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**PROMOTING JOB CREATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN
MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES AND THEIR SUPPLY CHAINS:
SIERRA LEONE**

Yukiko Arai, Ata Cissé, Madjiguene Sock

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Preface

The primary goal of the ILO is to contribute, with its member States, to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people, a goal embedded in the ILO Declaration 2008 on *Social Justice for a Fair Globalization*,¹ and which has now been widely adopted by the international community.

In order to support member States and the social partners to reach the goal, the ILO pursues a Decent Work Agenda which comprises four interrelated areas: Respect for fundamental worker's rights and international labour standards, employment promotion, social protection and social dialogue. Explanations of this integrated approach and related challenges are contained in a number of key documents: in those explaining and elaborating the concept of decent work,² in the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122) and in the Global Employment Agenda.

The Global Employment Agenda was developed by the ILO through tripartite consensus of its Governing Body's Employment and Social Policy Committee. Since its adoption in 2003 it has been further articulated and made more operational and today it constitutes the basic framework through which the ILO pursues the objective of placing employment at the centre of economic and social policies.³

The Employment Sector is fully engaged in the implementation of the Global Employment Agenda, and is doing so through a large range of technical support and capacity building activities, advisory services and policy research. As part of its research and publications programme, the Employment Sector promotes knowledge-generation around key policy issues and topics conforming to the core elements of the Global Employment Agenda and the Decent Work Agenda. The Sector's publications consist of books, monographs, working papers, employment reports and policy briefs.⁴

While the main findings of the research initiatives are disseminated through the Employment Working Papers, the *Employment Report* series is designed to consolidate the major evaluations of employment programmes, conclusions and resolutions of workshops and seminars, and other information details that are particularly, though not exclusively useful to the work of the ILO and its constituent partners.

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¹ See http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/dgo/download/dg_announce_en.pdf.

² See the successive Reports of the Director-General to the International Labour Conference: *Decent work* (1999); *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge* (2001); *Working out of poverty* (2003).

³ See <http://www.ilo.org/gea>. And in particular: *Implementing the Global Employment Agenda: Employment strategies in support of decent work*. "Vision" document, ILO, 2006.

⁴ See <http://www.ilo.org/employment>.

Foreword

This paper examines the employment impact of multinational enterprises (MNEs) in Sierra Leone. Its principal purpose is to explore the potential role that MNEs could play in creating more and better jobs. It is part of a broader study that also includes Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

This action-oriented research is intended to provide a timely and meaningful contribution towards tackling national youth employment challenges exacerbated by eleven years of armed conflict. Through dialogue with key stakeholders, the study seeks to understand the major constraints on the recruitment of local youth. Moreover, information obtained first-hand from the MNEs contributes toward promoting evidence-based policy discussion at the country level, reinforcing the ILO's efforts in promoting the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (the ILO MNE Declaration) which aims "to encourage the positive contribution that multinational enterprises can make to economic and social progress."

Employment and decent work for youth are of utmost concern for both the public and the private sector in the post-conflict period. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is expected to bring job creation opportunities. While MNEs cannot absorb all those seeking employment, they do create a substantial number of jobs through direct employment. And they have the potential to create many more jobs through their value chain operations in the country, as well as indirectly by stimulating broader economic activity.

One of the important outcomes of the process behind this study is that the participating MNEs expressed their willingness to engage further in eliminating impediments to expand youth employment. We hope that the findings and recommendations of this study foster a partnership approach that supports Sierra Leone's national development goals while ensuring that the MNEs also benefit through enhanced longer-term competitiveness.

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The authors above all wish to express their appreciation to all those who participated in the interviews and focus group discussions, including the representatives of the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security (MoELSS), Sierra Leone Employers Federation (SLEF), and Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC). Without their valuable contribution, this study could not have been undertaken.

They also thankfully acknowledge the insights and collaboration received from a range of colleagues in the ILO headquarters and in the field structure, the staff of FocusAfrica, and the representatives of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) in Freetown.

