

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OFFICE

PHASE ONE REPORT ON NATIONWIDE OUTREACH PROGRAMME

WITH CIVIL SERVANTS

IN KAILAHUN, KENEMA AND BO DISTRICTS



12TH - 16TH April, 2021



SUPPORT TO THE GOVERNANCE SECTOR IN SIERRA LEONE



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Introduction

Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) is the central personnel agency of the Sierra Leone Government charged with the responsibility of providing human resource policies, advisory services and managing the Civil Service workforce. Over the years, HRMO in collaboration with other partners have implemented a host of reform agenda in the Civil Service. In order for HRMO to deliver best on its mandate and having in mind that Freetown is not Sierra Leone, hence it is but necessary to be interfacing with Civil Servants across the country. In that direction, a one- day Outreach Programme/meeting was held with Civil Servants at their District Head quarter towns of Kailahun, Kenema and Bo on 12th, 14th and 16th April, 2021 respectively with a view of HRMO brining officers to speed on the reform processes and as well to identify challenges/constraints they are faced with at their respective districts in the discharge of their duties and also enable HRMO to find solution to those challenges for improved service delivery.

The objectives of the outreach

The Objectives of the outreach programme among many others were:

- To establish a direct line of communication with Civil Servants in the provinces,
- To understand their grievances and find ways to address them
- To bring Civil Servants to speed on the ongoing reforms and efforts of Government of Sierra Leone in improving service delivery.
- To enlighten civil servants to know as to how to channel their request and grievances on specific Human Resource issues.

Expected outcomes

At the end of the outreach, the following among many others are the expected outcomes:

- Civil Servants at district level are fully aware/sensitized about reforms in the Civil Service
- Civil Servants are well informed about government policies and programmes
- Challenges and constraints faced in the discharge of their duties are expressed
- Civil servant enlightened on specific Human Resource issues.
- Civil Servants will know how to channel their request and grievances to HRMO on specific Human Resource issues

Official Opening Ceremonies

The opening ceremonies in Kailahun, Kenema and Bo Districts started with a call to order by 10:30am followed by prayers in Muslim and Christian ways and followed by introduction of chairmen.

Opening Remarks By Chairman



The chairmen, from Kailahun, Kenema and Bo districts respectively making statements

In their opening remarks, the Chairmen Mr. Charles Kailie, District Officer Kailahun, Mr. Andrew J Fofanah, Provincial Secretary East and Mr. Moses M. Gbetu, Provincial Secretary South welcomed Director General, Human Resource Management Office and his Team to their respective districts. They also registered their sincere admiration of the Director General's leadership style of bringing Human Resource Management Office to the districts which is a novelty as it has never happened in the history of the Sierra Leone Civil Service.

They encouraged their colleagues Civil Servants to take full advantage of the history making event by expressing their concerns and challenges they are faced with in the discharge of their duties for the citizenry of Sierra Leone.

On that note, they encouraged the Director General and Team to make themselves comfortable and enjoy their stay as the people of their respective districts are hospitable and peaceful. Finally, they declared the outreach programme opened

Statements

1. European Union Representative



The EU Project Coordinator, Mr. Kelvin Kellie Making Statement at the opening ceremony

The EU representative thanked the Chairmen, the Director General and Team from HRMO and all members present in the outreach engagement. He expressed delight to be part of the history making event.

He said the EU is well in position to support all reforms agenda in the Civil Service. As you can see the outreach is a wonderful platform for members of the Civil Service to get closer to the Director General and interact with him to discuss pertinent issues bordering around the Civil Service.

The Director General is going all round the fourteen districts. So the EU is behind this in partnership with the Government of Sierra Leone.

He concluded by assuring participants that they will get the best out of the outreach were by they come up with messages that will help the Director General to make informed decisions.

2. Director, Corporate Strategy and Administration HRMO



The Director, Corporate Strategy and Administration making statement

The Director thanked the Chairman, the Director General-HRMO, Members of the high table, colleagues representatives from various MDAs for leaving their busy schedules to come and attend to the all-important engagement to bring them to speed on the workings of the Human

Resource Management Office and to also enable them to interact with the Director General to bring out issues affecting their operations in the provinces.

