



THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

National Draft Policy Framework for Social Protection in Sierra Leone

Final Report – Policy options and responses

The Elizabethan or 'Old' Poor Law: created by two statutes 'For the Relief of the Poor' 1598 and 1601 by which every one of England's approximately 10,000 or more parishes was mandated to create a parish fund, financed by a local tax on property, in order to support the local poor all year round if necessary, not just in times of dearth - orphans, widows, the old and disabled and the unemployed were all covered in principle. These laws developed over the following 400 years into today's social security and protection provisions of the welfare state.

– adapted from *Combining growth with equity in an agrarian economy: development in England c.1600-1830*, Simon Szreter, University of Cambridge
. www.historyandpolicy.org .

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Executive Summary

This is the final document from a series of studies and consultations undertaken for and by the Steering Committee on Social Protection (SCSP) convened from Government, the private sector and civil society to develop a National Social Protection Policy and to advise the Government on its adoption and implementation.

The main findings of studies and mapping into Social Protection (SP) measures for the poorest and most vulnerable across Sierra Leone developed through literature study, field work and discussions with key stakeholders are presented in the form of a Framework for a National Social Protection Policy.

While a wide range of stakeholders across the country have been included in the studies and consultations, the resulting framework and recommendations need to be validated by key stakeholders in decision making positions inside and outside Government.

This framework for Sierra Leone is developed in the light of the Africa Social Protection Framework developed over the past years and agreed in October 2008 by representatives of Ministers responsible for Social Welfare from 36 countries in Africa, at Windhoek, Namibia.

While not the most important reason for developing and implementing social protection in Sierra Leone, the frameworks and mandates of the AU and instruments on human rights and protection to which the GoSL is signed up can only start to be met through a National social protection policy and associated legislation and action plans.

Issues and options for a National Policy are presented, based on international standards and practice and the reality of Sierra Leone, a country in which an estimated 50% to 70% of the population are below the one dollar per day poverty line. Recognising that only the most vulnerable can be supported through SP measures, the framework identifies who these groups are and suggests means to strengthen traditional family and community support wherever possible as well as the adoption of other SP measures when necessary and affordable.

In the post-conflict context of Sierra Leone the vulnerable may be divided into three major categories: the chronically poor, the economically at risk and the socially vulnerable. Within each of these categories are found women, men and children of different ages; with different physical and mental conditions; with experiences and in situations that make them poor and vulnerable.

In consultations across the country, it is clear that social protection is perceived as the responsibility of both the community and the State. Traditional family and community means of support to the vulnerable are seen as the most common and available practical actions that work for many and should be sustained, and not replaced, through the introduction of a National Policy.

People consulted argue strongly that local management of social protection will be necessary to ensure accurate targeting, minimise abuse and corruption and ensure that the priority groups and individuals are supported. Some District and

Chiefdom level leaders pointed to the failure of the centrally managed Government social safety net (SSN) pilot programme to maintain its funding pipeline to beneficiaries. They argue that local management is necessary to address issues of raising and meeting expectations of the poor and vulnerable.

Social protection measures implemented on a nationwide scale can be costly. It is proposed that the financing of social protection is recognised as an investment in economic growth as well as a social obligation and political imperative. Organised support to the poor and vulnerable may transform them from dependant to productive citizens. Where the poorest cannot engage productively, their inclusion in schemes of support may free up their carers to engage in productive activities leading to development. This is especially important for children and women on whom the burden of care of the vulnerable most commonly falls, and limits them from meeting their potential to contribute to national development.

While social transfers of food and cash are suggested as being the most tried, tested and successful means to reach large numbers of members of specific groups, it is to be recognised that such support may increase dependency without stimulating self help and engagement in livelihood development and productive activities. Wherever possible, it is proposed that transfers should be made conditional on recipients taking positive action. There is evidence that conditional transfers, even to the weakest and most destitute, can encourage people to use services such as health and education, or can be used to help support family members to do so. For abandoned and rejected community members, transfers may make possible their reintegration into care within the family and community by enabling them to make some contributions from their transfers.

The issue of targeting is of great importance, especially in a country where information and data is limited and there are real risks of supporting unintended beneficiaries. Universal cash transfers may be the most cost effective and transparent means to reach the most vulnerable groups where these can be categorised by age or levels of disability or poverty: for example older people above an age threshold, or the parents of children in households with severely limited income and earning capacity.

Furthermore, in a society where so many are poor, care will be needed that those targeted with social protection measures are not lifted far above the situation of those not included in the measure.

Costs of social protection can be shown to be affordable, even in a country with as limited resources as Sierra Leone, given some initial international support. Social Protection is a long term investment and cost on society and must be factored into national and local budgets. Reliance on donor funding risks starting protection measures that cannot be sustained. It is essential to calculate the long term affordability of social protection measures chosen and to ensure that there is adequate political will and supporting legislation. It is advisable to start social protection measures on a small scale and expand them than start a large programme that has to be cut. In line with Africa Union and international Frameworks, the initial stages of social protection introduction will need to be

prioritised by adopting a *minimum package of social protection* for the most vulnerable and destitute.

There is popular support for the raising and application of locally available funds and other resources for social protection supplemented with resources from national, and international, levels. Realistically, people see the need for local action and responsibility, while valuing technical advice and support, especially in delivering free or subsidised services including health, education, social welfare, transport, agriculture and other areas of support. There are widespread concerns that even those services that should be provided at no or low cost to specified groups have to be paid for, or foregone, by the poor and vulnerable.

Therefore it is seen as a priority for National Government to meet its mandates to provide social protection services, while at local levels (Districts, Chiefdoms) focus is on identifying those in need of protection, working with civil society to deliver protection and monitoring and regulating its effective provision.

In practical terms, people say it is possible for taxes to be raised and used locally for social protection. Many favour protection in forms that are conditional – public works programmes that employ the poorest who can work. There is much support for the most vulnerable to be given access to land and other local resources by land owners, guided by Chiefs and other leaders, so that social protection can be provided in ways that are transformational of society, reduce the inequalities that increase poverty and vulnerability and break the intergenerational cycle of recurring poverty.

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Abbreviations and acronyms:

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy (of WB)
CCF	Christian Children's Fund
CCSL	Christian Council of Sierra Leone
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer (NaCSA etc)
CEM	Current Evangelism Ministries – Sierra Leone
CGG	Campaign for Good Governance
CORAD	Consortium for Rehabilitation and Development
CSM	Civil Society Movement
DAAG	Disability Awareness Action Group
DACO	Development Assistance Coordination Office
Dec Sec	Decentralisation Secretariat (of Gov. of SL)
DFC	Defence for Children (International)
DRP	Development Relief Programme (of CORAD)
ENCISS	Enhancing Interaction and Interface Between Civil Society and the State
FAWE	Forum for African Women's Education
GCAP	Global Call to Action Against Poverty
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HANCI	Help a needy child international
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
ILO	(UN) International Labour Organisation
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRCBP	Institutional Reform and Capacity Building Project
LAWCLA	Lawyers Centre for Legal Assistance
LC	Local Councils
LEAD	Livelihood Expansion and Asset Development
LUC	Local Unit Commander (of Sierra Leone Police)
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies (of SL Gov.)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MELSS	Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security
MoHS	Ministry of Health and Sanitation
MRC	Medical Research Centre
MSWGCA	Min. of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
NaCSA	National Commission for Social Action
NASSIT	National Social Security Investment Trust
NACE	National Coalition of Extractives
NAG	National Accountability Group
NMJD	Network Movement for Justice and Development
NSNIR	Non-Salary, Non-Interest Recurrent (expenditure)

OVG	Older vulnerable group
PC	Paramount Chief
PHU	Primary Health Unit
PLHA	People living with HIV/AIDS
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan
PSDO	Principle Social Development Officer
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme (Ethiopia)
SDO	Social Development Officer
SCSP	Steering Committee on Social Protection
SL	Sierra Leone
SP	Social Protection
SPF	Social <i>Policy</i> Framework (Africa Union)
SSN	Social safety net
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
SW	Social Worker
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAT	Value Added Taxation
VDC	Village Development Committee
WB	World Bank
WFP	(UN) World Food Programme
WIEP	Women's integral empowerment programme
WVI	World Vision International

1 Introduction

The impetus to develop National Policies for Social Protection across Africa has been stimulated by the "Livingstone process", organised by the Africa Union with assistance from HelpAge International. A series of regional and country consultations, guidance notes and frameworks have assisted Governments to plan the development of National Policies appropriate to their circumstances. Several governments have completed, or at least drafted Policies and started to implement action plans to implement the policies.

The frameworks and mandates of the AU and instruments on human rights and protection to which the GoSL is signed up can only start to be met through a National Social Protection Policy and associated legislation and action plans. The existence of continental and global frameworks is not the most important reason for developing and implementing social protection in Sierra Leone: paramount is the concern of society and political will to end or reduce poverty, especially of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable of the population.

This paper, in the form of a draft Policy for Social Protection, presents the results of the country wide research into social protection undertaken for the Steering Committee on Social Protection. The results of research on the subject by others in Sierra Leone and Africa more broadly also informs the analysis and recommendations included.