Special thanks are due to: Umarr Sesay of FocusAfrica and ILO colleagues based in Freetown who facilitated the logistics at the country level; management and specialists of the ILO Sub-Regional Office in Dakar who took part in the December 2009 technical review meeting; Mpenka Kabundi, Sina Chuma-Mkandawire, Claudia Coenjaerts and Gianni Rosas for the overall guidance and support throughout; Mohammed Gassama for the technical advice and review of the draft reports; and Sara Elder for the advice on statistics.

Lastly, sincere appreciation goes to those who made the publication of this report possible: Ricarda McFalls for her strong backing and technical guidance; Emily Sims for the technical support in finalising the report; and Irina Akimova for the production assistance.

This action-oriented MNE study in Sierra Leone was funded by the Government of Japan, as part of the UNIDO-ILO Youth Employment project in the Mano River Union countries.

Acronyms

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CWIQ	Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GST	Goods and Services Tax
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German technical cooperation agency)
IDP	Internally Displaced People
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IT	Information Technology
MAFFS	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security
MNE	Multinational Enterprise
MoELSS	Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security
MRU	Mano River Union
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SLEF	Sierra Leone Employers Federation
SLLC	Sierra Leone Labour Congress
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USD	United States Dollar
YEN	Youth Employment Network

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Executive Summary

The employment challenges of youth in Sierra Leone are closely linked to the effects of the recently settled 11-year civil war. More than half of the youth population – who constitute approximately 80 per cent of the total population - are illiterate. Finding jobs in the formal economy has been difficult. Unemployment amongst urban youth is high. Access to jobs for young women has been especially challenging.

Multinational enterprises (MNEs) operating in the Mano River Union (MRU) countries in industries such as mining and agriculture are a promising yet untapped source of job creation. Yet many of the posts created are seen to be filled by foreign workers due to limited skilled labour available locally. How can investment entering the region generate more quality jobs for local young women and men and contribute further to national development?

To help answer this question, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) undertook an action-oriented research programme on maximizing local job creation through MNEs (both direct and indirect employment), focussing on youth employment. The research identifies various constraints on the recruitment of local labour (especially young women and men) and possible strategies to overcome such constraints in the selected economic sectors.

Funded by the Japanese Government, the research programme consists of two components: (i) a country-level exercise led by the ILO in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone; and (ii) a survey of MNEs operating in the four MRU countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) led by UNIDO and targeting MNE headquarters offices as well as their subsidiaries in each country. The present report is an output of the country-level exercise undertaken by the ILO in Sierra Leone.

Using the ILO Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (the ILO MNE Declaration, the ILO's key instrument on corporate social responsibility) as an entry point, the country-level exercise collected first-hand information and promoted interactive dialogue amongst key stakeholders on practical ways forward. MNEs participated in interviews. The exercise provides an input into further policy dialogue and programming activities to boost youth employment in MNEs and their supply chains.

The Sierra Leone study focuses on agriculture, mining and banking—sectors which the government has identified as priorities in its 2005 and 2008 Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and where multinational enterprises currently operate in the country.

The key findings include the following:

- Multinational enterprises (MNEs) in Sierra Leone are wide-ranging in terms of nationality and size. Company headquarters span Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America, and local operations in Sierra Leone range in size from 6 to over 600 full-time employees.
- While it is not sufficient to absorb all youth seeking employment, MNEs in the three sectors generate a substantive amount of direct employment opportunities.
- MNEs must import most of their materials as necessary goods are not available in the local market, limiting potential for generating indirect employment opportunities.

- Youth represent over half of employees in all three sectors. The number of women employed in banking sector is substantially higher in comparison with the other two sectors.
- MNEs expect to expand their operations, generating new jobs in the near future, particularly in mining. As these sectors develop further the MNEs anticipate additional employment opportunities, including for more advanced and sophisticated positions in fields such as research and design, sales, management, manufacturing and marketing.
- MNEs operating in rural areas expressed concern about meeting current and future staffing needs as young people increasingly migrate to urban areas.
- All MNEs interviewed agreed that youth unemployment and the constraints in hiring youth are due to the quality of education offered to youth leaving them insufficiently skilled to compete in the labour market. MNEs found that young people's motivation and willingness to learn could at times compensate for the skills gap.
- With the necessary skills and experience in short supply, especially for key positions, MNEs look to neighbouring countries such as Gambia, Ghana, and Nigeria to fill these labour gaps. Although the percentage of expatriates working within the MNEs is minimal, they occupy most of the skilled positions. MNEs also fill the skills gaps through additional in-house training. MNEs expressed the desire to one day have only Sierra Leonean staff.
- Some MNEs stated that they attempted to increase staffing levels. However, this resulted in having too many employees kept busy with menial tasks, affecting not only the workers' morale but also the company's productivity.
- MNEs considered the infrastructure to be unreliable for their present operations, restricting their ability to expand and diversify production, and consequently hampering job creation.

