



Republic of Sierra Leone

2004 Population and Housing Census

Executive Summary - Housing Situation and Characteristics



UNFPA



SSL



EU

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.

Prof. Joseph Aruna Lawrence Kamara (PhD)
Statistician General

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE
FOREWORD.....	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
CHAPTER 6 SIERRA LEONE HOUSING SITUATION AND CHARACTERISTICS.....	1
METHODS.....	1
FINDINGS.....	2
- Type of Structure.....	2
- Materials of Construction of Roof, Walls and Floors..	2
- Repair Needs.....	3
- Housing Services and Facilities.....	3
- Occupancy Levels/Congestion.....	5
- Housing Tenure.....	5
- Energy for Cooking and Lighting.....	6
- Access to Services and Facilities.....	6
- Sources of Information.....	7
IMPLICATIONS.....	7
- Poor Quality Housing.....	8
- Inadequacy of Household Services and Facilities...8	8
- Wide Spread congestion/Overcrowded Living Conditions.....	8
- Low Levels of Energy Consumption.....	8
- Poor Management Rubbish Disposal.....	9
- Difficult Accesses to Facilities and Services.....	9
- Unbalance Housing Tenure System.....	9
- Restricted Source of Information.....	9

RECOMMENDATIONS.....	9
- National Housing Programme.....	9
- Environment Upgrading of Slums and Informal Settlement in Freetown.....	10
- Research.....	10
- Encouraging Home Ownership in the Western Area	10

CHAPTER SIX

SIERRA LEONE HOUSING SITUATION AND CHARACTERISTICS

BY:

✧ **JOSEPH L.K. MUANA**

✧ **MWALUMA A.B. GEGBE**

The Report analyses the housing Characteristics data collected during the Sierra Leone 2004 National Population and Housing Census.

The analysis of the housing characteristics data will be important for three reasons. First, it will provide, a full picture of what the housing situation is in Sierra Leone after the civil conflict. Secondly it will provide information which policy-makers can use to prepare and implement housing policies and programmes best suited to Sierra Leone. Thirdly, the results of the analysis will serve as a useful information on housing characteristics for the general public, national and international scholars, researchers and consultants, especially when prior to now information on the housing situation in Sierra Leone has been very scanty.

◇ **METHODS**

During the 2004 Census, the heads of households were asked questions on: types of structures, current repair needs of the dwelling unit, acquisition of dwelling units, types of toilet facilities, construction materials for roof, wall and floor and rubbish disposal

Questions were also asked on: sources of fuel for cooking and lighting, sources of water supply for drinking, bathing facilities, source of information and distance from home to the nearest primary school, water and health facilities.

In order to facilitate ease of analysis, the variables were re-grouped into:

- 1) Type of Structures;
- 2) Materials for construction of wall, roof and floor;
- 3) Repair Needs;
- 4) Housing Services and Facilities,
- 5) Occupancy levels/Congestion,
- 6) Housing Tenure;
- 7) Energy uses for cooking and lighting;
- 8) Access to Health Facilities Primary School and Sources of Water and
- 9) Sources of information

The description of the housing characteristics is carried out at the National, Regional and District levels. Where data are available on similar housing variables, the housing situation in 1985 is compared to the 2004 housing situation.

Due to the nature of the available data, the analysis of the type of structures was carried out only at the national and urban and rural settlements levels.

The current housing needs are also accessed using the data on dwelling characteristics.

◇ FINDINGS

1) Type of Structures:

The census result shows that at the national level, 73 and 23 percent of the households respectively live in single-unit-one-storey and multiple-unit-one-storey dwelling units. This pattern is repeated at regional and district levels.

The data collected further indicate that at the urban level, 91, 96, 95, and 97 percent of the households live in mostly single-unit-two-storey, multiple-unit-two-storey, single-unit-three-storey and multiple-unit-storey dwelling units respectively. At the rural settlement level, 70 percent of all households live in single-unit-one-storey dwelling houses at national level. At regional and district levels at least 60 percent of households living in rural areas live in single-unit-one-storey except in the western area where western rural has 42 percent and western urban has 1 percent of households living in single-unit-one-storey dwelling units.

2) Materials for Construction of Roof, Walls and Floors:

➡ *Roof :*

At the national level, 65 percent and 26 percent of households live in dwelling units that are constructed of zinc and thatch respectively.

At the regional and district levels the use of zinc and thatch as roofing materials is similar to that at the national level

➡ *Wall :*

At the national level, 37 percent, 35 percent and 17 percent of households live in dwelling units with walls constructed of mud bricks, mud and wattle and cement blocks respectively.

