



MANIFESTO 2018

AN AGENDA FOR JOB CREATION AND NATIONAL PROSPERITY

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MY VISION FOR THE PEOPLE OF SIERRA LEONE

On the eve of the 2018 Presidential and General Elections, our beloved country, Sierra Leone, is at a crossroads and in serious crisis. It is a crisis created within just ten years through the mismanagement, incompetence, rampant corruption and poor leadership of the All Peoples Congress (APC) Government. The painful result is that today Sierra Leone, one of the potentially rich countries in Africa, has gone from being ranked at the bottom quartile of the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) along with some of the poorest and most corrupt nations on earth to being a country trembling on the brink of a failed state and a dystopia.

It is with humility, therefore, that I present and offer myself and my services to the people of Sierra Leone as Presidential Candidate of the National Grand Coalition (NGC) Party for the 2018 Presidential and General Elections. As your Presidential Candidate, I am determined to ensure that we CHANGE Sierra Leone from being “run as a private business” to a country that innovates and competes with other emerging economies.

But for me to be able to do that and rise up to your expectations, I want to offer and sign with you, the people of Sierra Leone, my Vision of Hope, Opportunity and Transformation, solidly supported by a robust commitment to seek the wellbeing of the people of Sierra Leone. Hope, because there is a new awakening to the need for change from the current pessimism of our existence to optimism for better things to come; Opportunity, because my Leadership of the National Grand Coalition Party comes with the knowledge and understanding of the international global system as well as the partnerships needed to effect the kind of Transformation of our country that could create wealth and thousands of jobs for our people, particularly the 70% unemployed young people.

In the 2018 ELECTIONS MANIFESTO of the National Grand Coalition, we are offering you the people of Sierra Leone, a programme that starts off by recognizing the extreme poverty, diseases, high unemployment, injustice and uncertainties our country suffers today as a consequence of the abandonment of the basic principle of social contract. The Vision and Social Contract we are offering to the people of Sierra Leone is therefore backed up in the Manifesto by a credible and realistic Program of Activities we have committed ourselves to implement during the first five years of our Administration.

In implementing the program of activities, the National Grand Coalition Party will seek to reunite the country, salvage and revitalize the economy and strengthen democratic principles, rule of law, and justice for all by strengthening public institutions for health, education, security and governance; vigorously applying the rule of law and enforcement of order; making significant investments in human capital and skills formation beyond just access to education; further deepening systemic competitiveness through expansion of carefully selected infrastructure and energy investments to support more rapid growth and industrialization with each project subjected to sustainability and value-for-money tests; and accelerating structural reforms and economic diversification.

The 2018 Elections Manifesto of the National Grand Coalition is an embodiment of the promise and commitments I am making to you to build a society that works and gives each and every one of us the opportunity to improve our lives; a country that works for us and our families, not just

for the rich and powerful or the privileged few. I am highly committed and determined to be the President of all Sierra Leoneans whatever their region, tribe, gender, status, religion or social and economic background. I will serve you all. I will champion your cause and every day I wake up as President, my first concern will be what is best for the country we all love and what I can do to improve the lives of its people. I have an unshakeable faith that our country, the former “Athens of West Africa”, under the leadership of the National Grand Coalition, has a bright future that will be secured by the enterprise, creativity and hard work of its people.

In order to deliver on that promise and the commitment, I call on you the people to stand by and with me in demanding that the 2018 election campaign must be on what the real issues are: the declining economy, health care, education, security, etc., and not the ego of individuals and their personal interests. I call on all of you to support me and the National Grand Coalition Party so that together, we can build a country where, if you show up, step up, and work hard, you will have your fair share of its wealth, and be fairly rewarded for your hard work; a country in which hard work pays, and cutting corners does not; a country in which, no matter which tribe or where you come from, you will be rewarded based on merit, not on whom you know; and a country in which every young person can hope, and aspire, and reach his or her fullest potential, right here in Sierra Leone.

I call on all Sierra Leoneans at home and abroad, young and old, men and women, able or with disability to own the 2018 Elections Manifesto of the National Grand Coalition and to share and own the sense of responsibility and purpose for what the nation becomes in the next five years. As your leader, my single-minded objective will be to serve. I believe that in our 2018 Elections Manifesto, the NGC has presented a credible Vision and a program of activities as a formidable vehicle for our people’s new forward movement towards better days to come. I present it to you the people with a simple request: that you believe in it, get ready to mobilize and vote massively for me and my p a r t y , t h e National Grand Coalition Party.

UNITED WE STAND. WE STAND UNITED

Dr. Kande Kollah Yumkella

Presidential Candidate

National Grand Coalition Party

SIERRA LEONE 2018 ELECTIONS

CHAIRMAN AND LEADER'S REMARKS

For the first time in the history of Sierra Leone, since the country gained independence in 1961, politicians from across the political divide have come together to form a broad alliance of liberal philosophies and values, which is a break away from the traditional All People's Congress (APC) Red and the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) Green politics. We have courageously formed the National Grand Coalition (NGC) based on the values of progressive liberal democratic freedoms, which we the founders believe will energize and drive entrepreneurship, a vibrant and diversified free market economy, innovation, wealth creation, prosperity, and social and economic inclusiveness.

On 18 October 2017, the NGC received its full certificate of registration from the country's Political Parties Registration Commission to operate as a political party, and to organize, mobilize and prepare for campaigning for the 2018 Presidential and General Elections. Those elections are due on 7 March 2018, a timeline that is going to focus the minds of the Party's numerous supporters all across the country. We are confident that we can break the suffocating stranglehold that APC and SLPP have had on the politics of Sierra Leone even as the country's economy teeters on the brink of bankruptcy and poverty worsens.

As a demonstration of our commitment and determination to bring meaningful CHANGE to our beloved country, the National Grand Coalition is proud to present its 2018 ELECTIONS MANIFESTO to you the people of Sierra Leone. The Manifesto is a document the implementation of which is focused on bringing CHANGE to Sierra Leone as a society that will uphold the dignity of all its people irrespective of their background and one that would give the citizenry the Hope and Opportunity to fully participate in and benefit from the Transformation of the country's democratic and socio-economic development processes that have a direct bearing on the quality and standard of living.

To lead that CHANGE, the National Grand Coalition is blessed and privileged to have Alhaji Dr. Kandeh Kolleh Yumkella as its Presidential Candidate and Member of Parliament for Constituency 062 in the Kambia District. The Party and its entire membership and supporters believe that only a person of Dr. Yumkella's experience, skills, knowledge, capacity and ability stands a chance of leading the country into a new era of economic transformation, growth, job creation and social Justice. Dr. Yumkella has exemplified his leadership skills far beyond domestic politics and after thirty years in the United Nations, he became a household name at home and internationally. With well over a decade's experience in development work, Dr. Kandeh Yumkella has worked side by side with a cross section of decision makers providing support and directions across Africa, in ways that improved trade capacity, poverty reduction and international cooperation, often bringing to his own homeland the best of everything. Dr. Kandeh Yumkella lives and breaths success. He knows what is success and knows how to deliver it. Most important, he knows how to prioritize and simplify complex issues which has become part of his forte.

In recent years he has used his influence to facilitate development activities in Sierra Leone which include the mini hydro plant at Gbankasoka for the people of Port Loko District; another

hydropower project at Bikongo for the people of Moyamba and its Njala University; Fisheries Training Institute to replace one destroyed during the civil war; eleven agro-processing Growth Centers in almost all regions of the country with the biggest centre being in the Southern capital city of Bo to help transform and create a gainful trade environment for the vast pool of unemployed and under-employed youths and everyone that wants to receive vocational education. Dr. Kandeh Yumkella has also championed energy efficiency in Sierra Leone and introduced solar power in his small village of Kychom in the Kambia District as well as a Biomass Power Plant in the same village that can generate electricity with discarded rice husk and generate about 32 Kilowatts of renewable energy to supply 250 homes.

The National Grand Coalition believes in a united and prosperous Sierra Leone where citizens live in peace and security and where there are opportunities for everyone to succeed, not just for the few in power, and governance and their cronies because a nation is only successful when economic development is inclusive and reaches the disadvantaged and hard to reach segments of its society. The ongoing suffering of Sierra Leoneans and the country's ranking in the United Nations Human Development Index will only CHANGE under the leadership of Dr. Yumkella and Government of the National Grand Coalition Party.

In a country where social cleavages seldom cross-cut, it is refreshing to have a candidate in the person of Dr. Yumkella whose political appeal cuts across parties, regions, ethnicity, religion and other solidarities. The APC and SLPP, as presently constituted, will be hard pressed to settle on a Presidential Candidate who is above, or can rise above, the many parochial divisions that continue to prevent Sierra Leoneans from coming forward and transforming their country. National cohesion and the forging of a new national character that transcends primordial loyalties is best pursued by a leader who transcends the ethno-regional polarization that we must overcome, if our country is to progress. That Leader is Alhaji Dr. Kandeh Kolleh Yumkella whom the National Grand Coalition is presenting to bring the CHANGE the people of Sierra Leone so urgently need today to rescue them out of their present poverty and massive suffering after ten years of APC Party incompetence, mismanagement and endemic corruption.

UNITED WE STAND: WE STAND UNITED

Dr. Dennis A. Bright

Chairman and Leader

National Grand Coalition Party

SIERRA LEONE, 2018 ELECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The APC Government is leaving behind most of our institutions and infrastructure in a terrible state of decay and shame; there is increasing insecurity and the quality of life of the vast majority of our people has unacceptably deteriorated; our collective image and national esteem has plummeted whilst the economy has sunk rapidly into vicious depths due to incompetence and mismanagement. At the same time, endemic corruption has kept serious investors at bay as the continuing tragicomic national survival questions the ability of existing politicians to find solutions to the huge problems Sierra Leone faces today.

Our political and economic scenes are bankrupt and visibly mired in what looks increasingly like terminal impotence. The depth of the anguish is etched on the faces of the beleaguered masses who are pessimistic about the future, angry about the present and therefore desperate for a new political party with a leader to champion their cause. The National Grand Coalition is that Party and Alhaji Dr. Kandeh Kolleh Yumkella is that Leader and Champion.

Our collective vision and commitment to the people of Sierra Leone has been defined and consigned in our Party's 2018 ELECTIONS MANIFESTO which we have the honor and privilege to present to the people of Sierra Leone. Our principal goal is to CHANGE and build a new Sierra Leonean society that upholds the dignity of all its people irrespective of their background and one that would give the citizenry the Hope and Opportunity to fully participate in and benefit from the Transformation of the country's democratic and socio-economic development processes that have a direct bearing on their quality and standard of living. The National Grand Coalition seeks to reunite the country, salvage and revitalize the economy and strengthen democratic principles, rule of law, and justice for all by:

- Strengthening public institutions for Health, Education, Security and Governance;
- Vigorously applying the Rule of Law and Enforcement of Order;
- Making significant Investments in Human Capital and Skills Formation beyond just access to education;
- Further deepening systemic competitiveness through expansion of carefully selected infrastructure and energy investments to support more rapid growth and industrialization with each project subjected to sustainability and value-for-money tests; and
- Accelerating Structural Reforms and Economic Diversification

The carefully articulated Program of Activities in this Manifesto consists of measures to promote medium to long-term structural change to expand the economy and spur the non-mining sector and increase exports. The returns from the extractive sector and national capital will be re-invested in such a manner as to diversify the economy, and create a strong service, agribusiness and manufacturing base. This we believe will create many jobs, thus providing opportunities for our young people to earn a living and lift themselves out of poverty.

Our manifesto advocates for all citizens to hold government accountable because the National Grand Coalition believes in the bigger picture and greater good of a united and prosperous Sierra Leone where every citizen can afford the basic necessities of life; our children can receive quality

education; the population can have access to affordable and quality health care, and local government and public institutions function the way they should.

In short, our 2018 Manifesto underscores the NGC's belief in a united and prosperous Sierra Leone where citizens live in peace and security and where there are opportunities for everyone to succeed, not just for the few in power and governance and their cronies, because a nation is only successful when economic development is inclusive and reaches the disadvantaged segments of its society. The ongoing suffering of Sierra Leoneans and the country's ranking in the United Nations Human Development Index will only change under the leadership and government of the National Grand Coalition Party, which is committed to giving Hope, creating Opportunities and Transforming a country left totally broken and divided along tribal and regional lines by the APC Government.

THEME 1: REDUCING POVERTY AND FOSTERING INCLUSIVE GROWTH

This year marks 16 years since the declaration of the end of the eleven years civil war in Sierra Leone. By the end of the war, half of the country's population had been displaced. As a nation, we recorded negative growth throughout the war years and had zero or minimal exports. Successive governments, in collaboration with international development partners, made efforts to restore peace, democratic governance and revive the economy. However, today, under the All People's Congress (APC) Party, our nation has been plunged into an unprecedented economic crisis: economic growth has been sluggish; the exchange rate has considerably deteriorated; fiscal indiscipline has been rampant; external debt stock is out of control; and audit recommendations have been systematically disregarded with impunity. The APC Government's *Agenda for Prosperity* and its precursor, the *Agenda for Change* have only succeeded in working for the privileged few while the vast majority of our people continue to wallow and suffer in poverty. Cosmetic changes and ad hoc pronouncements on critical national development issues have not advanced our country's economic growth and development.