He said the outreach is one among the many reforms taking place in the Sierra Leone Civil Service supported by partners through the Governance Reform Process.

He furthered that, this approach initiated by the Director General through support from the European Union is a laudable one that has never happened in the Sierra Leone Civil Service.

The Director said for the Director General to move his office to come and interact with colleagues in the provinces to share experiences on the operations of HRMO and listen to officers on their challenges across the country shows that the Service is changing and adopting to modern day human resource management systems

The Director concluded by thanking participants for attending the outreach programme and wished them fruitful discussions.

3. Director, Payroll Administration HRMO

He thanked the Chairmen, the Director General and Team, participants from different MDAs for participating in the meeting. He said HRMO is one of the few centralized institutions in the Sierra Leone Civil Service.

He therefore applauded the Director General for this initiative and encourage colleagues Civil Servants to be attentive and come up with pertinent issues that will help promote the Civil Service.

4. Director, Management Services HRMO



The Director, Management Services making statement at the opening ceremony

The Director started by expressing gratitude for being part of the engagement process. He said this exercise is a novelty in the Civil Service having the Director General- HRMO stepping off the office to interact with Civil Servants in the Provinces looking at his busy schedules.

He said this is a clear manifestation that reforms are taking place in the Sierra Leone Civil Service.

He thanked everyone for coming and admonished them to make good use of the opportunity availed to them.

Director General – Human Resource Management Office Outreach Message



The Director General, HRMO making statement at the opening ceremony

The Director General thanked the Chairmen, the Senior District Officers, and Directors from the Human Resource Management Office, the Coordinator of the EU Support and participants from various MDAs for participating.

The Director General informed members present about the purpose of the meeting which he said was to meet with Civil Servants at district level as they are the clients of HRMO.

The Director General gave a brief background on the existence of HRMO. He said the office had existed since colonial times i.e. since 1808 and it was based in Freetown. Since independent it was called Establishment Secretary's Office and from that time, it had gone through a lot of reforms.

The Director General said the position of ‘Director General’ was formerly called the Establishment Secretary who is a top executive that manages the entire civil service.

The Director General said governance architecture is changing all over the world and Sierra Leone cannot be an exception to that as you have seen today. You see that governance is moving to the periphery, it’s becoming more people oriented and more people driven therefore, his administration cannot continue to operate just in Freetown.

The Director General explained that the Sierra Leone Civil Service is his constituency therefore his office had decided to undertake series of reforms to make sure that the civil service is modernized and that the needs of Civil Servants are actually met and that service delivery is improved.

He said a number of reforms have been implemented over the years but this type of outreach meetings since he joined the Civil Service in about 28 years ago has never existed where the Director Generals or the former Establishment Secretaries will come out to meet their staff in the provinces.

The Director General informed the meeting that Government has entered into agreement with the European Union and it is supporting Civil Service Reform and that is not all, they are also supporting governance sector reforms as well.

HRMO and PSC are the key implementing agencies of the Civil Service components of the reform process.

The Director General emphasized that the purpose of the engagement meeting is to come and communicate to Civil Servants in the provinces on the reforms that are going on, the strides HRMO is making to improve service delivery and also, to create the direct communication with officers that HRMO serve to understand the issues and challenges that they are facing.

He said HRMO intends to do these meetings in all the fourteen districts including the Western Area so that officers in the provinces can actually understand what HRMO is doing.

The Director General further highlighted a few areas as follows:

Overlapping Laws, Rules and Regulations

The Director General said the European Union support is addressing overlapping and outdated laws, Rules and Regulations in the Sierra Leone Public Service. He made members to recall on the presence of PSC few weeks ago in the provinces talking to them about the enactment of the Public Service Act. He said they had reviewed the policy and now they are doing consultations to draft a Public Service Bill to be table to Parliament for enactment.