The Draft Policy presents:

- social protection policy options,
- categories of vulnerable in need of protection,
- identifies responses to their needs,
- places the Sierra Leone social protection response in the context of wider social policy and national development,
- justifications for social protection as part the development agenda,
- action planning for social protection in the context of national development plans,
- a minimum package of social protection,
- practical aspects of implementation – funding, coordination, regulation, monitoring, evaluation, review,
- further steps towards a National Policy.

More detailed findings of the research undertaken on social protection, including:

- The results of mapping social protection across Sierra Leone,
- Summaries and analysis of consultation with Districts and stakeholders
- Review of relevant literature on social protection in Sierra Leone and Africa
- Affordability and international support for social protection

are contained in separate reports submitted to the Steering Committee.

2 Policy Options - What are the issues and options for Social Protection in Sierra Leone?

Social protection is not a new concept for Africa and Sierra Leone. However, there are challenges and issues to address in developing a Policy and Strategy that reaches all of the vulnerable, directly or indirectly, and reduces the risks of the less poor slipping into poverty.

While policy learning from other parts of the world is important, more important is experience from within continental Africa and Sierra Leone; not only in getting the attention of policy makers but in understanding that development is fundamentally

about engaging with local communities and learning to use what one has, to achieve what one wants¹.

To achieve protection of the most poor and vulnerable the State must address issues in the following areas:

- Human capital development
- Management of risk (of neglecting social protection)
- Empowerment and livelihood development
- Social cohesion and nation-building
- Macro economic policy

2.1 Human Capital Development

Six years after the civil war, Sierra Leone has been unable to fully recover its former social and economic position. An estimated 50 to 70% of the population is below the poverty line and there are large, though uncounted, numbers living in extreme poverty. Human capital development is recognised as one of the key areas for investment in the nation's Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan (PRSP) with recognition that social protection for the poorest groups and individuals has a role to play in growth and human capital development as well as being a moral responsibility for the state and society. The erosion of human capital is the result of migration, displacement, incapacitation of men and women through physical, mental and sexual abuses perpetrated during the conduct of the war, collapse of health and other essential services and infrastructure and the disruption of education for many before and during the war years. The latter has led to the extension of the understood age range of youth to 35, reflecting the lack of training and education opportunities during those years. These factors make it a priority that as much effort as possible be put into strengthening the capacity of Sierra Leoneans to contribute to the social, political and economic development of the country.

A National Social Protection Policy must establish the responsibilities and duties of the state and other stakeholders to alleviate the poverty of the poorest so that they can contribute to national development, or at the least, lead lives that are as independent and fulfilling as possible.

2.2 Risk management

The very poorest and most vulnerable are at constant risk of disease, starvation and death. It is these people for whom social protection is a priority, and without which they have no hope of achieving a dignified existence, let alone of contributing meaningfully to community and national development. From an economic perspective alone, Government and society puts at risk its development plans if there is no policy, and the means to implement it, that improves the situation of the very poorest and most vulnerable. Politically and socially the risks of ignoring

¹ Jimi Adesina, Rhodes University, South Africa. Making use of Transformative 'home-grown' Social Policy in Africa. Viewpoint 5 UNDP February 2009

its responsibilities to protect the deprived are high in that no democratic government can expect to maintain support from the population while large numbers of people are destitute with no apparent assistance from the state or other actors. This places an unrealistic burden on families and communities, most of whom are poor themselves, to provide what support they can.

A National Social Development Policy will acknowledge the responsibilities of the State to meet minimum standards of protection and care for its most deprived citizens, thus establishing the will of the State to meet its social, political and moral obligations, including those enshrined in national and international instruments on the rights of human beings to which the State has committed itself.

A social protection policy must assist the poorest in times of shock – natural, political and economic disasters and downturns which inevitably affect the poorest most profoundly, as well as adding to the numbers that may qualify for protection. At times of global economic recession the risks for the poorest increase, making social protection policy and measures even more important. Internationally and locally, concern is being expressed of the impact of global recession on the poor, with the likelihood that the numbers of the most vulnerable will increase substantially as employment opportunities, aid budgets and tax revenues diminish.

2.3 Empowerment and Livelihoods

Ideally, social protection measures provided through a policy will aim to lift people out of poverty, or at least reduce their vulnerability. This is most successfully achieved when protection improves livelihood prospects and opportunities. In many Districts a key means of providing social protection recommended was the provision of land, seeds and tools for those able to farm. In at least one Chiefdom, a Paramount Chief has provided land and assistance to the poor to develop farm production. Such measures that provide opportunities to develop income earning activities, or include the vulnerable in livelihood projects and programmes can result in sustainable and long term protection for those capable of participating. For those without the capacity to engage in productive activity, the inclusion of their family members can achieve similar results by increasing family incomes.

Even where the most vulnerable are unable to work, the ways in which social protection is provided can be empowering and need not create dependency. Providing food and cash transfers with conditions that require recipients to participate more fully in society can empower and avoid dependency. For example an INGO project piloting in several Districts provides food assistance to a group (often a family) that includes one extremely vulnerable member on condition that the group reduces its need for assistance by participating in collective farming or other enterprises that increases their assets and incomes. Year by year the food ration is reduced as the group's capacity to achieve food security and other livelihood gains improves.

For Sierra Leone, where population levels and density are not extreme and where the natural resource potential, especially for agriculture is high, social protection should be closely linked to improvements to livelihoods based on natural resource use and equitable access to these resources. This will require the participation of all those planning and providing access and support to land and its productive use

(farming and also mineral exploitation). Patterns of land use and access will need to change to improve opportunities for the poor, reducing inequality and the numbers of landless destitute poor.

2.4 Social Cohesion and Nation Building

Closely linked to empowerment and livelihood promotion to provide social protection are policies that aim to strengthen society and inculcate a sense of collective responsibility in building the nation state. Social protection initiatives are part of the process of state building without which there are inevitable fractures in society due to inequalities and erosion of historical standards of care and responsibility to support the disadvantaged as valued and respected members of society. This is more significant in a post conflict setting where there is need to repair relationships and to provide physical support and reparation for those injured, abused and mentally traumatised. The State must lead and support these rebuilding processes, paying specific attention to those whose deprivation may lead them to forsake their roles as citizens, disrupting society and attempts at nation building.

2.5 Pro poor macro economic strategy

The Sierra Leone PRSP identifies pillars of development. Those pillars concerned with policies for macro economic development must link to human development, within which lies social protection. The impact of macro policies and strategies on the poorest need to be assessed and adjusted wherever possible such that they are "pro poor": in developing investment policies for industry and trade, for example, there are opportunities to ensure that investment is made in areas that provide employment for poorer and lower skilled labour.

Likewise, in developing trade policies and agreements the needs of small scale and poorer producers and traders must be included so they can access markets and avoid exclusion through fiscal and other measures that favour only larger scale operations.

Taxation regimes at local and national levels can be designed to assist the growth of development opportunities for the poor: in introducing revenue collecting approaches, such as value added taxation (VAT), essential goods and services like food and medicines can be exempted to avoid increasing the burden on the poor.

At local level, small scale producers and traders can be exempted or charged low and affordable rates for market dues until they achieve incomes capable of supporting their livelihoods.

To ensure these policy areas are developed in ways sensitive to social protection needs and opportunities Poverty and Social Impact Assessment or Analysis (PSIA – see Box 1) must be featured in the National Social Protection Policy as a strategy to achieve social protection goals.

BOX 1

Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA) is an important feature of the new approach to supporting poverty reduction in developing countries, characterised by the development of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs). PSIA is defined as the analysis of intended and unintended consequences of policy interventions on the well-being or welfare of different groups, with a special focus on the vulnerable and poor. Well-being or welfare includes the income and non-income dimensions of poverty.

The overarching objective of PSIA is to promote evidence-based policy choices, by explicitly including poverty and social impacts in the analysis of policy reforms, and to build country ownership of policies by informing a public debate on the trade-offs between policy choices.

From: Poverty and Social Impact Assessment (PSIA)—Demonstrations: The Strategic Export Initiative in Uganda (undated)

3 Who needs social protection in Sierra Leone?

In a post conflict country like Sierra Leone, it is a challenge to identify those who need social protection because a substantial percentage of its population lives in abject poverty. However, mapping undertaken and other studies reveal three major categories of vulnerable people who are in dire need of social protection as follows:

3.1 The Chronically Poor

These people are described as the “popolipo”, meaning the “poorest of the poor” and comprise the destitute, beggars, physically challenged, mentally challenged, war wounded, the chronically sick and others. They have absolutely no assets, no means of sustenance and survive mostly on the good will of people in their communities, living one day at a time.

3.2 The Economically at Risk

This category comprises people who fail to engage in economically viable activities that can support their livelihoods, or are unemployable because they lack the education/skills and assets that should capacitate them to engage in meaningful work. A high percentage of the youth population fall within this group, especially those without education/skill and employment. Others in this category include the aged, unemployed adults (over 35), unsuccessful returned migrants, subsistence farmers, strangers and others who are not given access to land. These people find it very difficult to provide basic needs like education, health and regular food for themselves and their families.