Thus, the APC Government is leaving behind most of our institutions and infrastructure in a terrible state of decay. There is increasing insecurity and the quality of life of the vast majority of our people has deteriorated; our collective image and national esteem has plummeted whilst the economy has sunk rapidly into vicious depths due to incompetence and mismanagement. At the same time, endemic corruption has kept serious investors at bay as the continuing national survival questions the ability of existing politicians to find solutions to the huge problems Sierra Leone faces today. Our political and economic scenes are bankrupt and visibly mired in what looks increasingly like terminal impotence. The depth of the anguish is etched on the faces of the beleaguered masses who are pessimistic about the future, angry about the present and desperate for a champion of their cause.

It is this cry of the suffering masses that has inspired and given birth to the National Grand Coalition (NGC) Party. Our priority as the new Party, poised to take the reins of Government in 2018, is therefore to salvage the country's economy which has collapsed under the Ernest Koroma-led APC Government, move speedily to alleviate the suffering of our people and put the country on the path to inclusive growth and sustainable development.

1.1. Human Capital Development

In any country, the general rate of economic growth and development is influenced by the level of productive factors. One factor associated with development or underdevelopment is human capital. Moreover, the status of health in a country is recognized as an integral component of the human capital that is necessary for economic growth. Good health raises human capital levels and thus the level of economic productivity of individuals and a country's economic growth rate. However, under the APC government, Human Capital became a huge constraint for Sierra Leone as indicated by the enrollment pattern of primary, secondary and tertiary education levels and attainment patterns across the country whilst in the area of health the incidences of poor health and the levels of chronic illnesses in the country have in turn constrained the use of human capital for sustained economic activity.

Health

Sierra Leone has one of the worst health care delivery systems in the world. It also ranks as one of the worst places to be born or to give birth, with a maternal mortality ratio of 1,165 per 100,000 live births and under 5 mortality rate of 156 per 1,000 live births. Sierra Leoneans die from easily preventable diseases due largely to the absence of adequate diagnostic facilities, poor nursing care, sub-standard or fake drugs and the high cost of medical care. A majority of the causes of illnesses in Sierra Leone are preventable with most deaths attributable to malaria, nutritional deficiencies, pneumonia, anaemia and tuberculosis. Diarrhea diseases and acute respiratory infections are also major causes of outpatient attendance and illness.

Most of the medical facilities are under-staffed and under-equipped. There has been little or no improvement in the maternal and child mortality rates that were supposed to be affected by the free health care program. This has been mainly due to corruption in the system.

Sierra Leone has a health care delivery system that cannot boast of many of the basic facilities needed for effective health care. There are no facilities for high level diagnostics such as MRI scanning, no oncology (cancer) unit, no cardiology unit, etc. As a result, patients requiring anything more than basic diagnostics have to be taken abroad. There is also absence of an effective ambulance service.

There is a severe shortage of qualified medical personnel, and very few specialists, most of whom are based in the Western Area, while a considerable number of trained and qualified nurses remain unemployed. In addition to these factors, the existing hospitals are not efficiently run due to the over-centralization of the system and a Health Commission that is disempowered and side-lined. Basic necessities and amenities in the form of transportation and accommodation remain inadequate.

Goal

To develop a health care delivery system that is effective, safe and capable of providing good-quality personal and non-personal care to those that need it, when needed, with minimum waste.

Strategy

Provide a nationwide health care system with emphasis on preventive health measures including

improved nutrition and public health education and surveillance aimed at a drastic reduction in infant and maternal mortality rates as well as in communicable, non-communicable and lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, strokes and cancer.

To achieve its Goal, the NGC commits to:

- Deliver a universal health care system;
- Set up a sustainable healthcare financing system that optimizes all sources of health sector funding;
- Improve conditions of service for all health workers to enhance retention and attract those currently working abroad while providing a special incentive scheme for those in remote areas;
- Establish a centre of excellence for diagnostics and treatment at a strategic location in the country;
- Promote telemedicine by providing internet enabled communication in all hospitals to enable medical personnel to seek expert guidance and support from specialists across the country and abroad;
- Strengthen professional and regulatory bodies such as the Medical and Dental Association to make them become more functional;
- Improve Health Information Systems (HIS) for successful health sector planning and program design;
- Construct a state of the art teaching and referral hospital for training medical personnel, upgrade the medical school and support the Sierra Leone College of Health Specialists to ensure the proposed postgraduate training of health professionals takes off and is sustained;
- Empower the Sierra Leone Health Commission to take over the role of recruiting and posting medical personnel from the Public Service Commission and the Ministry of Health respectively;
- Ensure that, as a matter of urgency, all qualified nurses that wish to, are absorbed into the national health service; and
- Restructure the Ministry of Health to ensure it focusses on policy formulation and oversight.
- Upgrade all tertiary, secondary and primary hospitals in the country to ensure they are properly staffed and have all the necessary equipment to carry out their work efficiently.
- Foster public-private partnerships for the provision of good quality diagnostic, paramedic and ambulance services.
- Ensure that the teaching hospital and all other hospitals in the country operate under independent management boards without interference from the Ministry;
- Empower the Pharmacy Board and the National Standards Bureau to combat the importation and sale of fake and substandard drugs in the country;

- Support research into the practice of traditional medicine and the efficacy of herbs and roots; and
- Strengthen the disease surveillance, outbreak preparedness and response capacity of the health system.

Education

There has been a complete failure to prioritize education as a tool for national development, and as a result, Sierra Leone's educational system is in a state of crisis. The expected years of schooling are only 9.5; adult literacy rate (percentage of ages 15 and older) is 48.1%; the primary school dropout rate is 52.2% and school attendance and completion rates for girls is abysmally low. There are very few vocational schools and the quality of higher education has dropped considerably below that of other countries.

Though the Education Ministry receives about 20% of the non-salary recurrent budget, 76% of this is allocated to tertiary and vocational education, with 82% of this allocation being tuition subsidies for tertiary education. Very little (less than 2%) is spent on vocational education.

The critical challenges in our education sector include limited access to education and limited learning and teaching materials. Higher education has also faced serious challenges which include political interference, unproductive structural organizations, skewed governance, lack of accountability, and a significant drop in standards.

Trained and qualified teachers in schools are in short supply (about 40% of the teaching force is untrained and unqualified) and are unhappy; learning materials are inadequate; the overall performance of students in public examinations remains poor; and the Inspectorate Division which is the quality control unit of the Ministry of Education does not function well. Even more worrisome is the fact that many teachers, even those who may have taught for three or more years, are not on the payroll. Examination malpractices have become the order of the day, thereby creating doubt as to the quality of products, even the good ones.

Additional challenges facing the Education Sector is the paucity of infrastructure, as well as inadequate and substandard facilities where they exist at all and poor management of the Ministry itself. These have led to the shift system in many schools that was meant to be an emergency solution at the end of the civil war becoming a permanent feature, resulting in low contact hours. Because very little attention is paid to skills training, only 6% of youth have ever served apprenticeships and there is generally a missing nexus between educational training and the job market.

Goal

To give develop an inclusive and quality education that will nurture a globally competitive workforce that is attractive to investors, affordable, accessible and available to all, while at the same time being responsive and relevant to the needs of our society and individuals.

Strategy

Immediately declare an education emergency as a major priority upon assuming governance in order to effect a paradigm shift in the structure and content of the nation's education system from merely passing examinations to building character, nurturing values, and raising literate, confident, and engaged citizens who can think critically.

The core elements of the NGC Education Program shall be:

- Re-organize the Governance structure of the Ministry of Education for better performance into two distinct divisions - Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education; and Technical, Vocational, Adult and Higher Education;
- Develop a special incentive scheme for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) teachers and teachers in remote areas;
- Promote Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) by mainstreaming Nursery and Kindergarten Education into the national education system, training of teachers and encouraging the private sector to participate in providing nursery and kindergarten education;
- Introduce free and compulsory education at the primary level;
- Support feeding programs in all primary schools;
- Gradually build school infrastructure with all relevant facilities and phase out the two shift system of education;
- Implement a Nation-wide Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) project in schools;
- Explore the possibility of re-introducing civic education, including life skills, knowledge, attitude and behavioral change programs into the school curriculum;
- Reactivate and capacitate a curriculum development institute charged with the responsibility of constantly reviewing and upgrading schools curriculum with oversight provided by a board made up of representatives from universities.
- Work towards creating a digital and E-learning environment for education at all levels. Meanwhile restructure the current textbook programme to improve efficiency and cost effectiveness;
- Ensure adequate facilities and funding are provided for education of Persons With Disabilities (PWD);
- Build the capacity of the Inspectorate Division in the Education Ministry to provide effective monitoring of primary and secondary education in the country;
- Depoliticize tertiary education and devolve authority to college administrations;
- Encourage universities to eliminate payment for application forms by introducing on-line application and a minimal processing fee;
- Refurbish existing technical and vocational education institutions and establish new ones to ensure at least one exists in all district headquarter towns;

- Provide preferential support for girls pursuing science courses in tertiary institutions;
- Establish a Higher Education Loans Boards to handle the provision of loans, bursaries and scholarships to TVET and University students, and ensure awards are given purely on merit;
- Review and rationalize Tertiary Education Curricula to reflect the national manpower needs and employment opportunities;
- Establish formal linkages between the Private Sector, Academia and Government to solve real life issues including linking Research and Analysis to important national issues and harnessing expertise in the universities to support an industrialization strategy;
- Ensure that the MEST has the capacity to handle issues related to private educational institutions, with a view to assist them with their work and monitor standards.
- Within one year, Parliament will pass the Education Integrity Act. This Act shall target education officials involved in immoral acts, e.g. principals who harbor ghost teachers, teachers/ lecturers who take bribes for grades or harass female students and lecturers with fake degrees.

1.2. Creating Jobs and Empowering Youths

Youths (aged between 15 and 35 years) account for a third of the country's population and over 60% of them (2 million) are unemployed—one of the highest rates in West Africa. Rural youth who are mostly farmers face serious challenges, including lack of inputs, financing and technology. Urban youth, comprising Early School Leavers and illiterate youth are mostly engaged in artisan and small-scale business activities, also face many challenges. Many graduates are unemployed and lack the productive skills required in the job market with only 6% of youth having ever served apprenticeships. As they can hardly find jobs more than three years after graduation, many of them resort to spending their days in Ataya bases while others engage in anti-social activities.

With so many youths unemployed, there is a potential threat of an amalgamation of youth's disaffection, chronic poverty and high cost of living that could lead to instability in the country. The NGC party shall focus on education and skills development in solving the long-standing issues of poverty, unemployment and gender inequality. Sierra Leone possesses great potential for job creation and growth, but lacks the institutional capacity to harness labour and convert the potential it possesses into decent and productive jobs. Persistent problems of unemployment have plagued the country for decades and continue to negatively affect its stability and development. We will allocate funding for the implementation of strategies on reducing poverty and improving employment, specifically generating awareness about decent work and putting in place mechanisms to reduce youth unemployment.

This approach will require the NGC to focus on education and skills development as it will play a key role in solving the long-standing issues of poverty, unemployment and gender inequality. It will build the capacity of youth to take on more active roles in our country's future and its development.

Goal

To provide decent and productive jobs for youths that will result in a drastic reduction of their rate of unemployment.

Strategy

To empower youths in both rural and urban areas to be gainfully employed and able to contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic development of the country and to participate in national development decision-making processes.

The commitments of the NGC Party to the young people of Sierra Leone are to:

- Rationalise and consolidate institutions for promoting the welfare of the youth.
- Establish a sustainable National Youth Service Scheme that will involve tertiary education graduates being posted to a district other than their home district for a year of national service. This will promote internships to enhance the capacities of graduates and cater for various classes of youths. It will also enhance national cohesion by creating an appreciation and understanding of cultures other than their own among youths.
- Establish a Youth Enterprise Fund for capacity building of youths and supporting entrepreneurship.
- Develop a programme that will link training and skills building to jobs. It will involve youths, including those in Ataya bases, in urban renewal programmes for the improvement of roads, drainages, bridges, general sanitation and environmental management.
- Establish youth vocational training centres in every district so that young people can learn various skills.
- Implement a Youth in Affordable Housing Scheme (YAHS). The YAHS will be both a social housing and a youth jobs and employment scheme. This scheme will be launched in all Districts. It will involve placing skilled youths in the housing construction industry into companies by trade (block making, masonry, carpentry, steel works, etc.).
- Work with artisans and tradesmen to establish a national apprenticeship scheme for training young artisans.
- Implement a policy that ensures businesses established by young entrepreneurs under the Youth Enterprise Fund (YEF) are given opportunities in bidding for jobs, with 20% of Government-funded contracts being sourced from entities owned by women, persons with disabilities and young persons.
- Offer tax incentives to young entrepreneurs to encourage them to initiate start-ups.
- Ensure greater participation of young people in national development and guarantee that at least 10% of all appointments, projects and budgets specifically target them.
- Encourage highly talented young people to work in the Public Service by introducing a Young Professionals Management Programme.

- Provide structured support to the creative sectors, which have high potential for youth employment, including film, music and fashion and bring them into the mainstream economy.
- Train youths in various sectors of the economy with huge potential of absorbing the youth population such as; agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, tourism, construction, mining, forest industry.