Once this is done, he said, will solve the issue of overlapping functions so that the PSC will be able to regulate Public Service functions across the Public Service.

The review of the Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules

The Director General informed members that HRMO is reviewing the Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules and officers in the provinces will soon be engaged on that.

He said the Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules replaced the General Order in 2011. He said the introduction of the Civil Service Code was also part of the reform of the Civil Service because the regulations that govern the service are the instruments that are used to regulate the conducts of officers and to cater for their needs.

In this regard, if those regulations are not up to date and are not responsive to current time, definitely we will question their efficiency and effectiveness. He said the Civil Service Code has brought a number of changes which are as follows: three years probationary period reduced to two years, the Annual Vacation Leave increased from Le500 to one month gross salary, replaced the Annual Confidential Report System to the Individual Performance Appraisal System and have carried out a number of trainings to deepen your understanding on it etc.

Pay and Compensation Commission

The Director General said the pay and compensation issue is at the heart of the Civil Service and the Public Service in General. He said the service have seen a situation were a lot of agencies have been created that determine their own salaries which has paved the way to a situation where there are really big disparity in salaries.

He said there are situations were persons doing similar jobs have huge pay differences as a result officers want to move to MDAs that are better remunerated.

He said the Civil Service top management is now faced with serious problem managing this situation. This situation wants to divide the cohesiveness of the Civil Service. We are inundated with calls, text messages etc. from officers to be transferred to these MDAs so that they can live a better life.

He informed members that government is going to come up with a Wages and Compensation Commission that will look into these salary disparity concerns.

He said the process is being coordinated by the PSRU and that there is a draft Bill now awaiting Parliament Approval. When that Bill is enacted it will now usher in the Commission and its key mandate will be to harmonize the pay system across the Civil Service.

Pension disparities

The Director General said the disparities in salaries have resulted to vast differences in the pensions and part of that is due to the multiple laws governing the pension scheme.

He said the Wages and Compensation Commission will also have to address the issue of pension disparities.

End of Service Benefit

The Director General also elucidated on the procedures to access End of Service Benefit which he said officers who have retired use to find it very difficult to access their End of Service Benefit because the processes are long and confusing.

He said HRMO has designed a simple procedure where in a new form had been designed to alleviate this problem of people delaying in getting their End of Service Benefit.

The Finance Act

The Director General updated members that the Finance Act says that when an officer resigns he/she is entitled to benefit. He said before this time the General Order says if you resign from work, you are not entitled to any benefit.

He said the Financial Act also says that when you retire you are entitled to one month gross pay multiply by the number of years you have served.

The role of HRMO is to capture all of these changes in the Civil Service Code since they are not captured in it.

The Clerical Cadre

The Director General, Informed members that the Clerical Cadre is one of the oldest cadres in the Sierra Leone Civil Service. It had existed since colonial era. He said over the years top management has noticed that this cadre seems to be losing its value. They had also realized that this cadre performs a lot of important jobs but the carrier path of these job holders has become so stagnated that some officers do not go beyond First Grade.

Before this time they had a chance of been promoted to Staff Superintendent but the Human Resource Cadre had eroded that. He said HRMO is going to faced out the Clerical Cadre.

He said they have designed a scheme that will designate this cadre into several functional titles.

He said the process has started in the Western Area and it's going to be rollout in Phases.

Specialized trainings for Civil Servants

The Director General emphasized that knowledge transfer is very critical, if the Civil Service is to be efficient and effective for improve service delivery. He said specialized training is pertinent to supporting improve service delivery.

He said majority of the officers who came into the Civil Service do not come with qualifications that are related to the Civil Service but when they came in, they were trained and today they are doing wonderful jobs.

He affirmed that HRMO is going to start organizing systematic training programmes that will be undertaking in key skills areas in all the districts.

He informed members about the induction training. He said HRMO is currently inducting 646 newly recruited staff from grades 7 and above including those in the Regions. This is the first time officers in the region are per taking in such training.