Although MNEs are very much aware of the common challenges they face, there has not been a significant concerted effort to collaborate within and across sectors to find solutions, nor has there been much dialogue between the public and private sectors to address the constraints. Aside from the banking sector, there has not been much effort to develop partnerships with training institutions and universities to update teaching curricula to meet private sector needs.

This research confirmed that employment and decent work for youth in Sierra Leone are of utmost concern for both the public and the private sector. The MNEs interviewed indicated that they have made efforts to employ more local youth, and are willing and able to further engage to eliminate impediments to further expand youth employment.

For all sectors, the skills gap is impeding expansion of employment opportunities for youth. The education and vocational training systems need to be modernized and strengthened to better meet labour market demands for skills. Investment is also needed to develop and maintain adequate and reliable infrastructure, and to invest in rural development to stem the flow of migration to urban centres.

Sector-specific strategies for promoting youth employment include the following:

Agriculture: Establishing an effective platform for dialogue

MNEs interviewed explained that engagement has not been organized in ways that sectoral issues and needs could be brought forward. They suggested establishing a sectoral platform or further strengthening the capacity of the Chamber of Commerce to allow MNEs to engage in an effective dialogue amongst themselves and with other stakeholders.

MNEs also recommended that the government create a national scholarship programme where beneficiaries are able to work for the government or companies to reimburse their educational expenses, which would fund other beneficiaries. MNEs expressed a willingness to participate in such a programme, if offered some incentives to contribute. MNEs also expressed a strong desire to be perceived by the government as “partners”, rather than as donors. In this context, there is an opportunity to foster public-private partnership, with the assistance of third parties such as international development organizations. To this end, the International Labour Organization could leverage its existing engagements with all relevant parties, particularly concerning activities that already focus on youth employment.

Mining: Revitalising dialogue

The revival of the Chamber of Mines, with MNEs eager to participate, presents an opportunity for the sector to collectively tackle the skills development challenges in the sector. MNEs have already discussed the possibility of establishing a “mining institute” through the Chamber, which could foster partnerships between the existing company training facilities to make training more widely available while providing incentives for MNEs that offer their mine sites for training. And the MNEs suggested that industry and government partner to jointly develop and implement strategies to address the skills gap.

Banking: Enhancing the employment dimension of existing dialogue

In the banking sector dialogue has been on-going. The Bankers’ Association is active and provides a promising entry point to engage collectively with MNEs in the sector. A more structured dialogue could be developed, with the Bankers’ Association serving as a platform for dialogue and common action.

MNEs have had sporadic discussions with schools on improving the curricula to strengthen the skills of graduates hoping to work in banking. The Bank of Sierra Leone is currently formulating strategies to create a banking school, and further involvement of MNEs would be desirable, to build on their experience providing some form of training and internships within their operation. MNEs have already initiated some form of dialogue with the Bank of Sierra Leone, which the Bankers’ Association could play a key role in strengthening and expanding.

In summary, dialogue and public-private partnership is a way forward for promotion of youth employment, starting with the sectors with the highest concentration of MNEs. Organized dialogue has not yet happened on a concerted level; nevertheless, the opportunities for far-reaching and sustained dialogue exist.