1.3. Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment

The genuine Empowerment of Sierra Leonean Women & Girls is at the heart of the NGC's Change /Transformation Agenda. However achievement of the sought after gender equity remains a major challenge in Sierra Leone. The forward movement of women in the country is being held back by not only deep-seated discrimination from traditional customs and laws but also by modern economic and social barriers as well as by violence which must be overcome in order to achieve gender equality.

Although near gender balance has been attained in primary school enrollment, there is a catastrophic dropout rate among girls and their school & tertiary education completion rates are subsequently far lower than those of men even though women are the majority of the population (52%). Moreover, women are confronted daily with lack of access to justice, in decision-making processes, in access to and control over resources of all kinds and even in control over their own health and bodies. Sierra Leone's Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects widespread gender based inequalities facing women & girls in the areas of reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity at national, local and community levels. In addition, women face major challenges in accessing social and economic opportunities, and seeking overall advancement.

They have been unable to achieve fair political representation at different levels of government, with only 15% of Parliamentarians and 19% of Local Councillors being female and even fewer found in the cabinet, permanent secretaries or heads of diplomatic missions.

Although progress has been made in establishing a policy framework to promote gender equality and empowerment of women with the creation of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs and the enactment in 2007 of the Domestic Violence Act, the Devolution of Estates Act, the Registration of Customary Marriages and Divorces Act and the Child Rights Act (all specifically tailored to address issues of violence, discrimination and abuse against women and girls) implementation has been fraught with considerable difficulties.

Goal

To promote gender equality and women's empowerment across ALL sectors by focusing on urgent implementation of women and girls, political, social economic and health & reproductive rights in Sierra Leone while ensuring that Women & Girls' rights and liberties are not only protected and promoted by all state institutions but that they are also provided with the skills

and resources to participate on a basis of equality at all levels in the social, political and economic spheres.

Strategy

We will empower our women by expanding opportunities for their education and training, enforcing rules related to appointments and provide funding targeting women's enterprises. We will endeavor to make women equal and empowered partners in the full spectrum of our social and economic endeavors. We will also promote the physical & mental health of women & girls with particular protection for pregnant & suckling mothers and their babies and provide legal protection from all forms of violence against women.

Based on this strategy, the NGC commits to:

- Increase the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions and enact a law that allows women to hold 30% of positions in elective office and appointment positions;
- Provide sustained ring-fenced funding for incubating women enterprises to catalyze employment, build business and management capacity among women, spur innovation in women enterprises and enable women all over the country to become active participants in socio-economic development;
- Promote the study of Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) by girls in Schools and at tertiary levels;
- Strengthen advocacy campaign strategies to combat culturally entrenched attitudes that discriminate against women;
- Provide adequate resources, institute coordination mechanisms and ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of programs in gender-specific and gender-related sectors in the country;
- Enable women to benefit from entrepreneurship and basic training, improved farming technologies and grants that enable them manage complex and medium enterprises effectively to engage in formal transactions, and to expand their agricultural activities;
- Encourage women to participate in Natural resource management activities, including training programs for women and initiatives that lead to better management of forest resources in order to enhance potential economic benefits; and
- Promote pro-nutrition actions among pregnant and lactating mothers and encourage mothers to attend prenatal and postnatal care. Women should be key targets for hygiene education in communities, helping to reduce the incidence of waterborne diseases.
- Promote & support through training and incentives women's leadership & involvement in environmental protection and sustainable development programs at all levels.
- Support faster Mano River Union economic integration and facilitate cross border investment and trade by women.
- Provide support for nursery and crèche facilities to enable mother's & children undertake paid employment.

- Ensure new investors adopt & implement Equal Opportunity policies & directives in Employment & Local Content contracting.
- Within 3 months, present legislation to parliament on Affirmative Action for women & girls and to outlaw gender discrimination.
- Provide resources and action to address the causes and prevention of Early Marriage, Teenage Pregnancy and high drop-out rates of girls from education.

1.4. Empowering People Living with Disabilities

Successive governments have failed to pay attention to the issues facing people living with disabilities (PWD) in Sierra Leone, despite the fact that they form a significant proportion of our society (up to 10% by some estimates). They are generally treated as outcasts with many of them reduced to begging on the street. Despite the existence of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2011, not much has been done to ensure integration of PWDs into normal society, nor have many of the provisions of the Act been implemented. The following provisions in the Act, for example, have been largely ignored by the APC government.

- Right to free education
- Protection from discrimination in educational institutions
- Courses to be introduced in public educational institutions etc.
- Provision of free medical services
- Compulsory screening at health centres
- Prohibition of denial of employment
- Protection from discrimination in employment

The NGC recognizes PWDs as equal members of society and while we do not intend to make disability issues special we recognise that a fairer and diverse society is better and benefits all of us. PWDs therefore need to be given opportunities as all other citizens and their disability should not be a hindrance to them playing a role in national development, not should they be disadvantaged in any way.

Goal

To ensure that people living with disabilities have opportunities and can make choices related to their lives like all other Sierra Leoneans and are not disadvantaged as a result of their disability.

Strategy

Our strategy is based on the social model of disability which seeks to remove the barriers restricting their opportunities and choices. We will therefore ensure their full participation in all decision making relating to them.

Based on this strategy, the NGC commits to:

- Develop a disability wing within our party structure, which will be at par with the women and youth wings. It will be coordinated by competent and capable people with disability;

- Strengthen established institutions like the National Commission for Persons with Disability to understand the real issues of disability through for example, surveys and engagement with PWDs to ensure we leave no one behind;
- Require all public buildings to make provision for disability access;
- Expand the National Social Safety Net to cater for the 10%+ of PWDs in the country and especially for the hundreds of PWDs living in the streets and ignored by society;
- In line with Article 19 of the UNCRPD, work with and support a network of Disabled People Organisations (DPOs), led by persons with disability, to strengthen 'one-stop-shop' independent living hubs for PWDs;
- Expand access to free education for PWDs from Primary, Secondary through to Tertiary
- Develop a strategy which addresses the disability education gap and require educational institutions to make all their courses, resources and facilities accessible to PWDs;
- Commission a comprehensive review of employment services, employment opportunities and recruitment needs and practices in relation to persons with disability;
- Develop vocational or apprenticeship training strategies for PWDs that will lead to retained employment;
- Create or expand the capacity of Employment Bureaus to work with central government and local employers to create employment opportunities for PWDs;
- Require companies employing more than 50 employees to report annually on the number of persons with disability the company has employed while expanding fiscal and structural incentives for employers of PWDs;
- Strengthen the legal system to ensure all PWDs receive fair and just treatment. For example, by providing interpreters in the courts for people with hearing impairment or people with visual impairment.

1.5. Sports Culture & Creative Industries

Sports, creative arts and culture are strong unifying factors. Sierra Leoneans have a unique blend of cultural traditions. Sierra Leoneans are vibrant, exuberant and expressive people and our cultural values, traditions and belief systems are widely practiced and respected. A variety of food, clothing, jewelry, hand-made crafts, lively festivals and the performing arts are expressions of this colorful society. Rituals and ceremonies are performed by different groups at different times and religious beliefs and practices are very present in everyday life. There are also many fascinating historic sights, monuments and relics to see.

The Ministry of Sports runs sporting affairs. Funding for sports is however low and there is a dearth of stadia and playing fields. International participation in sports is at a very low level and funded mainly by International Associations. There are very little sporting activities in schools and inter-secondary school sporting activities have been banned.

Even though sports is an important medium for promoting peace, social cohesion,

entertainment and livelihood, during the past nine years of the APC government, sports evokes images of chaos, confusion, endemic corruption and a culture of impunity. This situation has been made worse by failure of the Government to efficiently invest in sports, resulting in low motivation and morale among young people in the country.

Cultural activities are within the purview of the Ministry of Tourism and culture. There is a dearth of Government funding for the arts and most artists are self-supported.

Among the graphic arts practiced in Sierra Leone are woodcarving, tie-dyeing, batik-printing, textile and fabric design, and basket making. A few famous Sierra Leonean musicians have gained widespread appeal both at home and abroad. There is even a national dance troupe that used to travel around the world but is now a pale shadow of itself. To a large extent, however, participation in the arts is widely diffused and informal; dancing, painting, singing, storytelling, tie-dyeing, weaving, and drumming are widely practiced skills.

Many youths are engaged in the music industry and other performing arts but these are badly managed and receive very little government funding.

The United Nation's Creative Economy Report of 2008 identified culture and creativity as major driving forces of national economies and says in its foreword "...the interface among creativity, culture, economics and technology, as expressed in the ability to create and circulate intellectual capital, has the potential to generate income, jobs and export earnings while at the same time promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development."

Even though a National Cultural Policy was developed and approved many years ago with the stated vision and mission "...to preserve, protect and promote cultural diversity, with a view to reviving and strengthening national consciousness, understanding and appreciation of the cultural heritage and artistic creativity, and enhance its contribution to poverty reduction and overall national development", that policy remains unimplemented, partly due to a severe lack of understanding of the value of the sector within government circles, but more importantly because the APC government abolished the implementing agency - the National Commission for Arts & Culture.

The support of the APC Government to the creative sector has been dismal. With the Creative industries Sector being perennially under-resourced, it has not blossomed enough to ensure that the country's creative arts professionals are able to make a reasonable living off their work even though the sector has the potential to contribute greatly to GDP growth. In the circumstances, the NGC is committed to focus on supporting the sector to enable it realize its full potential for generating wealth for its practitioners, creating jobs and growing the economy.

Goal

To transform Sierra Leone into a country where the citizenry proactively uses sports, music, dance, and other creative and cultural activities to nurture talent and creativity and forge a unique national identity and unity as well as contribute positively to the growth of the Tourism sector and the economy.

Strategy

Provide financial support to sports, culture and the creative industries and encourage the youth to participate in various types of sports, while developing and preserving the country's rich cultural heritage.

Sports

The NGC government commits to pursue the development of the sports sector by:

- Reviewing existing legislation and policy related to sports that would provide the right legal framework for the modernization of sports in the country;
- Ensuring that District Councils fully participate in sports development and promotion;
- Developing, in partnership with the private sector, Youth Development & Sports Centers in each of the Provinces with each centre capable of housing a fully-equipped library, ICT hub, social hall, multi-purpose pitches and courts;
- Putting in place, in partnership with the private sector, an effective maintenance regime for new and existing sports facilities and infrastructure;
- Encouraging the private sector to provide funding for sports through the provision of tax incentive packages.
- Investing in a special Women-In-Sports program to help discover and support female athletes and sports talents across the country;
- Awarding scholarships to promising young athletes to enable them develop in the best of environments and take on more active roles in our country's future and its development;
- Re-introducing inter-secondary school football and athletics competitions;
- Identifying and nurturing budding athletes and improve youth training facilities so that talented young sports men and women are given the best training opportunities;
- Encouraging and supporting national teams in the various disciplines and investing in setting up youth teams.

Culture

The NGC's commitment to the cultural sector is to:

- Review and update the existing National Cultural Policy to ensure it is relevant to present day requirements;
- Establish a National Council for Arts and Culture which will serve as the implementing agency for the National Cultural Policy.
- Carry out a comprehensive inventory of all the country's cultural assets as a first step towards creating a national database of these assets that will include all of Sierra Leone's tangible assets like the old Fourah Bay College and Bunce Island, and intangible cultural assets like rites of passage, values and belief systems, festivals, etc., which are currently in danger of disappearing completely with aging traditional custodians; and

- Update and expand the list of declared national monuments and take steps to ensure their protection and preservation.

Creative Industries

The NGCs commitment to the creative industries sector shall be to:

- Establish a Creative Industries Ministerial Task Force to support the development of the Creative Industries Sector;
- Educate the public and law enforcement agencies on the Copyright Act 2010 and Strictly enforce the Act in order to protect the country's creative sector from illicit exploitation and enable the country maximize revenue through the proper marketing of these creative products;
- Support the country's creative artists to establish the Collection Society envisaged in the Copyright Act 2010 and empower it to collect royalties for artists;
- Encourage the private sector to invest in the creative industries by providing tax incentives;
- Construct a National Arts Centre in Freetown and work with the districts to establish district arts centers where artists will showcase their work;
- Re-establish the Arts Education Unit in the Ministry of Education to supervise the teaching and learning of the fine and performing arts in schools and colleges;
- Promote National and District arts festivals and competitions, particularly in schools and colleges in order to stimulate an interest in the arts in young people; and
- Restructure and reorganize the National Dance Troupe and work with the private sector to create a National Performing Company that will be properly resourced and capacitated to serve as a repository of the traditional performing arts of Sierra Leone and showcase it to the world.

1.6. Industrial Relations: Empowering & Protecting Workers

Many of Sierra Leone's Labour Laws are obsolete and include laws governing individual employment relationships, Trade Unions and Dispute Settlement. The main areas of labour regulations include freedom of association, collective bargaining, dispute resolution, equal opportunity, forced labour, gender issues, minimum wage fixing, occupational safety and health, workers compensation and termination of employment protection. Moreover, the Labour Ministry lacks capacity and statistics are poorly kept or unavailable altogether. Manpower planning is also poor whilst there seems to be a missing link between the Labour Ministry and other key employment generating protection Ministries and agencies such as the National Social Security Trust (NASSIT) whose future sustainability is highly doubtful. The Factories Inspectorate Division of the Ministry which deals with industrial safety does not function well as it is grossly understaffed and under-equipped. There is a Local Content Policy and Act that is supposed to empower Sierra Leonean businesses and personnel but their implementation is fraught with a considerable number of difficulties. There are considerable concerns about the future sustainability of the National Social Security and Insurance Trust.

