: act decisively, act together and act now. When resources are limited, containment and prevention are the best strategies.

This is evident in how African countries have responded to Covid-19, from quickly closing borders to showing strong political will to combat the virus. While Britain dithered and allowed itself to sleepwalk into the pandemic, Mauritius (the tenth most densely populated nation in the world) began screening airport arrivals and quarantining visitors from high-risk countries. This was two months before its first case was even detected.

And within 10 days of Nigeria's first case being announced on Feb. 28, president Muhammadu Buhari had set up a task force to lead the country's containment response and keep both him and the country up to date on the disease. Compare this with the UK, whose first case was on Jan. 31. Its Covid-19 action plan wasn't unveiled until early March. In the intervening period, the prime minister, Boris Johnson, is said to have missed five emergency meetings about the virus.

African leaders have also shown a strong desire to work together on fighting the virus—a legacy of the 2013-2016 West African Ebola outbreak. This epidemic underlined that infectious diseases don't respect borders, and led to the African Union setting up the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In April, the Africa CDC launched its Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing (PACT), which is working to increase testing capacity and train and deploy health workers across the continent. It's already provided laboratory equipment and testing reagents to Nigeria, and has deployed public health workers from the African Health Volunteers Corps across the continent to fight the pandemic, applying knowledge picked up when fighting Ebola.

The Africa Union has also established a continent-wide platform for procuring laboratory and medical supplies: the Africa Medical Supplies Platform (AMSP). It lets member states buy certified medical equipment—such as diagnostic kits and personal protective equipment—with increased cost effectiveness, through bulk purchasing and improved logistics. This also increases transparency and equity between members, lowering competition for crucial supplies. Compare this with the underhand tactics used by some developed nations when competing for shipments of medical equipment.

The AMSP isn't unique. The European Union has a similar platform – the Joint Procurement Agreement. However, a bumpy start together with slow and overly bureaucratic processes led some countries to set up parallel alliances in an attempt to secure access to future vaccines. The AMSP avoided sharing this fate thanks to the African Union handing over its development to the private sector under the leadership of the Zimbabwean billionaire Strive Masiyiwa. He pulled together the expertise needed to quickly develop a well-functioning platform, drawing on his contacts and businesses across the digital and telecoms sectors.

This contributed to the AMSP's popularity with vendors and created high demand from member states. There are now plans to expand access to hospitals and local authorities approved by member states, and for additional support to be included from donors (such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and MasterCard Foundation). Again, a decisive decision, focusing on installing strong leadership, has paid dividends.

Source: <https://qz.com/africa/1919785/what-africa-and-asia-teach-rich-countries-on-handling-a-pandemic>

Procurement Notices

Bid Summary: General Procurement Notice for Sierra Leone Threshold Program

Funded by: Millennium Challenge Account (MCA)

Bid deadline: 31 December 2020

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Bid Summary: Tenders are invited for Supply Of Meter Testing Bench And Accessories For The Rural Renewable Energy Programme In Sierra Leone

Funded by: United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

Bid deadline: 15 December 2020

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Bid Summary: Digitisation of Government Payments in the Mano River Union (DIGIGOV)

Funded by: African Development Bank (AfDB)

Bid deadline: 14 December 2020

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Bid Summary: Tenders are invited for Supply And Installation Of Vertical Passenger And Staircase Lifts At The Parliament Building In Freetown, Sierra Leone

Funded by: United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

Bid deadline: 16 December 2020

For full/more procurement's notices, visit:

<https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice>

<https://www.nppa.gov.sl/>

<https://www.sl.undp.org/content/sierraleone/en/home/procurement.htm>

<https://www.biddetail.com/global-tenders/sierra-leone-tenders>

How to Protect Yourself from covid-19

Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. Please consult with your health care provider about additional steps you may be able to take to protect yourself.



Clean your hands often



Cover Coughs and Sneezes

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Avoid close contact



Stay home if you're sick

- **Stay home** if you are sick, and only go out when you need to get medical care.
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick
- Put **distance between yourself and other people** if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.



and disinfect

Wear a facemask if you are sick



Clean

- **If you are sick:** You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room.
- **If you are NOT sick:** You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

SOURCES:

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/.html>
2. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/misinformation_related_to_the_2019_coronavirus_pandemic



COLOFON

Credits

This newsletter is written and edited by Kemurl Fofanah for the SLNBCC. All articles are written by SLNBCC staff, or shared from news sources with correct references.

Feedback

Do you have any comments, suggestions or remarks on this newsletter? Feel free to contact us at any time. Please send an email to memunabayoh@gmail.com or binta@gnbcc.net. Also, we are looking for more press releases from our members. If you have anything you would like to share with our extensive network, our monthly newsletter provides the perfect platform to do so.

Membership

If you are interested in becoming an SLNBCC Member, please contact Binta Jalloh directly through binta@gnbcc.net or by calling **+232(0)78381007**.

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Thank you for reading our newsletter, the SLNBCC team: Binta Jalloh, Kemurl Fofanah, and Memuna Bayoh