At regional and district levels over 80 percent of households live in dwelling units with walls constructed of mud bricks and mud and wattle.

On the other hand, in the western urban district 24 percent of the households live in dwelling units with walls constructed of zinc (pan-body).

➡ *Floor Materials:*

At the National level, 63 percent and 23 percent of the households live in dwelling units with floors constructed of mud and cement respectively.

At the regional and district levels, mud is the principal building material for floor for over 70 percent of households. However, in the western urban and rural areas, only 5 percent and 34 percent respectively of households live in dwelling units that have mud floors.

3) Repair Needs

At the National Level, data collected on repair needs show that 10 percent of households live in dwelling units that do not need repairs, 59 percent need minor repairs, 24 percent need rehabilitation and only 8 percent require reconstruction.

At the regional level, 54, 60, 63 and 57 percent of households live in dwelling units in the eastern, northern, southern and western regions respectively need minor repairs. While 39, 32, 29 and 23 percent of households live in dwelling units in the eastern, northern, southern and western regions need rehabilitation and reconstruction. At the district level, between 50 and 60 percent of households live in dwelling units in all the districts require minor repairs, over 25 percent of households live in dwelling units in all the district need rehabilitation. For all the districts, it is only in Kailahun district that 21 percent of households live in dwelling units that need reconstruction. In all other districts, reconstruction needs is below 10 percent of households.

4) Housing Services and Facilities,

➡ *Sources of Drinking Water:*

At the National Level, 34 percent of the households obtain their drinking water from rivers and streams, 35 percent from wells and 6 percent from pipes-in-door and public taps

At the regional level, 44 percent, 32 percent and 23 percent of the households in eastern region depend on wells of all types, rivers/streams and pipe-borne water sources respectively.

On the other hand, in the northern region, 42 percent, 49 percent and 8 percent of households depend on wells of all types, rivers/streams and pipe-borne water sources respectively

In the southern region, the situation is where 46 percent, 40 percent and 13 percent of households obtain their drinking water from wells of all types, rivers/streams and pipe-borne water sources respectively.

It is only in the western area that the water situation is satisfactory. At this level 72 percent, 21 percent and 6 percent obtain their drinking water from pipe-borne, wells of all types and rivers/streams respectively.

At district level, wells of all types and rivers and streams serve as the main sources of drinking water. This is in contrast to western urban and rural districts where pipe-borne water serves as the principal sources.

➡ *Types of Toilet Facilities:*

The sanitation situation in Sierra Leone is unsatisfactory. At the national level pit latrines (62 percent) and bush/rivers (31 percent) serve as the main toilet facilities. Only 5 percent of households use VIP and flush toilets located inside or outside of the dwelling unit.

At regional and district levels, the pattern of use of toilet facilities is similar to that at the national level; except in the western urban where 18 percent of households use VIP and flush toilets as sanitation facilities.

➡ *Kinds of Bathing Facilities*

At the national level, only 4 percent of the households bathe inside their dwelling units, 42 percent in permanent structure outside of the dwelling units 38 percent in make shift structures outside the building and 16 percent of the households have no recognizable bathing facilities.

At regional, over 90 percent of households do not have bathing facilities inside the dwelling unit except in the western area where 14 percent of households bathe inside the dwelling unit. At district, the same pattern is common in all districts except at the western urban with 15 percent of households bathing inside the house.

➡ *Means of Rubbish Disposal*

At national level, 54 percent and 31 percent of the households deposit their rubbish in a dustbin and anywhere; and 4 percent, 6 percent and 3 percent of households collect, burn and bury their rubbish respectively.

At regional levels, this pattern of rubbish disposal is common in the eastern, northern and southern regions except western area where 9 percent of the households collect their rubbish.

5) Occupancy Levels/ Congestion

Number of Households, sizes and rooms available

According to the 2004 National Population and Housing Census, there are 819,848 Households in Sierra Leone. At regional level, northern province (261,204) has the highest number of households while western area (164,198) has the least number of households. At district level, there are more households in western urban (134,138) than any other district. The average household size is 6.0 for national level, but varies by region and district by ± 1 . In terms of persons per household, the 2004 data show that at the national level only 14.7 percent of households consist of one or two persons. Nearly half of all households, 49.4 percent, consist of 3 to 6 persons. In contrast, the largest size households of 7 persons and over, constitute 35.9 percent of all households. Western Urban however, has significantly higher proportions of households with one or two persons, (21.4 percent), but a smaller percentage of households which have 7 or more persons (31.9 percent).