Goal

To develop a workforce with the rights of their members protected, working in safe environments and provided with the requisite training to enable them achieve their fullest potential.

Strategy

Protect the country's workers and monitor their work environment whilst ensuring that they are well trained and remunerated and have fair benefits to prepare them for retirement.

To meet its Goal, the NGC is committed to:

- Work with stakeholders, including employers and trade unions, in an open, trustworthy and fair manner on employee welfare, as well as ensure living wages for all workers;
- Revamp and fully capacitate the Labour Ministry to enable it carry out manpower planning and monitor and enforce labour laws, policies and regulations effectively;
- Support medical and insurance policies for our workers consistent with international best practice;
- Enforce the requirement for Operators and contractors to submit an Employment and Training Plan (E&T) that shall address hiring and training needs, anticipated skills shortages in the labour force, project specific training requirements etc;
- Enforce the requirement for operators and contractors to sign an agreement to integrate Sierra Leoneans in the workforce. This shall include, inter alia, the number, roles and occupational profiles of the workforce, career plan and the plan to achieve the goals of integrating Sierra Leonean personnel into the workforce;
- Support tertiary and technical institutions to provide the requisite training for the workforce by transforming their education curriculum;
- Provide incentives for sector specific training and skills development in entrepreneurship and management offered by public and private sector institutions, industry associations and by private companies;
- Implement Core labour standards comprising a series of rules and principles regarding the minimum standards recognized internationally for treating workers; and
- Ensure solid governance and financial sustainability of the national pension scheme (NASSIT).

THEME 2: SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Despite recent investments in the sector, Sierra Leone's infrastructure remains grossly underdeveloped to support economic growth, particularly in rural areas. The overall condition of the national road network and general transportation infrastructure remains weak; power generation and distribution systems are derelict with conditions that are far below requisite levels to support existing demand. The water supply systems are insufficient to meet the demands of rapidly growing urban populations, while many rural areas do not have access to safe water.

Despite private investment in the Information Computer Technology (ICT) sector, particularly for GSM technology, internet connectivity is frequently disrupted and where it remains connected, is slow. The poor state of infrastructure development has been the result of massive corruption under the APC government through contract overpricing, opaque and shady contracting processes, and gross abuse of the sole sourcing provisions of the National Public Procurement Act (NPPA).

2.1. Increasing & Improving Electricity Supply

Less than 10% of Sierra Leone's total population has access to electricity. Only around 1% of its rural population has access to electricity with per capita electricity consumption estimated at 33 kWh compared to 149 kWh in Gambia and 341 kWh in Ghana. The total installed power is only 74 MW.

The electricity sector has been severely challenged over the years in terms of generation capacity which is insufficient; and transmission and distribution networks which are largely inadequate. The current electricity system covers mainly the Western Region of the country with the bulk of electricity consumption taking place in the capital city, Freetown.

Energy consumption in the country is dominated by biomass which accounts for over 80% of energy used with the largest source being wood fuel followed by charcoal. Imported petroleum products are the next largest source of power estimated at 13%.

The country's power sector is in its early stages of transformation as the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has set a goal to make 1000 MW available countrywide by 2027, a projection based on several demand forecasts. The intention is to achieve this goal through the entry of Independent Power Producers (IPPs) which are explicitly permitted under the country's 2011 National Electricity Act.

The generation target of 1000 MW will be achieved through an energy mix of energy generated from thermal plants and renewable energy sources. The Renewable energy projects will be hydro-electric and solar Photo Voltaic (PV). The thermal energy projects will be a mix of the existing HFO plants and proposed IPP plants (Diesel plants to be phased out or only used as stop gaps). In addition, the power from the West African Power Pool (WAPP) will be another important contributor to power supply. The existing Bumbuna 161KV line, is expected to be upgraded and interlinked with the WAPP line. The current distribution system (at 11KV and below) is in various stages of disrepair.

Areas of concern in the sector include but are not limited to:

- Limited access to improved energy services;
- Unreliable energy supply;
- Poor and inefficient Energy Sector Governance and Regulation;
- Inadequate Energy Policy Planning, Formulation, Implementation and Monitoring; and
- Inadequate funding.

Following the unbundling of the power sector, there is need to improve on the capacity of the unbundled entities and engender greater cooperation among them.

Goal

To effect a paradigm shift in the energy supply situation that results in a drastic increase in energy services around the country.

Strategy

NGC's strategy will be based on the current roadmap for the electricity sector. It will, apart from funding provided by government, encourage private sector players to provide the mix of energy services required to achieve our long term vision and provide requisite incentives.

NGC therefore commits to:

- Implement and, as necessary, improve on plans laid out in the Roadmap for the power sector;
- Develop and effectively implement a least-cost sector expansion to ensure the lowest possible electricity cost to the economy and direct the sector towards a sustainable development path;
- Rehabilitate/restore District Headquarters Power Stations and their associated transmission and distribution networks with all such district headquarter towns having access to grid electricity;
- Institute a Rural Electricity Board and a Rural Electricity Fund to promote electrification of rural areas with a view to making electricity readily and widely available in rural areas;
- Promote the use of renewables and modern forms of energy like Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG); encourage the start of mini-hydro and solar energy schemes, and provide special financial incentives to companies in the sector;
- Participate in the West African Power Pool;
- Ensure that areas contiguous to hydro-electricity projects get the benefit of electricity supply;
- Criminalize electricity theft and introduce stiff penalties; and
- Ensure that the power utilities are effectively governed, efficiently run and financially viable.

2.2. Increasing & Improving Access to Water and Sanitation

Only 59% of the population of Sierra Leone has access to safe drinking water, and more than half of rural households use contaminated water while 13% of the population has access to improved non-shared sanitation facilities. Some 74% of urban dwellers have access to safe drinking water while only 46% of rural people use safe water.

There is extremely limited functional infrastructure for water supply to cope with the increase in population in Freetown and provincial cities over the past decade. Sanitary conditions are very poor as sewage and refuse disposal systems do not function effectively in most places.

Provincial water supply is under the purview of the Sierra Leone Water Company (SALWACO) which is currently unable to meet the water needs of the rural population. Government has targeted water supply service provision in some district headquarter towns and the provision of rural water supply to Local Councils. However, both the Guma Valley Water Company (GVWC) and SALWACO have funding and management problems leading to poor implementation of projects.

The availability of water supply has been considerably reduced by deforestation in the dam areas and has put the Freetown water supply in a critical situation as it relies principally on a single source, with over 90% of the total water supply to the city supplied from the Guma Dam and the Guma Water Treatment Plant. The Guma Dam was built in the early 1960s and is sized to provide water reliably to around 800,000 people. The current population of Freetown is significantly higher than this, estimated to be approaching 2 million. Inadequate water from municipal systems forces the population to seek informal sources, seriously increasing the hazards to health and the risk of disease.

Goal

To harvest, conserve and protect available water resources for this and future generations and ensure that majority of the population has access to clean and affordable water and sanitation facilities.

Strategy

Provide sustainable access to safe water, improve sewerage systems, promote improved sanitation for majority of the population, irrigate agricultural land and reduce incidences of waterborne diseases.

NGC hereby commits to:

- As a matter of urgency, embark on a nationwide programme to protect all major watershed areas for provision of water supply against deforestation and other environmental problems;
- Reform all water utilities to strengthen their governance, management and financial viability;
- Support public private partnership in the investment and delivery of water services;

- Initiate feasibility studies and support the construction of the Orogu dam for provision of water to the Western Area;
- Ensure that all district capital towns and other large towns have pipe borne water;
- Support the construction of boreholes, gravity water systems and solar water pumping schemes in village settlements and generally reduce the burden on women and children of fetching water;
- Ensure that there is a constant supply of potable water to all district, regional, and teaching hospitals, as well as educational institutions;
- Expand sanitation infrastructure in urban areas;
- Enhance water security through construction of water harvesting and storage infrastructure across the country;
- Increase access to sanitation and sewerage to additional households by developing new sanitation and sewerage connections in towns with no sewerage;
- Work with local councils to establish proper waste management systems in each district;
- Support Local Councils to establish effective sanitary inspection regimes with adequate personnel and equipment.

2.3. Trade & Industry: From Raw Commodity Exports to Value- Addition

Sierra Leone's Trade and industrial sector faces significant challenges among which are lack of access to finance, high interest rates, inadequate and poor quality raw materials for industrial processing, poorly developed domestic trade, weak consumer protection, and lack of coherent industrial development planning and initiatives. High import duties on raw materials, poor standards of certification, and an unreliable and expensive power source also pose serious challenges to industrialization.

Goal

To transform Sierra Leone into an Industrial centre with emphasis on export promotion, creating forward and backward linkages in the production chain and development of economies of agglomeration in comparatively advantageous sectors with subsidies for local entrepreneurs investing in sectors identified for rapid development.

Strategy

Create and implement a Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) development and support program and formalize the large number of informal businesses, supporting their growth from micro to small to medium enterprises, and eventually into large firms.

The NGC shall address these challenges in ways that enable industry to thrive and become a major source of jobs, especially for the youth. The Party's number one priority, shall be to put in place the policy framework that should help businesses expand and create jobs, as well as promote the growth of entrepreneurship opportunities for young Sierra Leoneans in particular.

In order to achieve the industrialization we seek, the NGC commits to:

- Implement the rural development model of "One District One Factory" under which special Industrial parks and clusters shall be established in each district to target youths and women who start small businesses. They will be provided with access to electricity, water, capital, equipment, clean sanitary environments and improved access roads;
- Pursue aggressive industrialization and value-addition to agricultural produce;
- Provide tax and related incentives for manufacturing businesses in sectors such as agro-processing, light industries, garments and textiles, among others;
- Provide a reliable and cost effective mix of energy supply for businesses;
- Provide the necessary incentives for private sector participation in health service delivery;
- Pursue policies that will reduce interest rates;
- Implement policies that will reduce the cost of doing business;
- Stabilize the currency;
- Provide incentives to the hospitality and creative industries that will enable them create jobs;
- Promote exports, especially of value-added agricultural produce and light manufacturing.

2.4. Improving Transport Infrastructure

Transportation which is within the purview of the Transport Ministry currently faces many challenges. New institutions like the Road Maintenance Fund are not operating efficiently, there are problems with the operation of the Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA) and some regulatory agencies like the Sierra Leone Maritime Administration (SLMA) carry out their mandate inefficiently.

Road transport is the most dominant mode of transportation and represents about 85% of the entire transport system in Sierra Leone. The country has a public road network of about 11,300 kilometers of which 8,700 km are functionally classified in the National Road System. The remaining roads consist of urban roads, community roads, local roads and farm tracks. Road transport is almost entirely operated by small private operators, with free market entry for operators of trucks or passenger vehicles, subject to tariffs in the private sector. There is, therefore, need for significant investment in road infrastructure. The paved road network is very limited. Of the 11,300 km of roads, only 8% is paved. In comparison, Ghana has 18%, Ethiopia 12% and Niger 25%. Unpaved rural feeder roads are also in a serious state of disrepair and as such present a formidable barrier to the development of the agriculture sector.

There are a considerable number of road projects that are funded by the government, but most of these are poorly planned and the government over extends itself with payment of contractors. There are also concerns about transparency of award of contracts and getting value for money. In the area of air transportation, there have been improvements in the Lungi International airport, but the Government is dithering on whether to construct the newly envisaged Mamamah Airport with its questionable economics. It has now signed an agreement with the Chinese a few weeks to the end of its tenure. There are at present no functioning provincial airports and enforcement of regulations by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) continues to be lax.

Following the deliberate dismantling of the country's railway system in the 1960s, the only railway existing today is the commercial railway for hauling iron ore. Sea transportation is mainly through the port of Freetown and while this is being expanded to increase the container handling capacity, other local water transportation facilities are few and far between and very unsafe. Traffic has become a problem in Freetown with clogged up roads and poor parking facilities. Meanwhile, vehicle safety is of great concern, especially with the number of old trucks plying the routes. Old vehicles also cause considerable environmental problems and street garages abound.

Goal

To fully explore all modes of transportation for ease of movement of the population around the country as well as to and from other countries at internationally competitive rates.

Strategy

Improve upon and increase public transportation through government and private sector funding and operation of transportation schemes.

The NGC commits to:

- Pave all roads leading to district capital towns;
- Depoliticize the management of the SLAA and the CAA;
- Strengthen the management of the Road Maintenance Fund to support improved maintenance of road infrastructure;
- Improve physical access to rural and riverine communities through an improved and sustainable trunk and feeder road system, integrated with a coastal and river transport network;
- Institute a National Road Safety Program;
- Make the Maritime Administration Authority more effective;
- Make the National Commission for Privatization (NCP) more functional to fully meet its mandate.
- Encourage and promote private sector development of inland water way transportation services for passengers and goods as an alternate mode to road transport;
- Explore the possibility of re-establishing the national railway system;
- Promote public private partnerships in the management of Sierra Leone Road Transport Corporation (SLRTC) and provision of mass transit services;
- Provide incentives for other private investors to invest in mass transportation schemes;
- Ban the importation of all vehicles older than 15 years and reduce import duties for large buses;
- Develop major parks for vehicles by effecting, where necessary, compulsory land acquisition schemes in close collaboration with local governments across the country and construct flyovers to ease the problem of road traffic congestion in Freetown;
- Work with the Freetown City Council to introduce an effective vehicle parking scheme in the city; and
- Phase out street garages by relocating them to specially designated spaces.