3.3 The Socially Vulnerable

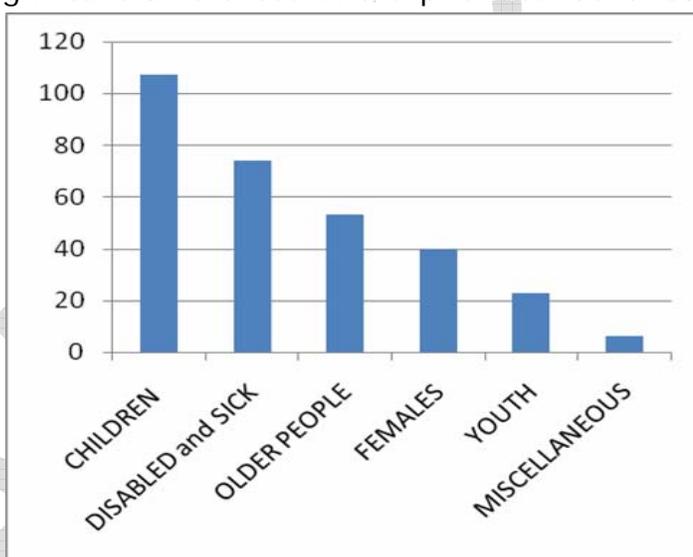
A group of people were identified in the mapping as socially vulnerable because certain cultural norms and values expose them to deprivation in communities. The social dictates of the society prevents some community members from enjoying rights that will add value to their lives, thereby making them vulnerable. Among the socially vulnerable are widows, single mothers, sex workers, children (orphans,

disabled, abandoned children, street children, under fives, juvenile delinquents, child carers of disabled etc), teenage mothers, families left by migrants, those, often female, accused of witchcraft or sorcery, barren women and others rejected or excluded from society. Usually with no assets and limited access to rights, this category of people can barely sustain themselves and their families/dependants.

There are far more females than males in this group.

3.4 Prioritisation

In a limited poll of half the Districts of Sierra Leone the following graph illustrates the views of participants in focus groups in each of these districts, when aggregated. However, there were significant differences in the priorities identified by each District, some of which reflected the context of the District with respect to the impact of the war, natural resources and patterns of migration (e.g. rural-urban movement). While the prioritisation exercise was based on different groupings to the three groups given above – which are grouped according to the *nature* of their deprivation, it is useful to see which broad categories of the community people consider to include the most vulnerable. In the report of the District consultations held across the country further sub categorisation is provided together with additional results on vulnerability, priority groups, appropriate responses and implementation issues for social protection, and specific vulnerabilities identified for the District (e.g. child miners, isolated riverine communities etc.)².



4 What Protection do vulnerable citizens need?

4.1 Approaches to Social Protection

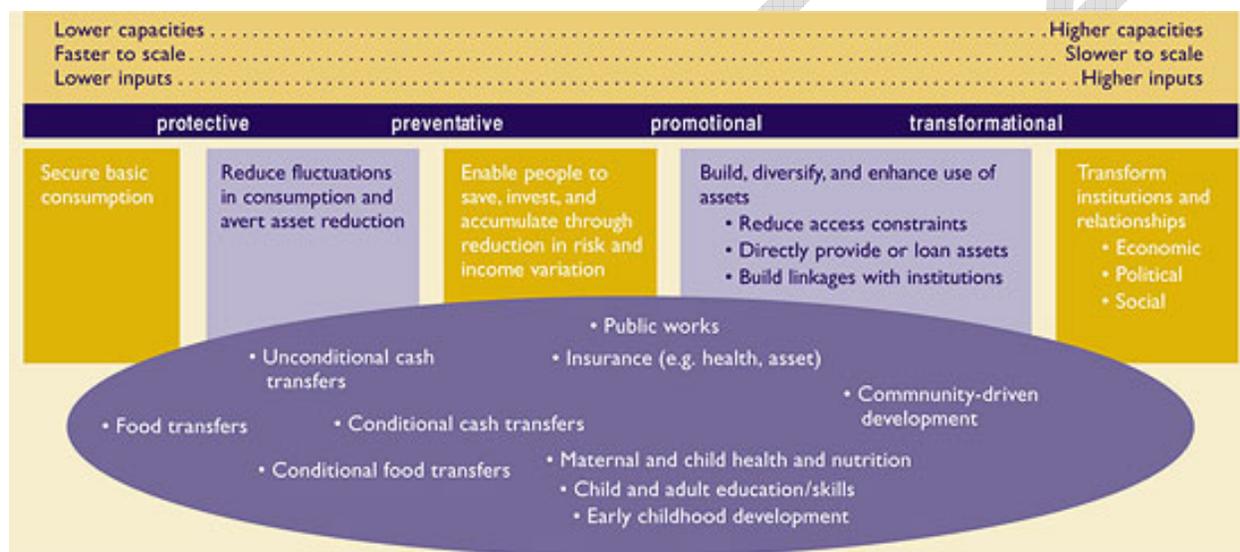
In selecting Social Protection methods to meet the needs of different groups it is important to consider the costs, benefits and longer term impact of investments made. The results of social protection can vary depending on the methods adopted. While the methods adopted have to be relevant to the needs of the targeted vulnerable and poor.

The very poorest and most vulnerable may need assistance to achieve a basic standard of life, indeed their lives may be at risk if they receive no support.

² Platt A and Max Kyne S (2009) Report of District Consultations on Social Protection, for National Steering Committee

Appropriate measures such as cash or food handouts, or *transfers*, may achieve their *protection*. By applying some conditions to the transfers made, a measure of *protection* may be added. For example, recipients may be able to save some of their income, or start to develop livelihood activities. For those able to participate in local public works initiatives or join in educational or health programmes the support provided becomes *promotional* by starting to improve the development prospects of those supported and of their family members, helping to break the cycle of poverty and deprivation across generations.

A step towards *transformation* is achieved when the poor and vulnerable are included by communities in their own development initiatives. These levels of social protection are illustrated in the following diagram³ which shows the relationships between possible approaches and methods of SP support to results and outcomes on the vulnerable, poor and the communities in which they live:



4.2 Social Insurance

Sierra Leone introduced a social insurance system in the form of the National Social Security Investment Trust – NASSIT. Membership is compulsory for all formally employed workers (Box 2). Further insurance and pension provision is possible through commercial insurance and pension providers, either in Sierra Leone or overseas.

Currently there are fewer than 1000 self employed members signed up and contributing to the NASSIT scheme⁴. Extension of the benefits of the NASSIT scheme to a greater number of self-employed workers would increase the number of people and families protected from the consequences of loss of employment through death, injury or business failure (the latter is of growing importance in a time of economic recession). The poorest of the poor, especially those with no or

³ from: Michelle Adato and John Hoddinott, September 2008 Social Protection Options for Africa IFPRI

⁴ Total NASSIT membership is approximately 160,000 (2009). Assuming an average family size in Sierra Leone of 6, approximately 16% of families include a NASSIT - insured member.

limited employment opportunities, are unlikely to be able to join a social insurance scheme such as the current NASSIT programme.

BOX 2

NASSIT holds the vast bulk of all the long-term funds mobilized by the financial sector and is critical to longer-term economic development. The importance of using these funds in a prudently and productive manner can not be over emphasized. Unfortunately, while private pensions can be approved by the tax authorities, there is little private pension fund activity and no regulatory or legislative framework to underpin it.

NASSIT has important social safety net objectives, while serving about 140,000 members that go far beyond the financial sector.

PRSP 2008-12 Draft Nov 2008.

The Social Protection Policy and strategy must include discussions with NASSIT and other potential employment insurance providers to determine the extent to which these schemes can be extended to cover a greater proportion of the population. Consideration will need to be given to linking social assistance provisions from government budgets to insurance schemes so that poorer self employed people can be insured.

Without active and viable social insurance schemes for those in work there is a grave risk of an increase in the numbers of very poor when bread-winners in families lose their employment, temporarily or permanently.

For Sierra Leone, as elsewhere in Africa, local level insurance schemes, for example contributions groups, such as *susu*⁵, are common and for many cases provide the main form of safety net against hard times. As identified in Box 3 (Adesina J. 2008), these forms of insurance are important and can be a significant means to provide social protection when understood and linked to formal banking, savings and other programmes.

BOX 3

A study of the varieties of social insurance funds that are being developed across Africa is important both for knowledge and policy reasons. While the Washington Consensus agenda is to push the responsibility away from the state fiscus and put the burden of access on individual insurance, it should be possible to shift the focus towards more solidaristic risk sharing in which the state and communities of citizens (operating as cooperatives) function as partners. This will reduce the current difficulties with adequacy of coverage and a shift towards defined contribution schemes. Along with pension funds, social funds arising from mutual aid associations savings and other social insurance schemes represent important sources of development funds. Beyond the mobilization of these funds, there is a need to reintroduce instruments such as banking institutions, engaged in long-term economic and social development financing and investment of social funds.