Biometric Attendance Register

The Director General started by saying to whom much is given, much is expected. He said, he has realized that time attendance management is very poor at MDA level. He said everybody is yearning for better pay but this has to be translated into our output increasing.

He said HRMO in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Communications and has designed a kind of biometric system of attendance register that will be linked to the Payroll Administration in HRMO

He said this attendance register is going to be rollout to MDAs in phases to be able to identify staff that are committed to work and those that don't work or come to work as and when they like.

The Director General concluded by saying he is in the provinces to communicate these reforms to officers and also to get their views on the emerging issues especially on those that have to do with the Civil Service, the challenges that they are facing.

He said the outreach is to have empirical evidences that he will use to engage key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Finance because some of the issues may be related to finances.

He thanked the chairmen and colleagues from HRMO and participants for giving him the opportunity to explain on the reforms in the Civil Service.

Discussions

Discussion sessions gave Civil Servants across the three districts the opportunity to express issues of major concern for the attention of Director General and Team. The following major issues/concerns among many others were raised:

- The issue of salary disparity across MDAs was a major concern,
- The issue of staff posted to the provinces without payment of relocation allowance,
- The issue of some staff who have not been promoted for over 16 years,
- Also the issue of promotion recommendation done out of favoritism without recourse to performance,
- Officers not availing themselves with the Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules,
- Officers have upgraded themselves academically but still stagnated in the same position,

- Officers taking longer than the probationary period before they can be confirmed,
- The leadership of the Civil Service to look into retirement age for Civil Servants and increase it from 60 years to 65 years as it has been done for teachers,
- The availability of quarters in the Region is a serious challenge,
- The issue of none availability of office space for staff of some MDAs,
- None availability of proper working tools,
- The issue of MDAs doing unplanned internal transfers and even done sometimes out of malice,
- The issue of remote allowances not been paid to officers posted in the provinces with special reference to the Ministry of Health and Sanitation,
- Issue of information gap between Headquarters and officers in the provinces,
- Delay in accessing correspondences from their parent MDAs,
- No feedback on Individual Performance Appraisal from supervisors at the end of the appraisal cycle,
- Issue of not getting retirement letters on time upon retirement,
- Annual Vacation Leave allowance not paid for MOHS and in some cases money demanded from some officers before it will be facilitated,
- Some CHS have worked for over 20 years without licenses,
- CHO cadre being on different grades i.e. 5 and 6 which is demotivating to others,
- Inequality in terms of distribution of staff in the region more particularly MOHS,
- Roles and career part not clear for a good number of MOHS staff,
- MOHS to consider recruiting Laboratory Technician in the next phase of recruitment,
- Future of Mental Health Nurses in terms of career path, successor planning etc.,
- Issue of officers who have reached the Statutory Age of Retirement not accessing their end of service benefit on time,
- Officers not having mobility in carrying out the official functions,

Responses from the Director General and Team

The Director General adequately responded to all the questions and concerns raised by Civil Servants across the three districts and promised to look into those concerns that he can address

directly and also promised engaging other MDAs leadership on issues / concerns that are systemic in nature.

CLOSING REMARKS

The chairmen admonished participants to be patient even though things are very difficult for them in the provinces looking at the enormous challenges they are faced with in carrying out their administrative functions in their various duty stations. They thanked the Director General for the opportunity given to them to bring them to speed on the operations of the Human Resource Management Office.

Finally, they expressed hope that the meetings of such nature will continue.