2.5. Improving Information Communication & Technology

One of the biggest constraints to the expansion of the telecommunications infrastructure in Sierra Leone (outside of the capital and a few main cities), is the limited extent of the electricity grid, which has yet to reach many of the provincial areas. These areas typically lack electricity or fixed phone service and are completely unconnected with the rest of the country. Even in the main cities, the provision of Internet bandwidth is limited, expensive and largely unavailable. These are all significant constraints to investment promotion in the ICT sector.

Although the number of internet service providers has increased, the efficiency and quality of services provided by them and the mobile phone companies are still very problematic. In addition, the expected drop in the cost of internet services following the introduction of fibre optic services has not been realized with NATCOM doing a poor job of regulating the sector. NATCOM operations are not transparent and there is undue political meddling, thereby militating against efficiency. There are also serious concerns about the non-transparent management of the international telecommunications gateway.

Goal

To put ICT, especially data science including analytics, at the centre of the national development agenda, while positioning Sierra Leone as an ICT hub for the Mano River Union (MRU) sub-region.

Strategy

The NGC strategy to achieve its goal for the sector will be based on depoliticizing the ICT sector, making sure that it is well regulated while encouraging investment into the sector and endeavouring to popularize the use of ICT.

The NGC commits to:

- Mainstream ICT into the public sector by:
 - Establishing an integrated Data Warehouse of databases from key public institutions, using the existing National Identification System (Voter/Civil Biometric Registration) as the unique identifier for data items; and
 - Automating the processes involved in accessing public services at both national and local government offices.
- Improve telecommunications accessibility for increased nationwide access to mobile networks; and
- Create opportunities for Entrepreneurship by:
 - Developing, in partnership with the private sector, world standard Incubator Hubs, including workspaces and app development resources in the regional headquarters, to support the sector to create private sector business opportunities.
 - Supporting young people to take advantage of the huge opportunities for investing in the nascent but active app and software development ecosystem in Sierra Leone;

- Increasing citizens' accessibility to data platforms by reducing tariffs on the use of data for internet access; and
- Working with the private sector to increase the bandwidth and speed of internet connections nationwide.

2.6. Quality & Affordable Housing for All

The desire to solve the chronic housing problem in Sierra Leone has been the objective of governments since independence. Post-colonial history shows that various strategies have been employed like direct government intervention, encouraging and facilitating individuals to build their own houses with savings, development of co-operative and building societies, short term loans from commercial banks and the formation of the Sierra Leone Housing Corporation (SALHOC).

This problem has however remained intractable and was compounded by the influx of displaced people into urban centres during the civil war. The problem is most acute in Freetown where the pressure for housing has resulted in numerous slum settlements, with most of them being in dangerous areas, including river flood plains and mountain sides. These settlements have in recent times been subjected to a variety of disasters, including flooding and landslides, the last of which took the lives of more than 1,000 people.

Rather than solving the problem, the actions of government officials under the SLPP as well as the APC, have exacerbated it, due to the fact that they have been engaging in corrupt activities, resulting in lands being sold where they should not be, most settlements being unplanned with no provisions made for social amenities. There is therefore an urgent need for something to be done to solve this intractable problem.

Goal

To employ innovative construction techniques and creative financial models to ensure that more Sierra Leoneans can own their own homes.

Strategy

Improve overall affordability and access to decent homes for all working Sierra Leoneans and their families in modern communities and develop housing units targeted at the vulnerable and marginalized segments of society.

To help Sierra Leoneans meet their aspirations for quality and affordable housing, the NGC commits to:

- Improve the overall affordability and access to decent homes for all working Sierra Leoneans and their families in modern communities;
- Work with the private sector to develop housing units targeted at the vulnerable and marginalized in our society;

- Capacitate the Sierra Leone Housing & Finance Corporation (HFC) to develop financing schemes to assist home buyers to acquire units;
- Improve the quality of infrastructure in existing communities;
- Use public policy to develop the entire housing value-chain;
- Facilitate the construction of high-density, quality social, low, and mid-income housing over the short, medium and long term by:
 - Establishing land banks with infrastructure such as roads, drainage, water and power in place for the development of affordable housing units on a public-private partnership (PPP) basis;
 - Offering tax incentives to local real estate developers and suppliers of building materials;
 - Working with identifiable groups such as the Sierra Leone Labor Congress (SLLC), Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU), Farmer's Groups and other trade groups to facilitate the construction of homes for their members through the provision of the appropriate financing guarantees;
 - Implementing a national policy requiring every public building, including new homes built under all PPP arrangements, to install solar panels and water-harvesting technologies in order to reduce the long term cost of ownership; and
 - Promoting and developing the use of local building materials in the construction of homes
 - Facilitating the development of an active mortgage market to expand mortgage loans to Sierra Leoneans

THEME 3: NATURAL CAPITAL: LAND FORESTS & ENVIRONMENT

3.1. Land Justice & Housing

The current situation in the Land Sector is not only chaotic but also becoming increasingly unsustainable. Major challenges in the sector have shaped the evolution of Sierra Leone's dual land tenure problems, and several years of reform under the APC government have failed to result in an efficient and well-functioning regime of titling, fixing of boundaries and ownership tracing.

The contentious nature of land ownership, particularly in Freetown, is evidenced by the fact that land ownership disputes are among the largest category of cases before the courts. These cases usually last several years, even decades and are a source of numerous conflicts, some of them deadly. Further reform is therefore needed.

Goal

To transform Sierra Leone into a country in which land is used in a sustainable way and available for housing, agriculture and for investments.

Strategy

Remove the barriers that impede the availability of land for various purposes and pay greater attention to land allocation and town and country planning.

The NGC commits to:

- Work with the judiciary to ensure that all existing land cases in court are resolved within 24 months of taking office, and the outcomes publicized;
- Ensure that Land can only be sold or leased by a land owner;
- Implement a policy barring individuals from holding lease or freehold on multiple parcels of government land in order to ensure more equitable allocation of government land;
- Work with the private sector to develop a low and middle income housing scheme that will within 36 months, provide 15,000 housing units in major urban centres around the country for low and middle income earners;
- Publish annual reports on occupancy of Government Quarters and state lands;
- Review ownership of large-scale land for mining and commercial agriculture with a view to ensure adequate compensation to land owners, security of investments and maintain community stability;

3.2. Protecting & Preserving Our Forests

Natural rainforests today cover only 3% of Sierra Leone's land mass and we are fast losing this small proportion that remains. Illegal logging, timber production, fuel wood and charcoal production as well as housing construction (in the Western Area), have led to massive deforestation of our rain forests. While there is a tendency to view Sierra Leone's deforestation as a recent phenomenon, studies conducted in the early twentieth century found forest cover already significantly destroyed or altered. The rapid pace of deforestation not only prompted early efforts to conserve forests, but also recognized the impact of such practices on water quantity and soil health. Mounting pressure on forests comes from major cities, especially Freetown, where people destroy forest areas to build homes and settlements, which at the same time require timber for construction.

In the 1980s, Sierra Leone had the Forest Industry Corporation (FIC) in Kenema and SELETI in the South. While the FIC used to export the finished products of timber, SELETI exported the timbers unprocessed. Both the FIC and SELETI were however required to replant trees in the same manner as they were harvesting. Unfortunately, with the outbreak of the 11-Year Civil War in 1991, the FIC and SELETI ceased operations and never resumed.

Goal

To protect and conserve our forests in order to contribute to water conservation, mitigation against environmental hazards and contribution towards agricultural development, cultural diversity and eco-tourism.

Strategy

Create understanding and appreciation of the importance of forest conservation among Sierra Leoneans and encourage community involvement in conservation activities while building the capacity of the Forestry Division for monitoring and enforcement of the law.

The NGC commits to undertake the following actions to minimize deforestation and conserve forests:

- Restoration of degraded areas and plantation establishment within and outside forest reserves for reforestation and plantation development, using fast growing indigenous and exotic species;
- Develop and support small-scale community tree nurseries by:
 - Establishing tree and plantain suckers in all districts; and
 - Procuring all seedlings for national plantation development program and other reforestation efforts from these communities to generate income and create jobs.
- Support the Conservation of Biodiversity and priority ecosystems by extending forestry conservation areas;
- Re-survey and effectively demarcate forest reserve areas;
- Support the protection of the remaining network of natural forest and biodiversity hotspots in the country to serve as gene banks for indigenous species and refuge areas for threatened, endemic and rare species;
- Launch an Apiculture Forest Conservation Program by making available bee-hives to forest fringe communities, in the next four years, as a forest protection mechanism and job creation incentive;
- Promote the Eco-tourism industry in the country to boost further its potential and contribution to economic development;
- Promote Sustainable Water Resources Management to maintain and improve the quality of water resources within each river basin through a comprehensive programme for protection of water catchment areas. The principal mechanism for this shall be a Clean Rivers Program (CRP), which will be executed across the country through an ongoing partnership with water stakeholders, local government, businesses and citizens.

The NGC shall also promote:

- Replanting of trees along the banks of all major water bodies and their tributaries, to reduce silting and other negative human activities adjacent to river banks;
- Dry season gardening within the buffer zone, to protect river banks;
- Construction of canals and/or the use of water pumping equipment to transport water to farms to ensure efficient water use;
- The conduct of regular assessments of effluents into our river bodies with the view to controlling pollution.

3.3. Sustainable Management of the Environment

Natural disasters are a continuous threat to Sierra Leone. Recent disasters in August 2017, included massive flooding that decimated homes, and claimed hundreds of lives in the capital city of Freetown and other regions, thus speaking highly to the need for implementation of the United Nations Eleventh Sustainable Development Goal (SDG11) which warns states to ensure

efficient management of towns, cities and population. Related to these disasters is the increasing evidence of the negative effects of climate change, including rising sea levels and frequent flooding. Sierra Leone has been recently reported to be among the most vulnerable countries in the world to the effects of climate change.

The management of the environment, though nominally under the Sierra Leone Environmental Protection Agency (SLEPA), falls within the purview of several Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA's) and poses severe coordination problems that leave many issues poorly addressed.

Goal

To address threats to the environment through sustained development cooperation and investment into effecting behavioral changes in consumption and production patterns, as well as in climate change-related disaster preparedness, such as early warning systems, and prevention planning.

Strategy

We shall take proactive measures to address climate change, including enforcing environmental laws for the benefit of all Sierra Leoneans and instituting better coordinating mechanisms for MDAs dealing with the environment and disaster management.

Specifically, the NGC commits to:

- Emphasize the use of modern forms of energy to encourage a shift from the use of wood fuel as a major source of energy
- Increase the current level of funding to support the national implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction and climate change adaptation policy and practice.
- Strengthen disaster preparedness of the Environmental Protection Agency for effective responses at all levels
- Implement provisions of international treaties and conventions on the environment to which Sierra Leone is a signatory.
- Recover and restore degraded forests, seashores and hillsides. This will include investments and social mobilization through national tree planting campaigns and greening cities through creation of recreational parks and greenbelts.
- Convert the Disaster Management Unit in the Office of National Security into an autonomous Agency and empower it to coordinate the efforts of all agencies in disaster management.
- Prepare a comprehensive plan mapping out all major hazard areas in Sierra Leone and enforce laws to avoid settlements in these areas.
- Coordinate the efforts of agencies concerned-EPA, NPAA and relevant Ministries to enforce laws related to building in disaster prone areas, protection of watersheds and catchment areas etc; and

- Assist Local Councils to build up the capacity of their environmental departments.

THEME 4: GROWING THE ECONOMY

4.1. Building a Broad-based & Inclusive Economy

Sierra Leone's economy is dependent on the exploitation of natural resources, mainly in the form of agriculture and mining, with mining providing some 80% of export earnings. More than 70% of the population live on less than \$1.50 a day and nearly 66% of the population is classed as rural poor, dependent on natural resources for their survival. The economy has seen a prolonged deterioration and an accompanying low standard of living despite the country's rich resource endowments.

Agriculture is carried out mainly on a subsistence basis, industrial capacity is low and the manufacturing sector is severely constrained because of the paucity of low infrastructure capacity. There is potential for huge earnings from other sectors like fisheries and tourism, but these are not properly exploited because of corruption, inefficiencies and other constraints.

Challenges in reviving and fixing an economy broken by ten years of an APC Government include reducing inflation and raising revenue to meet growing expenditure; ensuring fiscal discipline and improving expenditure management; reducing trade deficits by increasing exports and reducing imports with a view to sustaining a stable and competitive national currency and improving weak capacities in economic management institutions; and improving debt management, curbing corruption and reducing poverty.

Extra-budgetary spending, inflated costs of unplanned urban infrastructure projects, payments of questionable claims, and unwarranted overseas and local travels by Ministers and other public officials have also kept public expenditure on the increase. With growing public spending, often on unplanned items, the budget deficit (excluding grants) has remained high.

Goal

To rapidly achieve high, and inclusive economic growth, create wealth, reduce inequalities and ensure that economic performance is supported by a stable economic framework, a vastly improved business environment, improved security, strong remittance inflows and an ambitious government infrastructure drive to open the country and support development.