Level of overcrowding is determined on the assumption that overcrowding occurs where the occupancy rate is greater than 2 persons per room. On the basis of this assumption, 47.4 percent of all households in Sierra Leone, and 48.9 percent in Western Urban live in occupancy rates of more than 2 persons per room. This implies that overcrowding is widespread. Over half of all overcrowded households live with 3 to 6 persons per room, and about 20.0 percent are in rooms with 10 or more persons.

6) Housing Tenure

Owner, rental and employer provided tenure systems operate in Sierra Leone but they do not operate uniformly throughout the country.

At the national level 75 percent of the households are owner-occupiers, 19 percent of the households are rental occupiers and only 6 percent of the households are benefiting from Employer provided dwelling units.

There are more owner-occupiers in the regions than in the western area and at the district level, western urban has about 59 percent of the households who are rental occupiers.

7) Energy for Cooking and Lighting

➡ *Energy for Cooking*

At national level, 87 percent and 7 percent of the households use wood and charcoal respectively as the principal sources of energy for cooking.

This pattern of fuel use for cooking is common at regional and district levels.

Between the 1985 and 2004 censuses, there were drops in the use of electricity (0.30 – 0.15 percent), Kerosene (4.40 – 4.22 percent) and wood (93.20 – 87.04 percent) for cooking at national level. This drop is reflected at the Provincial and District levels. Charcoal use increased from 0.80 percent in 1985 to 7.52 percent in 2004.

➡ *Energy for Lighting*

At the national level, 86 percent of the households use kerosene for lighting.

At regional, 4 percent, 5 percent, 10 percent of households use electricity for lighting in the eastern, southern and western regions respectively. Only 0.04 of households use electricity for lighting. The use of electricity for lighting is significant only in Kenema (9 percent), Bo (12 percent) and the Western Urban (12 percent).

In the rest of the country, kerosene is the main source of energy for lighting.

Between 1985 and 2004 censuses, electricity consumption for lighting decreased from 9 percent to 4 percent. At regional levels, Southern and Eastern Provinces show increases of about 4 percent and 2 percent respectively, while Northern Province and Western area show decreases of 2 percent and 38 percent respectively.

8) Access to Services and Facilities

➡ *Health Facility*

At national level, 3 percent of households have health facilities on their premises, 47 percent walk between half a mile (0.8km) to a mile (1.61km), 24 percent walk between one mile (1.61km) and less than five miles (8km) and 26 have to walk five miles (8km) or more to the nearest health facilities.

Access to health facility varies between the Western Area and the eastern, southern and northern regions.

In the Eastern, Northern and Southern Provinces, 31, 25 and 28 percent respectively of the households are less than half a mile (0.8km) distance from a health facility compared to 59 percent in the western area. At the extreme, only 3 percent of the household have to walk at least 5 miles (8km) to the nearest health facility in western area; 26, 36 and 32 percent of the household in eastern, northern and southern provinces respectively have to walk for more 5 miles (8km)

At the district level between 50 and 60 percent of the households walk 1–5 miles (1.6km – 8km) to access a health facility. The situation is worse in the Koinadugu district where 58 percent of the households have to walk for more than 5 miles (8km) to the nearest health centre.

➡ *Water Sources*

Access to water sources is not much of a problem.

At national, 83 percent of the households have water facilities either within the premises or have to walk less than half a mile (0.8km) to the nearest water source.

This statement is also true for both regional and district levels

➡ *Primary Schools*

At national level, 64 percent of the households' access to the nearest primary school is less than half a mile (0.8km) distance.

At regional level, 80 percent, 62 percent, 60 percent and 59 percent of households in the western, eastern, southern and northern regions have to walk less than half a mile to the nearest primary school.

At district level, 17 percent, 20 percent and 24 percent of households in Bonthe, Pujehun, and Koinadugu districts respectively have to walk more 5 miles (8km) to the nearest school.

9) Sources of Information

At the national level, 49 and 48 percent of the households obtain their information by word of mouth and by radio respectively. At Provincial and District levels, sources of information are similar to those at national level.

◇ **IMPLICATIONS**

The analysis of the preceding sections implies the following housing situation:

➡ **Poor Quality Housing**

The majority of the households live in dwelling units, particularly those at regional and district levels, whose walls are constructed of mud, mud blocks and mud and wattle. Considering the high amount of rainfall experienced in Sierra Leone, these building materials disintegrate under the impact of the rain, unless they are regularly maintained, and this is not always the case. In Freetown dwelling units using corrugated iron sheet as wall and roof materials, Pan-body, do not offer security against the weather elements, and comfortable in door environment. The mud floors are also normally very cold and unhygienic especially for playing children.