Jimi Adesina, Rhodes University, South Africa. Making use of Transformative 'home-grown' Social Policy in Africa. Viewpoint 5 UNDP February 2009

⁵ Susu Economics: The History of Pan-African (Black) Trade, Commerce, Money and Truth Part 1 (History of Pan-African Trade, Commerce, Money) www.amazon.com/Susu-Economics-History-Pan-African-Commerce/dp/

4.3 Social Assistance

4.3.1 Social safety nets and transfers

Social safety nets are a long standing concept and mechanism that largely have their origins in periods of structural adjustment programmes (SAPS) as a means to reduce the negative impact of SAP implementation on employees and their families who were retrenched from government and other employment. The reduction in state investment in services and the introduction of fees for health, education and other services also resulted in the need to provide safety nets for those unable to afford these costs. Today, safety nets – unconditional transfers in cash or kind (food etc) – are seen as a necessary part of social protection for those with little or no income and limited assets to meet their livelihood needs. In Sierra Leone Government and NGOs are experimenting with safety nets in both cash and kind⁶.

The PRSP II draft identifies the current situation with safety nets: *“...safety net interventions in Sierra Leone are fragmented with weak institutional arrangements for delivery and coordination. Due to the lack of synergy arising from weak coordination, there is a paucity of empirical evidence of the impact of SSN. Also, the overall investment in SSN is hard to determine”*. Yet safety nets are likely to be essential in meeting the needs of the poorest and most destitute for some time to come.

BOX 4

The main findings of the report include: (1) social safety nets should be in place before a crisis occurs since they can address the needs of the poor in good economic times and be adaptable to combat the effects of crisis; (2) pre-crisis planning is essential to effectively address the social effects of crises and includes the availability of reliable and timely information on the poor and frequent evaluation of safety net programs; and (3) countries can select from a wide range of available instruments depending on their administrative capacity and target populations. In selecting the appropriate instruments, governments should ensure that the measures:

- (i) provide adequate protection to the poor;
- (ii) promote efficient targeting;
- (iii) avoid creating a culture of dependency among recipients by limiting size and duration of benefits;
- (iv) are consistent with economic incentives and overall targets of fiscal and macroeconomic policy; and
- (v) encourage transparency and accountability in the design and implementation of programs and in the use of resources.

Social Safety Nets in Response to Crisis (2001): Lessons and Guidelines from Asia and Latin America Submitted to the APEC Finance Ministers

⁶ See Mapping Matrix of SP responses identified Social Protection Framework, Part 2 Max-Kyne S and Platt A. 2008

In 2001 a report to APEC⁷ Foreign Ministers compiled by the World Bank, IMF and others⁸ identified the application and utility of Safety Nets (Box 4). As can be seen, there are a number of requirements in the design and implementation of safety nets. In Sierra Leone the pilot (SSN) programme of the Government is trying hard to follow these guidelines, however it is prevented through lack of funding to meet its commitments to disburse. This is an issue of political will and Government must be careful not to introduce transfer programmes until it is confident the resources will be available to maintain budgets over time. To do otherwise is to discredit the mechanism by raising and dashing expectations of both beneficiaries and those working to identify the recipients at all levels. In the Districts more than one Paramount Chief has withdrawn his support and cooperation with the SSN because the expected transfer pipeline has dried up.

If the challenges of achieving efficient targeting and continuity of support can be overcome, SSNs have been shown to provide the most effective response to meeting the immediate basic living needs of the very poor, and at the same time, freeing up the time of those who care for the poorest to engage in productive and income-earning activity. In southern Africa especially Lesotho and South Africa - and elsewhere – regular payments to clearly definable groups – for example a universal pension (or allowance) to all those above (or below) a certain age have been shown to achieve multiple benefits. For example, school enrolments and retention rates have improved where grandparents have been able to provide contributions to school costs from their pensions. Pension payment transfers have likewise enabled older people to pay for health care needs, without resort to younger family members.

4.3.2 Conditional transfers

Increasing emphasis can be placed on making cash and food *conditional* on defined actions being taken by recipients. With international agency and NGO support the Ministry of Health and Sanitation in several countries in Africa (including Sierra Leone) is encouraging pregnant women to seek antenatal and nutrition care for themselves and their infants. In some Districts of Sierra Leone this is done by offering insecticide treated bed nets to those who attend clinics at appropriate stages. This form of conditional social transfer is helping towards achieving two critical Millennium Development Goals – the reduction of both maternal and infant morbidity and mortality⁹.

In many countries, conditional cash transfers are used to increase the education, health, and nutrition of children. This is achieved through making the cash (and sometimes food or nutritional supplements) conditional on households undertaking certain actions such as ensuring their children attend school or attend health check-ups, and having mothers attend health and nutrition education workshops. In Latin America¹⁰, conditionality has been shown to improve school enrolment, increase the

⁷ APEC – Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

⁸ Social Safety Nets in Response to Crisis (2001): Lessons and Guidelines from Asia and Latin America Submitted to the APEC Finance Ministers

⁹ The MDG Africa Steering Group, www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

¹⁰ E.g. www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Feature_stories/lang--en/WCMS.../index.htm

supply and quality of schools and health centres, and increase political support for cash transfers. Experience suggests that conditional programs should not follow a blueprint; they work best when designed to respond to a specific problem, such as low secondary-school enrolment due to family financial constraints, despite an adequate supply of schools; or high levels of infant and maternal mortality due to poor health clinic attendance because mothers cannot afford cost recovery and other charges.

Conditionality is administratively complex, however, and requires adequate quantity and quality of services. In Sierra Leone, where there is little experience with conditionality, this approach should be explored cautiously and flexibly. Lessons can be drawn from the experiences of pilot conditional transfer projects of Government, UN and NGO agencies and expansion of these considered as part of the National Policy.

4.4 Promotional and Transformative Action

Social assistance through safety nets and conditional transfers provide *protection* and *prevention*. More *promotional* and *transformational* approaches to SP are possible. These approaches aim to build assets of the most vulnerable and poor by linking transfers to productive and developmental activities. For example, Ethiopia's Productive Safety Nets Programme (PSNP)¹¹ links beneficiaries receiving transfers to agricultural extension agents, development workers, and access to credit. Evaluations indicate that transfers plus access to these complementary activities have a much bigger effect on a range of outcomes (such as food security and use of improved seeds and fertilizers) than just transfers alone. For example, mean caloric availability among households receiving both PSNP transfers and these complementary activities was 10 percent higher than among comparable non-beneficiaries. In Kenya's Cash Transfer Program for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, transfers are being linked to lectures on child and maternal health, prevention and treatment of illness, and nutrition. Some programs in Latin America are experimenting with linking cash transfers to savings schemes.

A further conditional social transfer that is *promotional* and potentially *transformational* is the provision of meals to children attending schools. In Sierra Leone, whole school populations are targeted in parts of the country known to a) have poor food security, and b) experience low levels of pupil registration, high drop out rates and low retention, especially of girls. In Uganda a Social Protection Study Team argued that targeted school feeding should be considered for specific vulnerable groups (such as orphans) and in areas where poverty is high and is recognised as a barrier to participation in education. This would include geographically inaccessible communities, areas with high concentrations of displaced or resettled people, and informal urban settlements where street children and destitute households are concentrated (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2003). Districts in Sierra Leone with remote and inaccessible areas – riverine, forests – state that whole communities are in need of social protection.

¹¹ E.g. www.odi.org.uk/plag/resources/reports/psnp_targeting.pdf

Sierra Leone's national social protection policy should provide guidelines for the identification of schools and/or specific school populations to target with school feeding and other conditional transfers that can increase participation in education, especially of girl children. These may include the provision of learning materials and scholarships to those unable to meet costs¹².

The draft PRSP 2008 – 2012 recognises and responds to the challenge of improving educational attendance and retention, especially for girl children (Box 5). The National SP Policy and Strategy will need to monitor the implementation of these steps and to design where necessary additional means to ensure participation in education of any vulnerable groups that continue to be excluded.

BOX 5

Increasing access to and completion of primary schooling especially for girls and out-of-school children

The Government of Sierra Leone has taken strides to ensure that all children, regardless of gender and physical condition, access quality primary schooling. These areas include free tuition, provision of per capita fee subsidies, provision of teaching and learning materials, adoption of the 2004 Education Act and 2007 Child Rights Act and payment of the examination fees. Nevertheless, there are 30% of children of primary school-going age still out of school. Causes of the non-attendance include hidden and indirect costs, cultural barriers to girl child education, child labour and lack of nearby schools.

Sierra Leone PRSP, Draft 2008 - 2012

4.5 Labour and Employment

The high proportion of citizens of Sierra Leone living at or below the poverty line points to the need for enlargement of employment opportunities and improvements to wages and conditions so that those in work, or with the capacity to work, can support themselves and their families. The PRSP identifies increased employment as key to poverty reduction (Box 6):

BOX 6

Employment is a key factor in poverty reduction and expanding employment opportunities is central in the second PRSP given the large proportion of the population that is either underemployed or unemployed. Youth unemployment remains a difficult issue, particularly in urban areas; this needs to be addressed with the provision of increased educational and employment opportunities in order to raise the level of economic development and reduce the possibility of social unrest.