Strategy

Work towards increasing wealth and reducing inequalities while shifting the focus of economic management from taxation to production, managing the economy competently, and making the machinery of government work to deliver the benefits of progress to all Sierra Leoneans.

In this regard, the NGC commits to:

- Strengthen macroeconomic stability as a foundation for broad-based and inclusive growth by pursuing a prudent fiscal policy, disciplined monetary and financial sector policies and robust external sector policy;
- Ensure that entrepreneurs and investors are supported with appropriate financial tools;
- Reduce and eliminate wastage in the utilization of public resources to generate savings that shall be applied to enhance productive capacity and pay off the national debt;
- Reduce the cost of living by stabilizing the cost of food, energy and transport in order to help reduce the cost of education and health care and improve transport, energy, infrastructure and housing;
- Strengthen support for devolution by implementing a structured system of Conditional Grants to enable Local Councils enhance their capacity to raise their own revenues, direct investment to national priority areas and strengthen their organizational capabilities;
- Use improved infrastructure in roads and energy to support manufacturing and industrialization to increase the export/import ratio, increase investments and create jobs;
- Establish a fund to provide access to medium and long-term capital to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and encourage lending institutions to provide a significant proportion of bank loan portfolios to SMEs;
- Strengthen the capacity of the National Revenue Authority (NRA) to significantly scale up efforts at domestic revenue mobilization (both tax and non-tax revenues);
- Develop a robust policy and law for granting duty waivers in order to streamline the scale of tax expenditures;
- Develop the capacity of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in expenditure planning, management and reporting;
- Strengthen Public Expenditure Tracking (PET), the Audit Service Commission and the involvement of Non-State Actors in monitoring public spending;
- Make a conscious effort to diversify the economy by actively promoting targeted sections like tourism, fisheries etc; and
- Ensure the Central Bank is well capitalized and capacitated to carry out robust monetary policy and facilitate financial sector stability and growth.

4.2. Growing the Private Sector

The private sector in Sierra Leone faces numerous challenges including, on the domestic front, severely limited access to capital, legal impediments, bureaucracy, a financial system largely insensitive to the business community, lack of support services (mainly infrastructure services), poor macroeconomic environment and widespread corruption. The commercial banking sector is risk averse and retail oriented and is geared towards meeting the short term needs of the

formal sector with credit to the private sector standing at 5% of GDP compared to the sub-Saharan average of 17%.

The participation of local companies in businesses given out by many major companies is limited and little attempt is made by many companies to empower Sierra Leonean businesses. Moreover, Government interference into the private sector is rife and politically connected people have been unfairly given concessions in contracts and in importation of goods, thus giving them unfair advantages. A considerable lack of transparency in many business dealings still exists. In addition, the level of informality is high and many private sector businesses are not well regulated and do not pay taxes.

Goal

Develop a vibrant Private Sector to spur economic growth, income generation, employment and poverty reduction as well as a competitive, fast growing and liberal economy led by the private sector.

Strategy

Actively support initiatives that will make domestic businesses to perform better and continue operating in a sustainable way and encourage foreign investment in targeted sectors of the economy in a sustainable way.

The NGC commits to:

- Establish an Industrial Development Fund (IDF) to finance critical private sector industrial initiatives in cooperation with multilateral and private institutional investors;
- Deregulate the investment climate to boost investment and private sector development;
- Implement prudent fiscal and monetary policies to ensure a stable macroeconomic environment which is a prerequisite for private sector development;
- Deepen financial intermediation to expand access to credit by strengthening prudential supervision of Commercial Banks, fostering development of long-term securities and capital markets and facilitating financial inclusion in the country;
- Establish a fund to provide access to medium and long-term capital to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and encourage lending institutions to lend a significant proportion of bank loan portfolios to SMEs;
- Support the domestic private sector to create linkages with large domestic as well as foreign firms;
- Review the existing study on Administrative Barriers to doing business in the private sector and act on its recommendations;
- Support targeted work by the Sierra Leone Investment and Export promotion Agency (SLIEPA) to direct investment into certain sectors and promote exports;
- Enhance the capacity of private sector institutions like the Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce Industry and Agriculture (SLCCIA) to complement Government's efforts at growing the private sector;
- Conduct a diagnostic review of the impact of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Office in engendering public private partnerships for major infrastructure and other projects and its location in the Executive Office of the President;

- Support initiatives aimed at bringing informal sector establishments into the formal sector;
- Create a two-tier corporate tax system by charging a lower corporate tax for special industries located in provincial areas in order to spur development.

4.3. Mineral Resources: Maximizing Benefits

Historically the mining sector has accounted for over 80% of the country's export revenues. After the 2007 election, the mining sector in the country was reformed with new legislative and administrative policies. Between 2010–2014, the country experienced an economic boom from investments in the mining sector, especially with the establishment of new iron ore mines. It had a period of steady economic growth with mining accounting for almost 60% of export revenues in 2010, including \$132 million in diamonds, \$33 million for rutile and \$31 million for bauxite. In 2014, there was an outbreak of the Ebola epidemic which adversely affected the economy. Nevertheless, the Mining Sector continues to provide employment and livelihood for over 400,000 workers, the overwhelming majority of whom are engaged in artisanal and small-scale mining operations. Artisanal mining constitutes an estimated 40% of total diamond exports from Sierra Leone.

Small-scale and artisanal mining are poorly regulated. The artisanal mining sector contributes significantly to mining revenue but its environmental effects are considerable, causing health and sanitation problems in mining communities. The hierarchical marketing structure of artisanal mining also results in miners living in penury whilst dealers and exporters get the bulk of the revenue. Consequently, mining communities are underdeveloped, making it imperative for community benefits to be optimized.

Although there has been an improvement in EITI compliance, there is still need to ensure equitable revenue sharing and addressing issues like transfer pricing and identifying beneficial owners of companies. It is thought that the new policies for the general mining sector and the artisanal mining sectors will address these issues and it is hoped their recommendations will be addressed.

Goal

To optimize mining revenues through a combination of factors including fair agreements, better monitoring, encouragement of exploration and generally better management of the sector; prudent use of mining revenues to shore up and diversify the economy and put a premium on a fair development of mining communities.

Strategy

Fully implement the policies outlined in the Mining Policy and Artisanal Mining Policy; capacitate the National Minerals Agency for better monitoring and enforcement; fully implement the requirements of the EITI and put a premium on the development of mining communities.

NGC commits to:

- Ensure full transparency in the sector by complying with the EITI standards, making all contracts public, and providing updated and validated information on tax and other contributions from the mining sector to the government;

- Undertake geo-scientific survey of the entire stock of mineral wealth potential of the Republic of Sierra Leone to enhance Government capacity to effectively plan the exploitation of the country's resources;
- Require transactions between a company and any Affiliate to be made upon arms-length terms (including pricing), and requiring such transactions to be accompanied by up-to-date documentation;
- Make the sector internationally competitive by building up the capacity of institutions and personnel involved in various aspects of the sector governance and accountability;
- Provide adequate funds for various MDAs, especially the NMA dealing with compliance and monitoring in the extractive sector thereby paying dividends in terms of increased efficiency and greater revenue collection;
- Require that extractives sector companies are audited to international standards and support the work of international and local actors dealing with transparency and accountability in the extractives sector;
- Ensure improved management and use of mineral revenue by passing legislation that would require a portion of savings from the extractives sector be reserved for use by future generations;
- Compel mining companies to report comprehensively on all benefits paid to local stakeholders and build up the capacity of Local Councils to monitor and evaluate funds spent by mining companies at the local level;
- Support initiatives undertaken to obtain information on beneficial ownership and put measures in place to encourage further discussions on the issue;
- Create communications channels with mining companies and host communities, thus creating a framework for tripartite negotiations and building the capacities of communities to better understand the issues;
- Improve national human and material capacity to audit mineral production and exports;
- Harness the potential of artisanal and small-scale mining to advance integrated and sustainable rural socio-economic development;
- Recognize the importance of accountability in the EITI and fully support the greater involvement of international and local accountability institutions to make various players more accountable for revenue within the extractives sector;
- Require a certain percentage of mining royalties to be used for the development of mining communities.
- Provide a credible champion to support the work of the EITI Secretariat;
- Ensure that mining companies in particular are able to meet their community development obligations; and
- Put measures in place to drastically minimize the smuggling of minerals, especially gold outside the country.

4.4. Developing the Petroleum Sector & Optimizing Profits

The Fiscal Regime of the oil and gas sector comprises three key instruments, namely: (i) Royalty; (ii) Income Tax; and (iii) Petroleum Resource Rent Tax (PRRT). These, together with other complementing provisions, form the overall fiscal regime for Sierra Leone's hydrocarbon industry. Twenty-five years since the first drilling by Mobil (1982) and Amoco (1985), many Sierra Leoneans have today lost hope in the promise of oil because the current APC Government has compromised the sector through mismanagement of allocation rights.

Goal

To optimize petroleum revenues through a combination of factors, including fair agreements, better monitoring, encouragement of exploration and generally better management of the sector while petroleum revenue is prudently used to shore up and diversify the economy with premium put on developing mining communities.

Strategy

Ensure full compliance with requirements of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative while putting a premium on the development of mining communities.

NGC commits to:

- Remove the Petroleum Directorate from its current location in the Office of the President and place it under the Mineral Resources Ministry;
- Ensure full transparency in the sector through complying with EITI standards, make all contracts public, and provide updated and validated information on tax and other contributions from the petroleum sector to the government;
- Require transactions between any company and affiliate to be made upon arms-length terms (including pricing), and require such transactions to be accompanied by up-to-date documentation;
- Make the sector internationally competitive by building up the capacity of institutions and personnel involved in various aspects of the sector governance and accountability;
- Require that extractives sector companies are audited to international standards and support the work of international and local actors dealing with transparency and accountability in the extractives sector;
- Compel petroleum companies to report comprehensively on all benefits paid to local stakeholders and build up the capacity of Local Councils to monitor and evaluate resources spent by petroleum companies at the local level;
- Support initiatives undertaken to obtain information on beneficial ownership and put measures in place to engender further discussions on the issue;
- Create communication channels with petroleum companies and host communities, and create a framework for tripartite negotiations and build up the capacities of communities to understand issues better;

- Recognize the importance of accountability in the EITI and fully support the greater involvement of international and local accountability institutions to make various players more accountable for revenue within the extractives sector;
- Provide a credible champion and support the work of the EITI Secretariat.
- Ensure that petroleum companies in particular meet their community development obligations;
- Ensure transparency in the granting of licenses for oil blocks; and
- Formulate and implement a comprehensive capacity building plan for skills development in the oil sector.

4.5. Building a Vibrant Tourism Sector

Sierra Leone is endowed with rich natural features conducive for tourism, including over 350 km of unused white sandy beaches and 18 national heritage sites linked to Sierra Leone's rich past in the slave trade and as home for returning slaves. Location wise, Sierra Leone is only 3 hours to Nigeria, Africa's most populous city, 8 hours from the US and 6 hours from Europe. The country boasts an extensive array of tourist attractions that include Forts and Castles, ancient churches, slave trade artifacts, indigenous craft villages and various wildlife sanctuaries. With the tourism sector underdeveloped, however, successive governments failed to exploit these natural resources and the huge potential the country's tourist attractions offer for creating wealth and generating jobs, nor in marketing the country as an exciting destination for leisure, conferences, sports, and ecotourism.

Basic public infrastructure services, including roads to tourist destinations, are in a deplorable state whilst accommodation facilities are outdated, not up to international standards and very expensive.

Goal

To transform the Tourism Sector into a significant revenue earner and, in the medium to long term, becoming a lynchpin in the country's economy.

Strategy

Develop plans, empower communities and improve upon infrastructure to promote tourism in Sierra Leone.

To achieve this, the NGC commits to undertake the following:

- Expand the tourism sector through investment, innovation, the pursuit of service excellence and strong partnerships;
- Work with the Private Sector to aggressively develop the country's tourist sites such as Mount Bintumani/Loma Mountains, Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary, Bunce Island/Huntington Beach, Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, Banana Island, Outamba Kilimi Park, Turtle Island, Tokeh Beach, Gola Forest Reserve, etc., to bring them to world-class standards, complete with the requisite amenities and facilities;

- Pursue a deliberate marketing program to promote our unique historical sites, flora and fauna, waterfalls and other cultural artifacts;
- Partner with the private sector to upgrade existing hospitality teaching facilities to ensure workers in the sector receive world class training;
- Encourage local communities to take ownership and invest in the sustainability of tourist attractions in their localities by developing a revenue-sharing program to inject a percentage of tourism revenues from fees of well-developed tourist attractions into local community projects;
- Transform the National Tourist Board into a modern, efficient research and marketing institution with the necessary technical and financial resources to project the image of Sierra Leone as a globally recognized tourism destination;
- Ensure that the National Tourist Board efficiently carries out its function of regulating the hospitality industry in such a way as to achieve world class standards.
- Give priority to high-impact facilities that have the potential to draw more patrons and increase traffic to tourist venues, by providing the incentives for private sector investors to invest in new tourism facilities and upgrade existing ones, such as beach resorts, quality hotels, safaris, heritage villages and fun parks;
- Promote domestic tourism, by making it an aggressive plank of our tourism strategy with a marketing drive centered on entrenching a tourism culture among Sierra Leoneans;
- Pursue an ecotourism policy that enables us to make our natural tourist attractions available whilst properly conserving these sites and protecting the ecosystem; and
- Invest in Tourism IT as an enabler to improve knowledge and the sharing of information about tourism opportunities in the country.