Key recommendations

- HRMO to be organizing quarterly leadership meetings to discuss issues of major concerns,
- Transfer committees to be establish in all MDAs and HRMO to be represented in those committees,
- The Director General, HRMO to look into the issue of staff stagnation,
- HRMO to be engaging MOF on a regular basis to discuss major HR issues that have the tendency to undermine effective and efficient service delivery,
- MDAs leadership to be interfacing with their staff in the regions at least once or twice a year,
- The Cabinet Secretary and the Head of the Civil Service and the Director General, HRMO to consider accommodations concern and school calendar when doing postings to the provinces,
- The Cabinet Secretary and the Head of the Civil Service and the Director General, HRMO to ensure heads of MDAs set as part of the PTTs the existence of a functional Ministerial Performance Appraisal Committee,
- The Ministry of Finance to set aside some funds to construct mini-ministerial offices at least in the Regional Headquarters Towns,
- The Director General, HRMO to engage the Ministry of Finance on relocation allowances for officers posted in the provinces,

- The Director General, HRMO to engage the Ministry of Finance on remote or risk allowance for officers posted in hard to reach areas,
- HRMO to continue with the nationwide outreach exercise,
- Government to speed up with the salary harmonization process.

Action Points

- To engage the Ministry of Finance on the accommodations and office space issues/concerns,
- To engage the Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and Immigration Department on specific officers stagnation,
- To engage the Chief Agriculture Officer in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on how far they have gone in implementing the Manpower Plan recommendations in collapsing the three level of Agricultural Instructor to one,
- HRMO to expedite on the Management and Functional Review of the Immigration Department,
- HRMO to cascade specialized skills training programmes to the provinces,
- The Leadership of the Civil Service to speed up with the salary harmonization process,
- The Director General, HRMO to ensure that Heads of MDAs set as part of their targets in their PTTs a functional Ministerial Performance Appraisal Committee that is responsible for carrying out the reviews and providing feedback to officers.

Next steps

HRMO to conduct outreach programme in the remaining 12 districts

Submitted by:

Ibrahim S. Kamara

Director, Corporate Strategy and Administration Directorate

21st April, 2021

ANNEXES

Details of officers that need urgent intervention from the Director General, HRMO

1. Institution: Ministry of Social Welfare

Name: Beatrice Smith

Pin Code: 190164

Designation: Social Worker

Duty Station: Kenema District

Date of employment: 1st January, 1979

Tel: 076-21-81-91

2. Institution: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Name: Charles M. Mansaray

Pin code: 143185

Designation: District Extension Officer

Duty station: Bo District

Tel: 076-705-353

3. Institution: Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education

Name: Stephen M.V. Gogra

Pin Code: 800078

Designation: Supervisor of Schools

Grade: 7

Date of employment: 2005

Tel: 031-558-693

4. Institution: Immigration Department

Name: Mohamed Mustapha Konneh

Pin Code: 127338

Designation: Border Patrol Assistant

Grade: 2

Duty Station: Bo District

Date of employment: 2010

Tel: 078-958-595

5. Institution: Ministry of Health

1. Name: Millicent Nansu Bathalomew

Pin Code: 124480

Designation: Midwife

Duty station: Kenema District

Duration: 10 years

2. Name: veronica Jattu Koroma

Pin Code: 104368

Designation: Midwife

Duty station: Kenema District

Duration: 11 years

3. Name: Zainab Swaray

Pin Code: 133390

Designation: Midwife

Duty station: Kenema District

Duration: 11 years

4. Name: Mary Magdalene Songu

Pin Code: 104171

Designation: Midwife

Duty station: Kenema District

Those who have volunteer for many years without Pin Codes

<u>Name</u>	<u>Qualification</u>
1. Mariama Sia Senesie	Midwife
2. Josephine Hawa Powells	Midwife
3. Jemba Sia Bundoh	Midwife
4. J. Georgiana Kpovowai	Midwife



The Director General, HRMO making statement at the Opening Ceremony in Kailahun District



Participants making their submission during the outreach session in Kailahun



Group photo after the outreach session in Kailahun District



The Chairman, Mr. Andrew J. Fofanah making statement at the Opening Ceremony in Kenema District



The Director General making statement at the opening ceremony of the outreach session in Kenema District



Participants making their contributions at the Kenema District Outreach session



Group photo after the outreach session in Kenema District



The Chairman, Mr. Moses M. Gbetu making statement at the opening ceremony of the outreach session in Bo District



Participants making contributions during the outreach session



Group photo after the outreach session in Bo District