PRSP 2008-12 Draft Nov 2008. Chapter: Trends in Poverty 2003-07

To help the less poor – and the vulnerable they support – be resilient to shocks the specification by Government of a minimum wage is one approach to protecting those in employment from falling below the poverty line. A minimum wage also may play a part in reducing the pressure on low paid workers to engage in rent

¹² Examples for these paragraphs. adapted from: Michelle Adato and John Hoddinott, September 2008 Social Protection Options for Africa IFPRI

seeking and other corrupt practices to increase their incomes to meet their basic needs. Together with social assistance payments to those out of work, a minimum wage has been considered or introduced in a number of countries in Africa.

Evidence from six African countries shows that minimum wages have ambiguous effects when applied to either formal or informal sector workers. A Ghana study and a South African simulation of the impact of its introduction support the conventional view that legislated minimum wages can displace workers from formal employment. However, the case of Moroccan agriculture confirms the view of farmworker activists in Namibia and Uganda that, where monopsony conditions pertain¹³, minimum wages can achieve positive outcomes in terms of both social protection for exploited workers and economic growth, with no dis-employment effects. As with many policy choices, any decision about labour market interventions must be based on careful analysis of the specific labour markets concerned to avoid risks of dis-investment.

Minimum wages should be applied selectively to sectors where workers are clearly underpaid and the wage elasticity of demand for labour is low. Two additional challenges facing many countries that are considering introducing or extending minimum wages are: how to extend coverage to low-paid sectors that are traditionally difficult to regulate (agricultural, domestic and informal sector workers); and how to ensure compliance, which is problematic given the personnel constraints currently faced by most Departments of labour, employment and social security.

Thus the introduction of a binding minimum wage (within limits) should have poverty-reducing effects among a highly vulnerable group of workers, with no negative consequences in the form of retrenchments or cutbacks in non-wage benefits¹⁴. If the National Policy for social protection in Sierra Leone is to assist in reducing the number of under paid and under employed of the potential workforce consideration is needed to the timing of the introduction of a minimum wage alongside cash transfers to the destitute unemployed, perhaps with conditions such as requirements to participate in skill training, public works projects (cash and food for work) and job-seeking, including relocation to areas where there are employment or self-employment options, such as farming areas with labour shortages.

The India policy of guaranteeing a minimum of 100 days work per household per year may also be a useful approach to consider¹⁵ Though it will be challenging, and require strong political support, in the context of Sierra Leone, to redistribute existing, or find new, employment opportunities to offer to the poorest. Currently this can probably only be achieved through public works programmes, such as

¹³ monopsony – markets where there are several sellers but only one buyer – the opposite of a monopoly where there is just one seller and many buyers

¹⁴ Stephen Devereux and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler IDS Working Paper 232 Transformative social protection October 2004

¹⁵ Does the Employment Guarantee Scheme Benefit the Poor in India? Aims at removing poverty by assuring at least 100 days' employment.

www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/disciplines/economics/research/workshops/development/.../Manchester-Seminar%209Nov200

those of NaCSA and others, and insisting that contractors employed by the government include jobs for the poorest. Districts identified both these approaches in consultations.

5 Social Protection integrated into development-focused social policy

Social policy cannot be divorced from development. The ultimate goal of every social policy is to contribute to overall economic and social development, thus the need to ensure there are linkages between a social protection policy and the wider development agenda as spelt out in the country's PRSP and Vision 2025. Social protection issues are clearly presented below with a focus on development in key sector areas:

5.1 Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation

Creating employment for the vulnerable is very crucial to poverty reduction, given the large proportion of the population that is either underemployed or unemployed. The high unemployment rate among young people remains a difficult issue, particularly in urban areas. There is need to address this situation by providing increased educational and employment opportunities in order to raise productivity levels and subsequently the level of economic development.

5.2 Equitable and accessible Health and Other Services

Social assistance programmes in the health sector such as providing free ante natal and nutrition care for pregnant women and their infants and offering insecticide treated bed nets to those who attend clinics at appropriate stages, have direct bearing on the achievement of two key priorities in the health sector in the country and two critical Millennium Development Goals – the reduction of maternal and infant morbidity and mortality.

5.3 Social Welfare

Social transfers and free or subsidised services form the part of social protection that addresses poverty and vulnerability in groups such as the aged, children, pregnant mothers and the physically and mentally challenged. These social welfare support programmes that target the most vulnerable are usually non contributory and financed from state budgets. These services are made available to groups while the costs are usually to be carried by the state, through taxation or payments made by those who can afford to pay.

5.4 Quality Education

Effective delivery of quality education is essential for economic growth and poverty reduction. In education, strategies for development can be aimed at improving education quality, launching an aggressive literacy programme, and providing early childhood care for more children. This will be achieved through making the cash (and sometimes food or nutritional supplements) conditional on households

undertaking certain actions such as ensuring their children attend school to improve school enrolment, increase the supply and quality of schools and health centres, and increase political support for cash transfers.

6 Justification – why is a National Policy necessary?

6.1 National Economic Growth

Existing support to macro-economic development in Sierra Leone includes the establishment of a workable financial management system, deals with institutional capacity building, aid coordination, private sector development, strengthening institutional capacity for development and similar initiatives. These programmes are geared towards stimulating economic growth which in turn lays the foundation for sustainable development to benefit the poor.

The components of social protection – social assistance (food and cash transfers etc), social insurance and free or subsidised access to services have the potential to contribute to national growth and economic development while at the same time meeting the responsibilities of the state to support the poor and vulnerable.

6.2 Human Capital

Strengthening the human capital base is one sure means of ensuring economic growth and poverty reduction. Education creates employment opportunities for individuals and families, thereby enabling them to provide their basic needs. A healthy person is better placed to embark on productive activities for sustainable livelihood. Providing social protection packages for the vulnerable in health and education sector will help reduce the level of vulnerability and contribute to national development.

6.3 Breaking Intergenerational Cycle of Poverty

Social protection can be an effective mechanism to address childhood poverty and breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Social protection packages such as cash transfers in the form of child benefit or a pension, or in-kind benefits such as food aid and waivers from fees for health care and education, or livelihood support to families can help reduce vulnerability and poverty among children and in families. Social protection cuts across all sectors, and is considered important for breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty, and for achieving a social contract on nation-building and accelerating progress towards the MDGs.

6.4 Reducing Inequality

Despite headway in achieving some equality of opportunity for women, there are still massive differences in the access girls have to schooling, and even more so the retention rates for female students as they progress through education are far lower than for males. Health care for women and their children are well below standards. Social protection interventions will therefore help bridge the gap between marginalized, deprived and poor people and the rest of society. In order to

reduce inequality, it must be ensured that the strategic and practical needs of women and men, girls and boys, old and young are differentiated and addressed in developing SP policies and strategies. Social protection sets a minimum standard of social and economic security that protects citizens against vulnerability and deprivation and the Government must play the mediating role in redistribution from the rich to the poor.

6.5 Improving Living Standards

Social protection interventions can enhance people's quality of life by developing human potential, increasing stability, advancing social justice and equity, and promoting economic dynamism. With all of these in place, poor people will become less vulnerable and can be able to live meaningful, productive and dignified lives.

7 Action Planning for Social Protection – a gradual approach

Sierra Leone will not be able to move forward on all areas of social protection provision immediately a National Policy is in place. A phased and gradual approach will be necessary. This is not only because resources are limited, but also because the approaches to adopt require testing and review in the context of different areas of the country. While over 86 pilot social protection measures have been mapped, the evidence that these will be effective when adopted nationally is lacking. Moreover, the costs of national roll out have not been calculated given that there is limited data on the numbers of qualifying people in different vulnerable groups. What follows is a list of the possible main intervention approaches and recommendations for strategies for moving forward.

An action plan should include:

- Review of existing mandates of Government departments to provide free services, fee waivers etc to specific groups and measures to ensure these mandates operate in practice – including education, health, social services to specific groups
- Review of assistance provided by non Government agencies and institutions to assess their existing contribution to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and the potential for them to extend their services in coordination with plans of Districts and higher levels of government
- Encouragement to informal schemes – susu, community savings and insurance schemes with welfare provision elements
- Extension of existing social insurance schemes – NASSIT,
- The introduction of subsidies to those unable to contribute to formal insurance schemes to extend their coverage and membership
- Encouragement and support to occupation based insurance schemes
- Strengthening the provision of social welfare services to the poorest and most vulnerable

- Employment guarantee schemes for the poorest families – for example the 100 days per year of employment per family India programme
- Provision of safety nets and conditional transfers to those who remain unsupported and unemployed.

Prioritisation of such an action plan is challenging. It will depend on political will and ongoing dialogue with affected communities and the representative civil society organisations (CSOs) who advocate for them. Care will be needed to match resources to need, to reduce inequalities and avoid disadvantaging groups and individuals not included when introducing social protection actions.