Introduction

The promotion of decent and productive employment for all, including young people, is the objective of the ILO. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the unemployment rate is estimated to have risen to 8.2 per cent in 2009 as a result of the recent economic crisis⁵. However, the impact of the crisis should be seen in conjunction with other indicators such as vulnerable employment and working poverty. The overall vulnerable employment rate, defined as the proportion of the total workforce who are either self-employed without employees or unpaid family workers, is likely to have risen to 80% of the employed⁶. Workers in this region are particularly vulnerable where two thirds of the workers were at risk of falling below the extreme poverty line. Many are engaged in low-productivity employment with without social protection. Moreover, the annual growth of youth labour force shows little likelihood of slowing down. Creating opportunities for youth to engage in decent productive activities throughout the continent is essential and urgent.

Sierra Leone⁷ is no exception to this urgent need. The country's economy deteriorated drastically from 1991 to 2002 due to the civil war. People suffered from danger and disruption in their lives; and plantations and mines were destroyed, significantly damaging the economy. The country has been concentrating on rebuilding these two largest sectors and stabilizing the economy to promote foreign investment, in order to promote youth employment and tackle working poverty.

The potential for youth employment is high in industries such as mining and agriculture (cash crops), with further potential in their value chains. However, jobs are often filled by skilled foreign workers because local young women and men generally lack the required skills; and MNEs often must import goods and services rather than procure them locally in view of the insufficient capacity of the local market. More jobs could clearly be generated if MNEs were able to source more goods from local producers.

How can the full potential of MNEs for local job creation be reached? It was in this context that the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) decided to undertake an action-oriented research programme designed to contribute to maximizing local job creation in MNEs (in terms of both direct and indirect employment), with emphasis on youth employment. The research programme is aimed at analysing and identifying the various constraints on the recruitment of local labour (especially young women and men) and at identifying experiences and future strategies to overcome such constraints in selected economic sectors.

This UNIDO-ILO action-oriented MNE research programme consisted of two components: (i) a country-level exercise led by the ILO in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone;⁸ and (ii) a survey of MNEs operating in the four MRU countries⁹ led by UNIDO,

⁵ ILO, Global Employment Trends, 2010

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Youth in Sierra Leone is defined as those between the ages of 15 and 35

⁸ Country-level exercises took place during the months of October and November 2009. A total of 57 MNEs were interviewed, 27 in Côte d'Ivoire, 17 in Liberia, and 13 in Sierra Leone, or approximately 60 per cent of those identified for the study.

⁹ Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

targeting MNEs headquarter offices and their subsidiaries in each country. The research programme was designed¹⁰ as a component of the broader MRU multi-stakeholder youth employment programme funded by the Government of Japan, and implemented by the ILO, UNIDO, the Youth Employment Network (YEN) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The present report is an output of the country-level exercise undertaken by the ILO in Sierra Leone¹¹. The principal objectives of this action-oriented study was to collect first-hand information, engage diverse stakeholders, including MNEs, in dialogue and seek practical ways of contributing to addressing the national challenges of youth employment. FDI trends and Government policies (including national development strategies, employment and sectoral policies) have been analysed with a view to gaining a better understanding of the environment in which MNEs operate. The ILO Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (ILO MNE Declaration), adopted in 1977 and revised most recently in 2006, provided a research framework for the exercise, as the instrument provides clear guidance on how MNEs can contribute to the national development priorities in the countries in which they operate.

This action-oriented MNE study is the result of a process of engagement at the country level with key actors including MNEs, through interviews and focus group discussions. It is also intended to serve as an input into further policy dialogue and programming activities to boost youth employment in MNEs and their supply chains.¹²

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What types of jobs are currently found in MNEs and their supply chains?
- What are the prospects of creating more and better jobs through MNEs? Where does the future potential lie in terms of job prospects?
- What are the future skills needs?
- Do MNEs have a role to play in narrowing the “skills gap”?

Note on methodology

The ILO MNE study for Sierra Leone focuses on the three priority sectors of the government as identified in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) - agriculture, mining and banking - which are also the sectors with the highest concentration of MNEs. For purposes of this study, multinational enterprises operating in the country, including Sierra Leonean enterprises, are defined as those “whether they are of public, mixed or private ownership, which own or control production, distribution, services or other facilities outside the country in which they are based.”¹³

¹⁰ A joint ILO-UNIDO scoping mission conducted in late 2008 assessed the feasibility of the study.