4.6. Increasing Agricultural Productivity

Although agriculture continues to be the anchor of the country's economy, employing more than half of our workforce, its growth has declined dramatically under the APC Government due to mismanagement, incompetence and corruption. The staple food, rice, has become much more expensive compared to what it was under the previous government. Production methods are not only outdated; income levels of farmers and fisherfolk remain unacceptably low, thus making the sector unattractive as a sustainable means of livelihood for the vast majority of the country's population dependent on the sector.

The country imports a sizable proportion of its staple food, rice, costing the economy a whopping \$200 million each year, with another US\$20 million spent last year for importing onions alone. The country still ranks last out of 15 countries in West Africa and 36th out of 43 African countries in terms of hunger faced by the population. It is estimated that at national level, about 2.5 million people are food insecure in Sierra Leone, representing 45% of the country's population. We are still using mainly traditional, low productivity agricultural production systems from which the country's farmers earn very low incomes. Moreover, the marketing systems are very inefficient, post-harvest losses are high, and traders who are mainly women, work under unhygienic and degrading conditions. The quality of domestic crop and

livestock products in the markets is also poor, often with a very short shelf life, and do not compete with the quality of imported produce from Asia and other developing parts of the world, let alone being able to compete effectively in the export market.

Goal

To, within five years, modernize agriculture, improve production efficiency and achieve food security and profitability for farmers.

Strategy

Pursue a value-addition strategy aimed at rapidly ramping up agro-processing and developing new and stable markets for the country's products while policies and interventions shall ensure that the country's farmers and fisher folk earn higher incomes, using the full agricultural value chain and creating additional businesses and job opportunities in the areas of storage, transport, processing, packaging and marketing of agricultural produce.

NGC commits to:

- Support increased mechanization and irrigation of agricultural production systems, particularly by mechanization of rice production in the Mangrove swamps and Bolilands in the North, river terraces in the South and North, and the Riverine grasslands in the South-east;
- Establish a rice marketing and pricing policy that minimizes the foreign exchange needs of rice importation and enhances farmers' access to market and income;
- Encourage the development of out-grower schemes for plantation crops (oil palm, cocoa, coffee, cashew, citrus);
- Encourage increased supply of animal protein for rural communities by supporting expansion of small scale aquaculture, as well as small ruminant and poultry schemes all over the country, backstopped by a network of district veterinary stations, providing services to small producers;
- Improve post-harvest processing and marketing by encouraging private sector investment in rice milling, cold chain marketing of fish and vegetable products, improved rural market infrastructure, and export promotion;
- Expand and modernize the agricultural input marketing systems by supporting the development of an expanded network of small-scale private sector agro-dealers, expanding the network of rural finance institutions, and implementing a "smart" subsidy scheme for key agricultural inputs (fertilizers, veterinary services, etc).
- Support the further development and expansion of agricultural institutions, focusing on transformation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security from a project implementation agency providing services and handing out "goodies" on political bases, to a national policy formulation, extension support, and agricultural statistics agency;
- Increase support to agricultural research institutions (Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute etc.);

- Establish a Food Acquisition Program to create demand and stable market prices for products from small-scale farmers who will be encouraged to form cooperatives. Under this program, the government will buy 50% of its food requirements from small holder farmers;
- Provide incentives for integration of youth into agri-business value chains, including market guarantees, incubation training and scholarships for youth to agri-business; and
- Improve disaster risk reduction and response through strengthened early warning systems;

4.7. Revitalizing the Marine Resources Sector

Sierra Leone is blessed with abundant marine and inland fisheries that already contribute significantly to the country's economy and national food security. The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) estimates that around 135,000 tonnes of fish are caught annually in Sierra Leone. The majority of this fish is taken by a small scale fleet of about 30,000 fisheries supporting the direct employment of around 100,000 people and indirect employment of as much as 10% of the population of Sierra Leone. It is estimated that fisheries contribute 8% of Sierra Leone's annual GDP output and are vital to food security by contributing to an estimated 80% of the total animal protein consumed by the population.

The sector faces serious challenges, including overexploitation from uncontrolled harvesting, poor governance and leadership in the sector, corruption, weak capacity for surveillance and overall marine development, minimal focus on Sierra Leonean fishermen, depletion of fish stock and lack of effective testing facilities. Reports indicate that there is documented rampant pirate fishing in Sierra Leone and laundering of the illegal catch into the European seafood market. There is also evidence of extensive use of Flags of Convenience. Along with the economic losses, pirate fishing in Sierra Leone has devastating impacts on coastal communities, severely compromising food security, local livelihoods and the health of fish stocks and the marine environment in one of the world's poorest countries.

Goal

To transform the marine resources sector into a major lynchpin of the economy, providing significant revenue to the country and as a major source of protein for the population.

Strategy

Ensure that the population has a sustainable source of protein and income by developing a vibrant Marine Resources Sector and greatly reducing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

The NGC commits to:

- Intensify surveillance and monitoring of our coastal waters through improved capacity of the Navy, capacity development for community surveillance and effective functioning of a Joint Maritime Authority;
- Improve on laboratory testing for fish products and sanitary conditions for fishing establishments with a view to facilitating the lifting of the export ban on fish exports to the EU market;

- Support artisanal fishing through the provision of fishing gears, training in preservation, processing and packaging as well as micro-finance to fishermen and women;
- Promote replenishment of fish stock through the development of inland aquaculture and providing alternative sustainable livelihood opportunities;
- Promote the transformation of artisanal fishing to semi-industrial fishing;
- Follow-up on the West African Regional Fisheries Program in Sierra Leone (WARFP-SL) process with a view to redressing all mis-procurement and maximize the rent derivable (\$60 million/year) and employ 1,000,000 people while maintaining healthy stock;
- Enhance the sector's capacity to reduce illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing by foreign boats, with the purchase of patrol vessels enabling us to better protect our marine resources.

THEME 5: TRANSFORMING OUR GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

5.1. Promoting National Inclusion & Cohesion

Our governance system is characterized by divisiveness, exclusion, the weakening of and politicization of state institutions. Politics is often split along tribal and regional lines and with a “winner takes all” electoral system, sections of the country or individuals with merit are often excluded from deriving benefits that they deserve, thus ignoring the principle of meritocracy altogether. There is also the tendency for those in power to skew national development towards their own areas. In building a united and cohesive nation our unity should be our strength. The parallel existence of informal patronage networks alongside formal bureaucratic institutions and the absence of a meritocratic bureaucracy with a sense of role and mission has continued to undermine state effectiveness. State capture by patronage networks has deprived the public bureaucracy of the autonomy and resources needed to build capacity and effectiveness.

Goal

To build a country where hard work pays, and cutting corners does not; a country in which, no matter which tribe or where you come from, you will be rewarded based on merit, not on whom-you-know; and a country in which every young person can hope, and aspire, and reach his or her fullest potential.

Strategy

End politics based on division and the perception that strong parties, both of government and opposition, are a prerequisite for a thriving country; stand with the people of Sierra Leone in support of peace in our country and commit to ensuring that never again shall blood be shed over political differences.

Based on this strategy, the NGC commits to:

- Create an Equalization Fund to be disbursed to the most disadvantaged Districts;
- Enhance the capacity of the country's education institutions to promote and nurture nationhood and integration through the education curriculum and the revitalization of schools, enabling them to become champions of national integration;

- Restructure the National Commission for Democracy, empower it and give it the mandate to address issues of promoting national cohesion;
- Promote the teaching of indigenous languages in schools in areas where the particular language is not predominantly spoken;
- Post participants in the National Youth Service scheme to areas of the country from which they do not hail;
- Promote recitation of the National Pledge and singing the National Anthem as tools to achieve national cohesion.

5.2. Corruption Transparency & Accountability

Sierra Leone, well-endowed with natural capital, has been brought to its knees under the APC government and is today reduced to borrowing and begging from foreign creditors and donors to finance even its most basic development needs. This has been largely due to state sponsored corruption, characterized by rampant contract price inflation; abuse of the procurement processes, with sole sourcing being the most abused process; public accountability reduced to highlighting government projects, without accompanying monetary cost; anti-corruption institutions being underfunded; revelations of stealing and looting not investigated with potential culprits going unpunished, and finding shelter in the Office of the President in an open display of impunity; payments for dubious judgment of debts and questionable settlements; and flagrant nepotism and cronyism.

It is estimated that over 15% of Sierra Leone's GDP is spent on the procurement of goods, services and works. This singular function presents the greatest opportunity for savings in Sierra Leone. A mere 20% saving in procurement could be equivalent to 40% increase in domestic revenue and the potential exists for a saving of up 40% through the application of strategic sourcing in the procurement of goods, services and works. Although there have been major changes to budgeting and financial controls, monitoring and implementation of programs remains poor. Notwithstanding the presence of an Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the formulation of an Anti-corruption strategy, corruption is still on the increase. Consequently, Sierra Leone has featured badly in international corruption assessment ratings, including those for Transparency International and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC).

Goal

To transform Sierra Leone into a country in which the public frowns upon corruption, public officials work for the common good and are accountable and revenue leakages are kept to a minimum with more money becoming available for provision of social services.

Strategy

Widen the scope and strengthen anti-corruption institutions; inculcate value systems in the public and enhance monitoring of institutions as well as enforcing punitive measures; strengthen prevention strategies, eliminate opportunities for corruption in the public and private sectors and prioritize prosecutions and the recovery of proceeds of economic crimes.

The NGC Commits to:

Improve the capacity of anti-corruption institutions (with particular reference to the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Audit Service Commission) and the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament and other initiatives to detect corrupt activities;

Require all persons holding public positions to make annual public asset declarations;

Ensure that the details of all contracts awarded by government or its agencies, including management and shareholding of the company awarded the contract are made public;

Establish a transaction price database of goods and services, that shall be periodically reviewed to conform to market trends in order to ensure transparency in public procurement;

Restructure the National Public Procurement Authority (NPPA) and recruit internationally accredited and certified Procurement Professionals with proven experience in managing public procurement;

Train and equip more procurement specialists;

Recognize the effectiveness of procurement in enhancing the development of less advantaged segments of our society by requiring that 10% of government contracts for all routine/non-critical commodities (stationery, office supplies, provisions, etc.) will be awarded to women, youths and the physically challenged;

Develop the country's value system and implement a robust merit and reward system in public and private life;

Strengthen the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act and capacitate the Agency to better carry out its functions;

Encourage civil society to be more involved in monitoring key government institutions, especially those with huge budgets, and provide them support to tackle issues of transparency and corruption;

Employ Special Prosecutors for Economic Crimes and establish a Special Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Division of the High Court, appointing Special judges to deal with anti-corruption and economic crime cases;

Publish at the end of each financial year details of all the procurement contracts for major government projects from the previous year.

5.3. Good Governance

The fundamental requirement for sustainable development of a state is Good Governance. Together with accountability and probity at all levels of economic activity, it has the potential to hasten the process of economic development by forcing government institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations to be accountable to their stakeholders and the rest of the citizenry. The underfunding of most of the critical government institutions is a major problem with corruption rife in most of these institutions thus rendering them ineffective in the discharge of their statutory mandates. Moreover, the APC Government has been ineffective in blocking leakages and the excesses of the executive whilst numerous Parliamentary Bills are passed under Presidential Certificates of Urgency. This way, democratic institutions have either been grossly politicized or cowered into silence. Furthermore, the quality of personnel in the public service is very low while many Parliamentarians lack the capacity to fully synthesize and analyze Bills placed before the House.

Goal

To institute a fair, just, secure and orderly management of public affairs so that Sierra Leone becomes a society that upholds the rule of law, with institutions that work in accordance with their mandate.

Strategy

Intensify cooperation with the Private Sector, faith based organizations, the media and other non-state actors, in implementing a continuous national values and ethics awareness and education program while strengthening the public service and improving the capacity of Parliament and Parliamentarians to do their work.

The NGC commits to the establishment of a solid, efficient machinery for Good Governance, comprising accountable government and respect for the rule of law and human rights. To achieve this, the NGC will:

- Capacitate Parliament through hiring additional Parliamentary Researchers and Clerks and the provision of logistics and additional funding to enhance its independence in carrying out its oversight and scrutiny roles;
- Strengthen the Committees of Parliament, particularly the Public Accounts Committee, to bolster the work of the ACC and take prompt action on Audit Reports;.
- Develop and Roll out a Service Charter Framework for the delivery of public services that will provide for specific timelines within which services are to be rendered and a mechanism for holding individual officers accountable for delay or failure to render public services or implement government programs;
- Implement mandatory and continuous values and ethics training for all public servants;
- Ensure the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the Boards of State corporations, thereby improving oversight of public resources; and
- Increase housing and hardship allowances for public officials.

5.4. Enhancing Local Government & Decentralization

Sierra Leone is a Constitutional Parliamentary Republic with three spheres of executive government: Central Government, Local Councils and Chiefdom Councils. As there is no constitutional provision for Local Government, only the Local Government Act 2004 provides the main legal framework for Local Councils, although implementation of the new governance structure has been fraught with challenges. Devolution of responsibility to Local Councils has been inordinately slow and is behind schedule, with responsibility for key services such as water and waste management and infrastructure like roads among the important areas remaining under the Central Government's control.