In more detail and based on reports and studies¹⁶, together with recent dialogue with people in all fourteen Districts of Sierra Leone¹⁷, strategies can include:

7.1 Education and health services

7.1.1 Fee Waiver - health user fee waiver, scholarships

Fee waiver is a sure way of reducing the burden of high health and education costs on poor families and vulnerable people. Health user fee waiver for pregnant women, lactating mothers, HIV/AIDS patients, the aged, the disabled and children are already mandatory and if fully implemented are an essential and effective social protection strategy.

BOX 7

Policy Objective: Ensure all vulnerable groups eligible for fee waivers and scholarships have access to them.

Strategies:

- Identify Government, donor and CSO programmes for the support of free access to health services and education – through waiving of user fees, costs of schooling and scholarships for further education.
- Establish the importance with these providers of meeting their obligations to channel benefits to agreed vulnerable groups.
- Lobby policy makers of Government and donors etc to recognise their obligations to meet conventions that specify the rights of all to health care and education.
- Regulate, monitor, review and evaluate.

¹⁶ See Platt A and Max-Kyne S, 2008. Framework for National Policy and Strategy for Social Protection in Sierra Leone Part 2 Annexes, Documentation list.

¹⁷ See Platt A and Max-Kyne S, February 2009 Development of Social Protection Policy in Sierra Leone, District Consultations Part 1 – Summary of Outcomes Part 2 Annexes.

7.1.2 Special needs provision-education, rehabilitation

Some category of vulnerable people like the blind, the deaf and dumb, physically and mentally challenged children (and adults), need special care provision because of their circumstances. They need special provisions in the areas of education, health care and rehabilitation.

BOX 8

Policy Objective: All special needs children and adults have access to full health care, education and their basic needs are met.

Strategies:

- The National Policy must specify responsibilities for special needs groups.
- Identify resources to support the existing services.
- Map existing services and ensure that these are decentralised to Districts together with adequate resources – trained staff and funding.
- Regulate, monitor, review and evaluate.

7.2 Assessment and extension of non state actor pilot SP programmes

Since the war, most social protection actions have been implemented by non-state institutions – the UN, NGOs, INGOs, CSOs. For Government to take up its responsibilities to provide social protection to the poor and vulnerable, partnerships will be needed that enable Government to ensure that social protection is provided universally and equitably to those groups it plans to support through the National Policy.

BOX 9

Policy Objective: Government and non state SP providers work together to learn the lessons from existing pilot projects and apply those that are viable and likely to be most successful equitably and nationally.

Strategies:

- Include non state actors in governing, coordinating and managing bodies mandated by the National Policy for its implementation
- Review the range of pilot initiatives relevant to the needs of the vulnerable groups prioritised in the SP Policy and strategy
- Ensure coordination between non state actors and Government at local and higher levels in identifying SP measures and their application fairly and equitably
- Ensure all projects and programmes are integrated into District development plans

7.3 Traditional family and community support for vulnerable

The culture of Sierra Leone is to care for the poor, weak and vulnerable within families and communities, with traditional leaders and elders supporting in a variety of ways. Through conflict and modernisation these systems are eroding. Exclusion and abandonment of individual family members is the root cause of most destitution and extreme vulnerability. While some beggars, street children,

orphans, sex workers and others may receive some support from their families or other community members, many do not. SP strategies that can help rehabilitate the estranged and abandoned so that they can be cared for within the family and community setting are of critical importance.

BOX 10

Policy Objective: Encourage and support the care of the vulnerable within communities with, where necessary, strengthening of community resources and assets.

Strategies:

- Dialogue with vulnerable groups and their communities to assess needs for support at community level so that traditional responsibilities of care can be met.
- Link SP measures, especially social transfers, to the building of respect for the vulnerable and excluded so that they may be seen, and see themselves, as valued and contributing members of society.
- Examine traditional systems to assess areas in which they may be discriminatory towards specific groups – by gender, ethnicity, strangers, youth etc. – or exclude groups or individuals.
- Develop solutions and provide awareness raising to improve the equity of household and community level social protection.
- Focus especially on improving agricultural productivity and food security at the household level so families and communities are less likely to cast out or neglect burdensome individual members.
- In urban areas focus on skill training for those without work as well as encouraging unsuccessful urban migrants to value rural livelihood options.

7.4 Insurance schemes

7.4.1 Compulsory Insurance, pensions health etc for employed and self employed

BOX 11

Policy Objective: The National Policy should identify the potential for compulsory insurance schemes for employees to be extended to meet the needs of informal sector employees, including the self employed.

Strategies:

- Dialogue with NASSIT and other pension and insurance providers.
- Investigate ways in which membership can be extended to include those unable to afford contributions, including through subsidies provided by Government to the poorest self employed.

7.4.2 Voluntary insurance, pensions, health etc

BOX 12

Policy Objective: The policy should encourage private sector development in this area of pensions and insurance for those able to afford it.

Strategies: This level of Protection should be seen as long term and not a priority for the National Policy given the high proportion of poor and vulnerable and the small proportion of better off citizens likely to be in serious difficulty from shocks, other than major natural catastrophes or serious political conflict.

7.5 Social Services - transfers, shelters and homes

Social assistance is the oldest form and one of the main components of social protection in Sierra Leone. It is the non-contributory, regular and predictable cash or in-kind transfers made to the vulnerable in society. It is financed mostly by the Government and Non-Governmental Organisations, though in Government budget terms it is one of the most poorly supported services. It caters mostly for the most vulnerable in communities i.e. the sick, disabled, elderly, homeless etc. It is essential that care be exercised to ensure the SP measures are not introduced that raise expectations that cannot be met and sustained, and that capital investment in infrastructure is followed through with provisions for recurrent costs:

7.5.1 Unconditional Transfer-Cash, Kind

This involves giving cash or kind to vulnerable people in order to assist them meet the immediate needs of food, medicines and clothing. Food security is a paramount concern for both urban and rural communities and the inclusion of the most vulnerable in food distributions is critical to their survival. The National Policy will need to fully engage with those planning longer and short term food supplementation to ensure that systems adopted meet their needs. Those responsible for the National Policy may need to take a leading role in coordinating food supplies and distribution, which should be undertaken with advice and assistance from International bodies such as WFP and FAO.

BOX 13

Policy Objective: Establish a framework for cash and kind transfers

Strategies:

- Undertake rigorous assessment of the pilot programmes by the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security and other schemes of government and CSOs for cost effectiveness and affordability.
- Carry out simulation exercises based on costs and benefit figures for ranges and levels of target beneficiaries. Simulations will use information from the pilot schemes plus data on vulnerability from existing and updated surveys.
- Consider especially cost effective means of delivering transfers to the most vulnerable, even if this requires universal payments such as pensions and child support grants.
- Use the results of the simulations to form the basis for a phased extension of affordable social transfers to agreed targeted groups.
- Lobby decision makers and donors to make long term commitments for finance.
- Participate in dialogues and planning on food security with relevant agencies to help ensure that data systems to assess vulnerability to food and nutrition deficits are implemented. (WFP, CSOs, FAO etc)
- Plan phased introduction of agreed schemes including monitoring framework.
- Regulate, monitor, review and evaluate against agreed targets.

7.5.2 Conditional Transfer-cash for work, food for work

Conditional transfers are mostly used to create income generating opportunities for the unemployed, mostly young people through, for example, civil and public works programmes. They are also used to give food to the needy as payment for working on community Development projects. Women who work mostly in agriculture will benefit from participation in food production, processing and marketing initiatives.

BOX 14

Policy Objective: Achieve coordinated and equitable range of conditional transfers for social assistance to relevant vulnerable groups.

Strategies:

- Survey and assess the numerous existing small and medium scale conditional cash, food and kind transfer projects.
- Assess which projects are most appropriate for different vulnerable groups – ensure the participation of proposed beneficiaries.
- Assess affordability and negotiate with implementing agencies (MDAs and CSOs) a plan for equitable application across all Districts.
- Where necessary, organise training for implementers at all necessary levels.
- Regulate, monitor, review and evaluate.

7.5.3 Transfers for clinic, school attendance, etc.

Women and children will benefit from support given to clinics in their localities in the form of free treatment and medicines. The school feeding programme will increase attendance for children and improve their nutritional status by ensuring at least a meal per day.

BOX 15

Policy Objective: Conditional transfers in health and education areas operational nationally and helping to reach to MDG and PRSP targets through increased access to health care and school completion rates for vulnerable groups, especially women and children.

Strategies:

- National Policy to recognise and promote the transparent and effective implementation of programmes of MoHS, MoEYS and other service providers that support the access of vulnerable women, infants and children to health and education.
- Ensure through regulation and monitoring that programmes of MDAs and CSOs are uniformly applied across all districts, using criteria that ensure that the most vulnerable are targeted.
- Regulate, monitor, review and evaluate.

7.5.4 Shelter and other basic needs provisions for destitute

Shelter provision for the homeless, particularly the aged with no relation to care for them is of paramount importance. It came out very clearly in the mapping that there is dire need to provide shelter for some aged and disabled homeless people. Apart from shelter, these categories of people need to be provided with basic needs of food, medical care and clothing. Informants suggest that CSOs are frequently best equipped to manage and operate these services.

BOX 16

Policy Objective: Increase the availability of homes and shelters for destitute and vulnerable groups.