➡ **Inadequacy of Household Services and Facilities**

The water and sanitation situation is far from satisfactory through out the country. Pit latrines and bush/river serve as the main sanitation systems.

The water supply situation is no better. Throughout the country only 6 percent of the households obtain drinking water from pipe borne water supply system, while in the Provinces 69 percent of the households obtain their drinking water from rivers and streams and wells of all types.

In the Western Urban, the water supply situation is comparatively better. In the Western Urban 28 percent of the households obtain their drinking water from pipe borne water supply system.

➡ **Widespread Congested / Overcrowded Living Conditions**

Considering the fact that the majority of the dwelling units are of 1 - 2 bed rooms, and the national average household size is 6 persons per household, it can be concluded that congestion is widespread throughout the country but more especially in the Northern Province where average household size is above the national average of 6 persons per household.

➡ **Low Levels of Energy Consumption**

Energy consumption levels are very low. In fact there has been substantial drop in energy consumption levels for lighting throughout the country. Electricity services are available in only Bo, Kenema and Freetown. In the rest of the provinces kerosene continues to be the principal source of energy for lighting. Wood continues to be the main source of energy for cooking.

➡ **Poor Management of Rubbish Disposal**

Deposition of rubbish, especially in the Western Urban is done in a haphazard manner. The majority of the households deposit their rubbish anywhere and in a dust bin. The haphazard pattern of rubbish disposal in especially Freetown largely explains why the streets are littered with high heaps of rubbish, which are homes of rodents, mosquitoes, flies and other carriers of diseases.

➡ **Difficult Access to Facilities and Services**

Access to health, primary school and water facilities are still major problems in Koinadugu, Bonthe and Pujehun districts where more households have to walk at least five miles to access them. This could be the reason behind the high mortality rate and high illiteracy rate in these districts.

➡ **Unbalanced Housing Tenure System**

There is dichotomy between owner and rental housing tenure system. At the national level, there are more owner than rental occupiers. This pattern is repeated at the regional and district levels, except in the Western Area, Western Rural and Western Urban levels, where there are more rental than owner occupiers. Employer provided dwelling units is negligible. This implies that whereas the majority of the households at the regional and district levels can manage to provide shelter for themselves, those in the Western rural and urban cannot.

➡ **Restricted Sources of Information**

The majority of the households obtain their information from radios and by Word of mouth because these information are normally communicated in the local languages; the high illiteracy rate, among others, makes people shy away from print media.

◇ **RECOMMENDATIONS**

➡ **National Housing Programme:**

Inspite of the fact that Government faces huge backlog of current housing needs and substantial quantity of recurrent housing needs, there is no housing programme to indicate how Government proposes to tackle the housing problem it faces. There is therefore the clear need for the preparation of a National Housing Programme (NHP). The NHP should be developed at the national, regional, district and residency levels (urban and rural) and income groups.

➡ **Environmental upgrading of Slums and Informal settlements in Freetown**

Freetown has over 27 slum and informal settlements. Of these, those at the foreshore, hillsides and slopes of stream valleys are growing rapidly as more and more rural poor continue to migrate to the city. If Government is to achieve:

Goal 7 Targets 10

Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

and Goal 7 Target 11

By 2020 to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

of the Millennium Development Goals,

the Government will need to upgrade existing slum and informal settlements through the provision of basic infrastructural facilities of water, sanitation, education, health affordable housing and granting of security of tenure.

➡ **Research**

Three major areas of Research are recommended:

- Research into the production and use of local building materials such clay bricks and stabilized soil blocks
- Research into the types and cost of locally manufactured and imported building materials and how the costs are affecting construction costs and affordability of the dwelling units produced by the urban poor in the Provincial Urban centres in general and in Freetown in particular.
- Research into the possibilities of improving the quality of thatch as roofing material.

➡ **Encouraging Home Ownership in the Western Area,**

To encourage home ownership in the Western Urban in particular, Government should sell the Low Cost Houses, the OAU Villas and Government Quarters to Sierra Leoneans on Mortgage basis. The funds so derived should entrusted to

the National Insurance and Social Security Trust (NASSIT) to develop additional dwelling houses for sale on mortgage basis.

Private Housing developers should be encouraged to develop Housing Estates for all income levels nation wide. The dwelling units so produced should be for sale on mortgage basis.