The APC government has only been able to devolve Health (primary and secondary), Education (primary and secondary) and Agriculture to the Councils. A host of other functions like feeder roads, rural water, solid waste management, youth and sport activities are yet to be devolved and this is affecting the delivery of services at the local level. To compound these challenges, Traditional Chiefs are reluctant to yield their long-standing control over collection and spending of local taxes to the new authorities. All of this has weakened the power of Councils to make their presence felt.

Goal

To establish a solid and efficient machinery for Good Governance, comprising accountable government and respect for the rule of law and human rights.

Strategy

Stimulate socio-economic development at local level by providing services to beneficiaries at village level, thus enabling them to become active participants in national development.

The NGC commits to institute the following measures to ensure that local governance and decentralization are enhanced:

Political Decentralization

- Strengthen the sub-structures of MDAs through capacity building and adequate resource allocation;
- Strengthen the role of traditional authorities within the local government system; and
- Improve allowances paid to assembly members.

Restoring & Protecting the Institution of Chieftaincy

- Implement a structured system of conditional grants to enable Local Councils build up their capacity to raise their own revenues, attract investments and strengthen their organizational capabilities;
- Provide monthly salaries to Chiefs;
- Revise the Chieftaincy Act to include clearly defined obligations of Chiefs and a clear distinction between the roles of Chieftdoms and Local Councils.
- Ensure the regular and prompt release of Consolidated Funds disbursements to Chiefs to enable them carry out their functions;
- Establish and support a National House of Chiefs to codify and systematize traditional laws and culture;
- Forge a new and formal collaboration between Chiefs so that relief assistance can be better managed in local communities during natural disasters and other emergencies; and
- Consult traditional authorities on appointments to local government institutions.

Local Government Services & Capacity Building

- Review the Local Government Service regime and practice to ensure that local level action is not stifled by top-heavy bureaucratic institutions, especially in recruitment and procurement, against the background of a seeming scheme of re-centralization; and
- Establish a modern state-of the-art Institute of Local Government Service (ILGS) to train local government practitioners and staff in Sierra Leone.

Fiscal Decentralization

- Abolish the current practice of Central Government manipulation through the procurement process;

- Decentralize and equip the Land Valuation Board (LVB) to provide direct technical support on property valuation to MDAs for enhanced revenue mobilization; and
- Enforce the Municipal Finance Law with the objective of providing space to MDAs to access funds from the capital market for rapid socio-economic development and partner with the private sector to provide job opportunities to local people.

Sanitation Management

- Ensure the consolidation of all existing national sanitation policies, plans and programs into a Comprehensive National Sanitation Program and Action Plan;
- Establish a National Sanitation Fund to fund the Action Plan from and to include allocations from the Consolidated Fund; contributions from sanitation-related industries; and sanitation-related fines; and
- Promote the recycling of refuse through the use of incentive packages.

5.5. The Judiciary Human Rights & Rule of Law

The biggest obstacle to reform in the justice sector currently is a lack of serious government commitment to implementing the solutions laid out in successive strategies. This lack of commitment manifests itself in the selection of which bills get taken to Parliament to be enacted and once enacted, following through on the implementation of said Acts of Parliament. There is also poor coordination at all levels between all justice sector institutions and between them and others. Moreover, there are huge delays in the courts leading to backlog of cases partly because the enactment of the Local Courts Act (where the majority of Sierra Leoneans actually go to seek justice) has not been effected. This needs to be done as it would help to ease the case load on the higher courts.

Also of great concern is the widespread abuse of suspects who are often kept in remand for protracted periods of time; and inadequate detention and custodial facilities for all categories of inmates. Because of corruption, citizens lack trust in the justice system. This, coupled with the weak infrastructural facilities to house the judicial offices as well as the lack of access to modern machines and equipment that are supportive of the management of modern and efficient courts, constitute a serious challenge.

Although there was a recent recruitment drive for Judges and Magistrates they are still insufficient to adequately administer speedy justice nationwide. As at December 2017, there were only 35 Judges for the whole country including the Chief Justice and 30 Magistrates. These numbers are still grossly inadequate and yet even those that are on board have not been given sufficient tools to carry out their work in terms of office space, vehicles and even court rooms.

Goal

Every Sierra Leonean shall have confidence that the country's legal and justice systems can support and protect them and that nobody is above the law.

Strategy

Improve upon the performance of the judiciary; enforce respect for human rights and rule of law;

ensure timely justice for every Sierra Leonean by reforming the Justice Sector and investing in infrastructure, equipment, personnel, training and management and restoring its financial independence by restoring its self-accounting status.

NGC commits to:

- Within 3 months of assuming office, review and act upon the recommendations of the recent report on the 2017 Constitutional Review. Commission
- Support the training of paralegals to support the justice sector especially for working in rural communities;
- Revamp the Judicial Service Commission and improve on the conditions of service of judges and magistrates;
- Institute a performance management system for judges and senior personnel in the Judiciary;
- Equip the entire Justice sector – from police to the Supreme court - through a comprehensive capacity building process;
- Ensure there is adequate separation of powers between Judiciary and others arms of government, especially the Executive branch;
- Enact an Administration of Justice Act and introduce a modern electronic list system to deliver justice in a timely and effective manner; and
- Modernize all court processes and provide regular training and exchange programs for Judges, Lawyers and Judicial Support Staff.

5.6. Strengthening Press Freedom & Access to Information

Sierra Leone's Constitution guarantees freedoms of speech and the press, although these rights are sometimes restricted in practice. Under the Public Order Act of 1965, criminal defamation is punishable by prison terms of three to seven years, while the separate crime of publishing false news is punishable by up to two years in prison. The 2013 Right to Access Information Act includes penalties for government agencies that fail to comply with its provisions on information requests. Media in Sierra Leone are regulated by the IMC, whose members are appointed by the president on the advice of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and subject to the approval of Parliament, according to the Independent Media Commission Act of 2000 as amended in 2006 and 2007.

The IMC provides an alternative to litigation under the Public Order Act; aggrieved parties can register complaints with the commission, which grants them a hearing. If the IMC agrees that a complaint of defamation or falsehood is valid, it can impose a fine as well as require the offending outlet to publish a retraction and an apology. The IMC can also summon editors at its own discretion. The government frequently interferes with the work of journalists and media outlets in an attempt to control content and its increasingly aggressive intimidation of journalists has entailed both censorship and self-censorship.

Goal

To create an environment in which the press is free and responsible, and providing useful information to the population.

Strategy

Work with the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) to ensure journalists in the country can do their jobs without let or hindrance.

NGC commits to:

Support to the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) to ensure it has the capacity to do what needs to be done to ensure media practitioners in the country can perform their role effectively; and

Take steps to repeal Part 5 of the Public Order Act and all other laws that hinder press freedom in Sierra Leone.

5.7. Security: The Army & Police

The people of Sierra Leone have become highly concerned about their security due to the increasing levels of crime and lawlessness under the APC government which has woefully failed to provide security for the country and its citizens. The existing laws are largely not enforced, and when they are, they are done selectively, often with interference from the Executive. The Army, Navy and Air Force are poorly resourced with inadequate trained and qualified manpower whilst the National Fire Force is even more grossly incapacitated and only covers a few urban areas. The immigration service has severe management problems and needs to improve on its professionalism.

Goal

To keep Sierra Leoneans and their properties safe and protected from internal and external threats.

Strategy

Deepen reforms in the Security Sector and improve collaboration in capacitating the Security Forces to detect, deter and disrupt threats to our people and the country's sovereignty.

The NGC commits to:

Utilize the military to engage in productive pursuits eg agriculture and engineering;

Improve the capacity and accountability of the Independent Police Complaints Board;

Provide training for the OSD wing of the Police to ensure that they execute their functions based on professional standards with focus on respect for Human Rights and fair treatment of people;

Establish and capacitate a functional Fire Force service in all District Headquarter towns;

Ensure that the Office of National Security (ONS) works consistently in line with international standards;

- Set up an integrated immigration network system linking all border posts with the
- Immigration Headquarters in Freetown to facilitate data processing and storage;

- Equip the Security Services and Anti-drug Agencies to confront sophisticated criminals;
- Work with our partners to eradicate the ever-present international threats of terrorism, piracy, money laundering and drugs and child trafficking;
- Increase the number of operational police stations;
- Work with other regional and international actors towards peace and stability in our region; and
- Build and equip a Forensic Laboratory to enhance science-related criminal investigations.

5.8. Diplomacy & International Cooperation

A careful examination of the key issues that govern a nation's foreign policy on global issues such as national history, geography and economic limitations, could throw some light on Sierra Leone's global performance in twenty-first century diplomacy. Successive governments from Milton Margai in 1961 to the current Ernest Koroma- APC government, have remarkably failed to adopt and pursue an objective and effective foreign policy.

Sierra Leone currently lacks quality resource capacity in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation itself. As a result, the country has not been able to develop a strategic and coordinated doctrinal foreign policy beyond the convoluted theory of "Non-alignment". Because of the complexities and multi-dimensional nature of the challenges and opportunities associated with modern day diplomacy such as terrorism, international trade and globalization, territorial and expansionist ambitions, Sierra Leone cannot afford to continue to sit on the fence and play the role of a spectator.

Goal

Sierra Leone becomes a peaceful, prosperous and globally competitive country able to project, promote and protect the country's interests and image globally.

Strategy

Make Sierra Leone's Foreign Missions more functional to operate and participate actively in sub-regional, regional and other international initiatives.

NGC commits to:

- Professionalize the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, equipping it with career diplomats who will be appropriately trained;
- Upgrade the quality of our foreign embassies;
- Play an active role in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), Mano River Union and other relevant institutions like the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD);
- Continue all commitments to the Commonwealth, Non- Aligned Movement, the
- United Nations and all other multilateral organizations;

- Redefine the country's Foreign Policy that will establish the country's global trade priorities and pursue a robust reciprocal bilateral and multilateral trade, taxation and investment relations through regional and international trade agreements;
- Facilitate annual trade meetings between Ambassadors, Provincial Ministers and Chairmen of District Councils in order to maximize trade opportunities for district economies; and
- Support the move by the African Court of Justice to expand its remit to cover human rights abuse.

5.9. Mobilizing Diaspora Resources

Sierra Leone Diaspora capital is currently handicapped by numerous perceived obstacles to investment, particularly issues related to government policy/practice, weak infrastructure, and some local human capital challenges. The top-five greatest diaspora-perceived obstacles to investment in Sierra Leone (in order of importance) are the poor supply of electricity, lack of a strong telecommunications infrastructure, difficulties in identifying suppliers, the lack of skilled mechanics, and the lack of a strong physical infrastructure.

The Diaspora Office does not function well. Whilst its objectives are laudable, the Office has been politicized. Though the diaspora contributes significantly to the economy they are disadvantaged in many areas, including politics. There are no arrangements for diasporas to vote outside the country.

Goal

To encourage Sierra Leoneans abroad to return or invest in the country through remittances and other types of transfers.

Strategy

Recognize the Sierra Leone Diaspora as a precious and under-utilized resource of expertise, investments, experience, and entrepreneurship that shall be tapped into and deployed creatively on a host of development programs in the country.

Using this strategy, the NGC commits to address these challenges and ensure greater involvement of the Sierra Leone Diaspora by:

- Taking necessary measures to enable Sierra Leoneans in the Diaspora to vote overseas in public elections;
- Encouraging highly skilled Sierra Leoneans to share their knowledge and transfer their skills to the country by having volunteer services or short-term consultancy services or partnership between local and Diaspora professional's organizations;
- Establishing an enabling regulatory and business environment to harness and expand the impact of the Diaspora including the simplification of bureaucratic processes to create and foster a conducive environment for the Diaspora to invest and start businesses through the setting up of one-stop shops that facilitate diaspora investment and enterprise;
- Creating new financial products and facilitating access to capital such as supporting trans-boundary investment and innovative financing schemes for social and private enterprises. This will include the injection of capital into the economy that supports the SME sector,

provision of local and transnational grants and other forms of capital, match-funding schemes, access to or creation of suitable public-private partnerships (PPP) and public finance initiatives (PFI) for the Diaspora;

- Develop business and technical skills of the Diaspora through provision and support of training and capacity-building in enterprise, business development and related management skills;
- Ensure policy coherence at national and local levels in relation to Diaspora engagement strategies to include a link up with global migration discourses such as Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs), as well as regional or sub-regional dialogues for cross-border cooperation, and mainstreaming relevant national policies into local planning mechanisms – all as a critical component for national development;
- Create conducive frameworks for facilitating and harnessing migrant remittances for social impact;
- Consider the provision of incentives in the form of tax relief proportional to the level of remittances channelled into productive investments;
- Formulate coordinated strategies for harnessing remittances for development and peace-building and encourage public and private sector actors to focus on new technological innovations to facilitate alternative remittance transfer systems, involving mobile money and digital currencies to increase competition and drive down transfer costs;
- Formulate data, research, and study of best practices by supporting a coordinated approach that documents and shares best practices and lessons learned and enables evidence-based policy interventions; and
- Conduct more household surveys that enable assessments on the profile and nature of Diaspora entrepreneurs, the size of investments, sectors of interest and those that Diaspora investment can make more of an impact in, to inform policy planning and strategic interventions. Also more data will be collected about the magnitude of remittance flows, remittance channels, and methods for improving the integration of remittances into development efforts.