Strategies:

- In collaboration with MSWGCA survey and identify the current availability of shelters and homes for the most vulnerable across all Districts and develop a plan to extend the number to meet current and predicted demand.
- Ensure those targeted participate fully in assessment and identification of solutions to their shelter needs
- Develop minimum standards for such provisions and assess the standard and quality of existing and new provisions.
- Identify resources at central and District levels for MSWGCA and appropriate NGOs to support these critical services without which homelessness, vagrancy and begging will continue to be the only recourse for these groups.
- Regulate, monitor, review and evaluate (MSWGCA).

7.5.5 Homes – orphans, physically challenged, aged, shelters for the physically, mentally and sexually abused, Care in the community

Care-providing homes are needed for orphans, the physically challenged, street children, the mentally ill and others. Communities are overstretched in taking care of such people and they need proper, sometimes institutionalised, care under the supervision of recognised agencies working with the Government.

BOX 17

Policy Objective: Ensure all orphans physically challenged, aged, abused women and children, victims of trafficking are receiving adequate standards of care and support, including access to shelter and homes when necessary. Develop a comprehensive SP strategy that ensures the provision of relevant services and optimised service delivery for people with disabilities (Africa SPF)

Strategies:

- Identify and specify responsibilities and duties to provide shelters and care in the community for at risk groups, orphans and the aged who are in need of care and protection.
- Define the rights of these groups in line with international conventions and codes of practice to which the GoSL is signed up (E.g. the Universal Rights of Children, CEDAW etc), for example by ensuring there are proper educational and training facilities for children in orphanages.
- Avoid institutionalising vulnerable groups wherever possible – treat institutional care as an absolute last resort when all other means of providing care within the community fail.
- Regulate, monitor, review and evaluate.

7.6 Livelihood and employment support

7.6.1 Gender equality and women’s empowerment (cross cutting issue)

Despite headway in achieving some equality of opportunity for women, there are still massive differences in the access girls have to schooling, and even more so the retention rates for female students as they progress through education are far lower than for males. Health care for women and their children are well below standards in most other countries in Africa¹⁸.

¹⁸ “Sierra Leone has the worst maternal and child morbidity and mortality indicators worldwide: 457 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.” PRSP 1 Draft 2008

BOX 18

Policy Objective: Ensure that the strategic and practical needs of women and men, girls and boys, are differentiated and addressed in developing all SP policies and strategies.

Strategies:

- In all planning for SP measures make use of and ensure compliance with the key instruments Sierra Leone has committed to including: *1994 Dakar Platform of Action and the 1999 African Plan of Action to accelerate the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action for the Advancement of Women, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ICPD Plan of Action, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights of Woman in Africa* etc (Africa SPF 2008)
- As improvements in policy and legislation on women's property and land rights are put in place, ensure that vulnerable women are supported in exercising these rights.
- Monitor, review and evaluate progress with the achievement of equal rights and the rate at which the MDGs and other targets concerned with gender, health and sexual and reproductive rights are being met for the most vulnerable groups.

7.6.2 Livelihood support – micro finance, farm inputs etc

Micro-Finance and the provision of farm inputs is to be considered for the poorest, particularly for women - who are estimated to contribute 80% of on farm productive labour - in rural communities. This will increase their earnings and enable them cater for other needs of their families. Access to productive land is a key factor in reducing deprivation and providing livelihood opportunities.

BOX 19

Policy Objective: Access of the poorest to assets and capital (including land for farming).

Strategies:

- Assess the extent to which poorer farmers are targeted in agricultural and industrial support programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture, other relevant MDAs and CSOs.
- At District and Chiefdom levels encourage the provision of land and other natural resources for use by poor and vulnerable groups.
- Consider reforms to land ownership laws, usufruct rights and practices to make more land available for cultivation etc by the poor and vulnerable
- Lobby providers of micro finance to introduce affordable loan schemes for poorer farmers and others, with safeguards against inappropriate and misunderstood terms and conditions increasing risks to the vulnerable.
- Ensure that contractors to Government employ available local labour.
- Regulate, monitor, review and evaluate.

7.6.3 Small Enterprises support, skills training, business training

Micro enterprise support, skills training and business training can be used effectively to promote youth employment and job creation, thereby reducing the level of vulnerability among young people and other employment aged people.

Such a programme, if successfully planned and implemented will contribute to economic growth and development.

BOX 20

Policy Objective: Ensure that employment schemes for youth and others are targeted to the most vulnerable of these groups.

Strategies:

- Participate in planning employment and self employment schemes, identifying ways for these schemes to target the most vulnerable.
- Liaise with scheme providers to ensure schemes operate, where appropriate, in Districts other than West.
- Encourage and legislate for employers to employ quotas of vulnerable groups, e.g. the those with disabilities and training for them.
- Regulate, monitor, review and evaluate.

7.6.4 Pensions and wages

A retired army sergeant receives 16,000 Leones (approx US\$5) per month as pension. These levels result in even retired pensioners unable to meet basic living needs. Other civil service pension rates are not related to current costs and in the main are not linked to cost of living indices. Wages for many workers are at exploitative levels and, while there are risks in setting minimum wages (see Issues section), wage levels need review if those on lowest pay are to afford basic living needs and avoid falling into poverty as a result of shocks. Consideration may be given to the adoption of programmes such as that in India whereby all households are guaranteed a minimum of 100 days employment for one member, or welfare payments if employment is not available or possible.

BOX 21

Policy Objective: Achieve adequate pension levels for retired people currently under the poverty line. Support older people by effectively addressing their needs through specific social protection and other programmes that are incorporated into national development plans and strategies, (Africa SPF 2008).

Strategies:

- Review existing civil service pension rates, which are based on pre war costs. The Policy must include dialogue with the Government department responsible for setting pension levels.
- Discuss wage levels with relevant Government and non-government employers and consider innovative solutions such as 100 day per H/H of work.
- Consider the effect and value of introducing a minimum wage on poverty levels and resilience to "shocks".
- Develop intergenerational programmes which create mutual benefits to both youth and the elderly (Africa SPF 2008).
- Regulate, monitor, review and evaluate.

8 Minimum Package of social protection

Recognising that the policy development and implementation described above (7 Action Planning for Social Protection – a gradual approach) will take time to plan and implement, the GoSL is advised to prioritise its National Social Protection Policy by introducing a *minimum package of social protection* as defined in the Africa Union Social Protection Framework:

8.1 The AU Framework and Minimum Package of Protection

The Africa Union Social Policy Framework, (2008) recognises the key role of social protection as a means to reduce poverty and inequality as well as building the human capital required to achieve economic and social development (Box 22):

BOX 22

The interventions falling under a social protection framework include social security measures and furthering income security; and also the pursuit of an integrated policy approach that has a strong developmental focus, such as job creation, equitable and accessible health and other services, social welfare, quality education and so on. AU member states have noted that social protection has multiple beneficial impacts on national economies, and is essential to build human capital, break the intergenerational poverty cycle and reduce the growing inequalities that constrain Africa's economic and social development.

Africa SPF 2.2.3 Social Protection para 30

Recognising that most less economically strong countries in Africa may not in the short to medium term be able to meet all the obligations in international rights and other conventions they have signed, a ***basic social floor*** or ***minimum package of protection*** has been defined in the Social Framework for Africa. (Box 23):

BOX 23

Basic Social Floor/Minimum package of protection:

1. All have access to essential health care benefits including maternity benefits, where the State accepts the general responsibility for ensuring the adequacy of the delivery system and financing of the benefits;
2. All children enjoy income security at least at the poverty level: through family/child benefits aimed to facilitate access to nutrition, education and care;
3. Some targeted income support for the poor and unemployed in active age groups;
4. All residents in old age and disability enjoy income security through pensions granted at least at the poverty-line level.

"A minimum package can have a significant impact on poverty alleviation, improvement of living standards, reduction of inequalities and promotion of economic growth and has been shown to be affordable even in low income countries within existing resources if properly managed."

Adapted from Africa Union and ILO Frameworks for Social Protection

For children to achieve security of income, access to nutrition, education and care the National Policy will have to specify how this support can be provided. Sierra Leone (see later) has numerous pilot and small scale projects and programmes that achieve the protection defined in 2 (Box 23). ***The issue for SP Policy and strategy is to select and implement nationally those responses that are cost effective and affordable.***

To provide income support for the poor and unemployed 3, (Box 23) will require the introduction of administratively complex targeting, registration and payment schemes. ***The issues for Sierra Leone are how to increase the livelihood opportunities for the poor and unemployed of two main groups:***

- a. the 80% of the population living in rural areas who depend principally on farming for livelihoods and food security, improvements in their access to capital, inputs, means of production (including mechanisation) and access to markets, and
- b. the growing numbers of city dwellers in need of skill and business management training and investment support towards seeking employment and self-employment.

With high rates of unemployment only the most able and fittest can access decent work and incomes from employment and self-employment. The physically and mentally challenged, the under educated and those subject to employment and other discrimination, for example people living with HIV/AIDS, and most women, will require some form of assistance to meet their basic living needs.

