Republic of Sierra Leone

2004 Population and Housing Census

Executive Summary - Population Projection for Sierra Leone

November 2006
FOREWORD

Government and other Stakeholders have been eagerly awaiting this report. The long interval between the 1985 and the 2004 population censuses has been mainly attributed to the 10 (ten) years brutal civil war. The 2004 census is an improvement on that of 1985 in that more questions were asked this time, and of course more information will be provided to the public after the analysis of the data.

Following the transformation of the then Central Statistics Office (CSO) which was purely a government institution, to the present Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL) a semi-autonomous Institution, the need for better Strategy for the development of National Statistics has been constantly expressed at all meetings of Stakeholders. The political will, to develop Statistics in Sierra Leone is also there.

The government is very much aware about the need for better statistics to inform the design, implementation and eventual evaluation of various development programmes for economic recovery and national development. Statistics Sierra Leone is expected to play a greater role than before in the development of National Statistics, it will have to develop standards, promote best practices and co-ordinate the entire National Statistical System to ensure that better Statistics are produced for better planning, policy formulation, programme design and development, and effective implementation.

In order to be able to do this and more, Statistics Sierra Leone will have to be strengthened in the first instance as past evidence shows that it has been weak, under-staffed, under-resourced, and therefore vulnerable.

Our expectation is that with a sound Statistics Institution in place and a reinvigorated National Statistical System that is properly co-ordinated, the government and other Stakeholders will get quality Statistics (accurate, consistent, timely, relevant etc) to track progress being made towards meeting our development goals and targets on poverty reduction, job creation, housing, agriculture production, health, education, transport and communications etc.

On behalf of Statistics Sierra Leone, I would like to express our appreciation to the Government of Sierra Leone, to the donor partners (European Union -EU), and United Nations Population Fund – UNFPA) for supporting the 2004 Census activities.

Finally, I would like to express our appreciation to my predecessor Professor Herbert B.S. Kandeh and to all individuals who played a part in the design of the census, and in the generation, processing and analysis of the data. I wish to very much recognize the important roles played by the External Consultant Professor Clifford Odimegwu and also the Local Consultants.
It is impossible to say everything at once about the 2004 population and Housing Census. We have therefore prepared this Executive Summary to serve as a guidebook for the government, the Stakeholders and the general public.

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Statistician General
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CHAPTER NINE

POPULATION PROJECTION FOR SIERRA LEONE BASED ON THE 2004 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS

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The last census conducted in 1985 provided the basis of estimating the population of Sierra Leone for an undue long period of time. The long interval between the 1985 and 2004 censuses created a paucity of data that forced various agencies to come up with estimates of various national, sub regional and sectoral population parameters. This work based on the 2004 census provides population projections for Sierra Leone at national, regional and local council/administrative levels for the period 2005-2014. The fertility levels in Sierra Leone continue to remain high and relatively stable with estimates of Total Fertility Rate decreasing slightly from 6.5 in 1974 to 6.3 in 1985 and 6.1 in 2004. On the other hand mortality levels in Sierra Leone are declining although they are still high compared to other African countries. In 1985, life expectancy for males was 37.7 years, while that of females was 40.3 years. In 2004, life expectancy improved to 47.5 years and 49.4 years for males and females respectively.

Evaluation of past age-sex population data for Sierra Leone has always shown evidence of misreporting and heaping. Therefore the Brass Logits Transformation Method was used to smooth the age sex data, which was the principal input for projecting the national population through the cohort component method. DemProj, a component of the Spectrum software was used to project the population under, high, medium and low variant assumptions. The link between DemProj and AIM (Aids Impact Model) in Spectrum made it possible to factor in the potential demographic impact of HIV/AIDS on the projected population using a set of HIV/AIDS assumptions.

The sub national population has been projected on the assumption that the observed intercensal rate of change stabilizes in the very long run period. Additionally, the Urban Rural Growth Difference (URGD) method; the assumed age specific enrolment rates; the prevailing teacher pupil ratios for the various levels (Primary, Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary); the observed age-sex headship rate; the projected working age population and the assumed future trends in age specific activity rates for the various
administrative units, were used in carrying out sub national and sectoral projections.

According to the low variant projections the population is expected to reach 5.7 million in 2010 and 6.2 million in 2014. The medium and high variants on the other hand indicate that the population will reach 6.3 million and 6.4 million respectively in 2014. Also, Freetown is projected to contain more than a million persons by 2014. Other areas of projected population concentration will continue to be Bo, Port Loko, Kenema, Kailahun, and Tonkolili each of which will contain around half a million persons by the end of the projection period. Furthermore, the urban population is projected to reach over 40 percent for periods beyond 2010. As a lingering effect of the drop in over all sex ratio, the projections further show that there will continue to be more women than men in the total urban and total rural populations.

Moreover, the total number of school age population will increase from about 762,000 in 2005 to about 1,025,000 in 2014. However the total school enrolment is projected to increase from about 557,000 in 2005 to 777,000 in 2014. Also, the total number of teachers required is expected to grow from 24,000 in 2005 to 33,000 in 2014. The projected number of households will increase from about 109,000 male headed households and 46,000 female headed households to reach 133,000 male headed households and 52,000 female headed households in 2014, engendering an increase in the number of housing requirement from 893,000 in 2005 to 1,076,000 in 2014. Also, the working age population is projected to decrease from 4.1 million to 3.6 million, with economically active population decreasing from 2.6 million to 2.2 million. The projected decreases are as a result of changes in the projected demographic composition in which the population less than 15 years increases while that for persons 15 years and over decreased slightly.

The projection results clearly show that the population will continue to grow and hence be a very critical factor that will affect development interventions. The population will continue to be youthful. This will continue to pose a major challenge for development interventions and nation building which strongly calls for concrete strategies for youth empowerment. Also increasing levels of urbanisation should attract appropriate result oriented measures for appropriate decentralised governance and service delivery. Additionally, the potential demographic impact of HIV AIDS should be a major concern and efforts should be made to slow down the impact of the disease on the future population of Sierra Leone. Finally consideration should also be given to making reproductive health services and information available and accessible to the people, along side other development interventions.