With respect to Basic Social Floor/Minimum Package provision 4 (Box 23), income security for the aged and those with disabilities is currently mainly provided through traditional family or community support, plus a few pilot “social transfer” projects of the Government and civil society organisations. Family responsibilities and practices are increasingly eroded as communities deal with the consequences of war and loss of able bodied members (especially in farming areas), disposable incomes fall as food prices rise¹⁹ and, through urbanisation, people increasingly live in cramped and expensive accommodation. ***The Social Protection Policy and strategy issue to achieve income security for the poor in old age, the disabled and others well below the poverty line is to stimulate the political will to recognize that there are increasing numbers of people near destitution who will not be supported through traditional caring structures.*** The experience of Asian countries with economies far stronger than those of Africa, including Sierra Leone, illustrate this challenge (Box 24)

¹⁹ As world recession takes hold, remittances received from members abroad by many families may well fall

BOX 24

Social assistance or basic pensions financed through the budget are essential for the lifetime poor both urban and rural. In none of the ASEAN countries, does the first-pillar (human development) play a significant role. With the exception of the Philippines, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam the fiscal position of other countries is comfortable. Thus, the fiscal constraint is not a factor in application of the first-pillar in these countries. The main constraint is the current socio-political norms which do not regard provision of a floor level of income as an essential element of a good society. In none of the ASEAN countries does a first pillar involving a social pension financed from budgetary revenues exist. For the lifetime poor, this is the most important pillar.

Paguman Singh. Issues And Challenges for Asean and its Member Countries. Prepared for International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) South East Asia and Pacific Region (SEAP) Vietnam. December 2007

9 Strategy and implementation issues

9.1 Funding

The implementation and monitoring of Social Protection Strategy and Policy will form part of the Government's development agenda, therefore the policy will be funded under the various aspects of social protection in the different sector programmes. Given the recognition of social protection as part of the human development pillar of the forthcoming PRSP II it should be possible to identify other international sources of financial support to supplement Government budgets.

9.2 Coordination

It is very clear that the coordination of social protection interventions rests squarely with the Government of Sierra Leone. There are several MDAs with mandates to oversee specific elements of Social Protection in the country. In order to avoid overlaps and an uncoordinated implementation of the National Social Protection Policy and Strategy, there is a need for a designated Government entity to take on the responsibility of bringing together all that the respective MDAs and CSOs are doing on social protection. That body will create the link among Government, international agencies and civil society actors. There are existing agencies with systems in place that could be built on to provide proper coordination of social protection activities in the country. For example, NaCSA. Based on the findings from the mapping, NaCSA has done a great deal of work in several areas of social protection and has Provincial and District offices and teams across the entire country. A high level governing body drawn from State and non-state organisations will be required to ensure A0 that the National Policy is kept on the Government's political and budgetary agendas, and B) to be the reporting and accountability governing body for the coordination agency and all others entrusted with implementation of social protection.

9.3 Institutional Capacity of Implementing Agencies

As revealed in the mapping report and the functional review of key Government ministries, there is a serious capacity gap in most MDAs charged with the responsibility of providing services in different aspects of social protection. There is also very low capacity on the part of most non-state partners providing social protection services. These constraints are both in terms of the limited material and human resources required to embark on a full scale and well coordinated social protection programme. However, there are existing institutions which can be strengthened to take on the implementation and monitoring of SP activities e.g NaCSA in the public sector. In the non-state sector, efforts are being made to build coordination, monitoring and advocacy networks to link NGOs and INGOS, and the creation of a platform on social protection for CSOs. These non state actors are likely to be key both to implementation of social protection and for advocacy and holding Government accountable for its implementation.

9.4 Political Stance on Social Protection

An overall social protection agenda is more a function of political will and less so (though important) of actual resource availability. To achieve income security for the poorest and most vulnerable, there is need to stimulate the political will to recognize that there are increasing numbers of people near destitution who will not be supported through traditional caring structures. It is based on this knowledge that the Government saw the need for the development of a social protection strategy and policy for Sierra Leone. In line with this thinking, such a policy must go through parliament and be legislated as law.

9.5 Social Protection in the National Planning and Budgeting Process

Sierra Leone has an extremely limited budgetary envelope as a result of low GDP and low revenue collection effort, as is common among post-conflict countries. It is also a highly aid-dependent country, with close to 50 percent of the government budget having been provided in recent years by direct donor budget support and indirect project support. By adding all items in the budget *Total Social Protection (excluding foreign contributions)* the estimate of total government spending on a broad definition of social protection is approximately US\$ 1.5 million in 2006 and US\$ 2.8 million in 2007. Government spending on education and health is substantially higher than that on social protection. Non-Salary, Non-Interest recurrent (NSNIR) expenditure of government was approximately US\$ 104.2 million in 2006. This is the most appropriate figure to judge the proportion of government expenditure on social protection as against competing priorities, excluding as it does wages to government employees and interest on government debt. Taking social protection as a percentage of this figure 1.5 percent of the 2006 recurrent NSNIR budget was allocated to social protection, 2.5 percent in 2007, with indicative figures of 5.4 percent in 2008 and 1.6 percent in 2009. The larger figure in 2008 is primarily due to higher projected government contributions to NaCSA in that year. In recent years, NSNIR spending has totalled approximately one third of total government spending and around 7 percent of GDP; the amounts predicted to be spent on social protection as a percentage of these figures are therefore much smaller again, between 0.3 to 0.6 percent of government spending between 2006 and 2009, and between 0.1 percent and 0.2 percent of GDP.

Comparisons with over countries in Africa implementing social protection suggest that Sierra Leone will need to spend from 5 to 10% of national budget on social protection. This will

need to be built up year on year, protecting prioritised groups as appropriate responses are identified and introduced²⁰.

9.6 Review and Reform of Existing Social Protection Programmes

There are several ad hoc social pilot protection programmes being implemented by MDAs and Non-Governmental Organisations, particularly in the areas of health, education, agriculture and social welfare. There is need to review and harmonise these programmes within the Government's framework for social protection. Eighty six such projects have been mapped (and there are undoubtedly more). These provide a wide range of experience from which to draw lessons and base wide scale SP responses.

9.7 Involvement of Civil Society in Design, Implementation and M & E

Monitoring of social protection interventions is very central to the success of social protection and as such should be institutionalised. A proper monitoring framework should be put in place to track the contributions of all stakeholders to ensure that the most vulnerable get maximum benefit from these interventions. The implementation, monitoring and Evaluation of the PRSP 2005-2007 were hampered by the weak or nonexistent M&E capacity at central and district levels. Although structures exist at the districts, there is a need to strengthen these structures through providing adequate training and required logistics and equipment. While there are district development and annual work plans, there are no clear M&E guidelines making routine data collection and reporting a serious challenge.

Coordination of activities at the district level is another major challenge. There are reports that some NGOs operate within some districts without the knowledge of the relevant local authorities and sector departments who are expected to keep track of their activities. This situation severely undermines the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes at the national and district level.

Monitoring of social protection measures must be organised alongside the overall monitoring of programmes and targets identified for poverty reduction in the PRSP. Social protection monitoring must be made a clear responsibility of one of the sector/thematic working groups identified in the PRSP II. Protection should also be recognised as a cross cutting issue that must be considered and acted upon and monitored in all pillars of the PRSP, alongside other vital cross cutting issues such as gender, with which protection is closely associated.

Evaluation should form part of the strategy for the implementation of the policy. The evaluation is geared towards assessing the impact of policy implementation on the vulnerable within a specified timeframe. Evaluation reports will be vital means for planning subsequent or follow-up programmes for the vulnerable. A Logical Framework or similar planning and M&E approach must be developed for the National Policy and Strategy such that its progress can be properly tracked, and reviewed against performance targets and indicators, enabling learning, adjustments and re-planning when necessary.

Civil Society Organisations are central to the monitoring framework for implementing the SP Strategy and Policy and eventually evaluating the successes and impact. CSOs have a

²⁰ Holmes R. and Jackson A. (2008) Cash transfers in Sierra Leone: Are they appropriate, affordable and feasible? Overseas Development Institute Project Briefing No 8 London – provides an analysis of social protection costs for different vulnerable groups.

responsibility to their constituents who are mostly the beneficiaries of SP programmes so they will serve as partners to ensure that the programme achieve the intended purpose.

9.8 Next steps

National Steering Committee to discuss findings and recommendations for a National Social Protection Policy described in this report, including recommendations for governance, coordination and management responsibilities for the policy and its implementation

Steering committee to report back, with recommendations, to High Level Committee that gave them their mandate and task

High Level Committee and Steering Committee to validate findings and recommendations reports – this Final Report of Policy Options and Responses plus earlier Framework and Mapping Documents and Annexes – with key stakeholders

Discuss and agree additional recommendations and comments from stakeholders, revising Final Document

High Level Committee to present Final Document to His Excellency and the Cabinet for consideration as the basis for a National Policy for Social Protection in Sierra Leone, through the Strategic Policy Unit or other appropriate channel

On approval of Final Document, re-draft into a formal policy (by Ministry of Justice or other appropriate GoSL body) for legislative processes and instruments.

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