¹¹ The country-level exercise in Sierra Leone was undertaken during an ILO mission that visited the country on November 3-12, 2009.

¹² Although the United Nations defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, the present study follows the national definition, which is young persons between ages of 15 and 35.

¹³ ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, 1997, most recently updated in 2006

The analysis and recommendations presented in this report are based on first-hand information gathered in November 2009 from senior-level executives representing 13 MNEs (those interviewed forthwith referred to collectively and individually as “MNEs” or “MNE” respectively), including six in agriculture, three in mining and four in banking. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes, followed by an interactive discussion with representative(s) of the MNE. The discussions focussed on issues relating to the recruitment of youth, partnerships with local suppliers, current Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies, national labour laws and practices, and the current interactions of MNEs with the various line ministries. The MNEs were given the opportunity to discuss the challenges that they face in recruiting locally and to share their opinions on ways of improving the sector as a whole, including possible partnerships.

Dialogue was also held with representatives of the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security (MoELSS), Sierra Leone Employers Federation (SLEF), and Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC); as well as with other ministries, chamber of commerce, youth groups, and development partners (see Appendix B). Each meeting lasted approximately 60 minutes, with participants engaging in interactive dialogue on issues related to youth employment, the roles that they could play and the role that they expect MNEs to play in creating decent employment opportunities for youth.

Policy documents and statistics were also analysed.

ILO representatives introduced the principles of the ILO MNE Declaration to the delegates during the dialogues and interview sessions. The new ILO Helpdesk service, which provides advice to companies on international labour standards, was also introduced.

Limitations of the study

Prior to arriving in Sierra Leone, all the MNEs identified in the three focus sectors were contacted to request for an interview. Due to scheduling difficulties, it was not possible for the team to meet all the MNEs. The 13 MNEs interviewed represent 54 per cent and include the leading MNEs in the selected sectors.

Table 1. Participating MNEs as a proportion of total MNEs for each sector

Sector ¹⁴	Number of MNEs identified	Number of MNEs interviewed	Percentage of MNEs interviewed
Agriculture/agro-forestry	9	6	54%
Mining	10	3	30%
Banking	5	4	80%
Telecommunications	4	0	-
Oil	2	0	-

It should also be noted that the employment-related data presented in the report are only indicative, as they are based on figures provided voluntarily by the MNEs interviewed. While the sample size may be sufficient to provide an overview or a trend for a particular

¹⁴ The three sectors highlight is in blue are covered by the ILO MNE study. Other sectors were included in the MNE survey carried out by UNIDO.

sector, and the data generated may provide an indication of the amount of employment generated by each new MNE operation, the aggregate figures would have differed considerably if other MNEs had been included in the interviews, particularly in relation to the data on employment prospects.

Another major constraint in carrying out the analysis was the general absence of labour market information and reliable statistics. The country is in need of both quantitative and qualitative data on employment.

Structure of the report

Chapter 1 describes Sierra Leone's socioeconomic profile and FDI trends, provides an overview of youth employment and indicates the general status of dialogue at a macro level. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 analyse each of the selected economic sectors, including: current job profiles, skills and other gaps; future job prospects; an assessment of the extent to which MNEs are interested and/or willing to engage in broader youth employment challenges; and each sub-section concludes with some recommendations on the way forward. Chapter 5 concludes with the general findings from the study and presents the overall recommendations.

Chapter 1 Economic development, employment trends and social dialogue

Socioeconomic profile

Sierra Leone has suffered dramatic economic decline and political instability and has gone through five military coups and suffered a brutal armed conflict lasting 11 years. From the time of independence to the mid 1970's, Sierra Leone's economy grew at an average rate of 4 percent per year with agriculture maintaining a central role in the economy¹⁵. The country was almost self-sufficient in rice production – one of its main staples – and relied heavily on cash crops such as coffee, cocoa, and cassava. The country's rich soil produces a diversity of crops ranging from cassava and other root vegetables, palm oil, and peanuts with rice and cocoa dominating export earnings in agriculture. Despite its impressively rich soil and abundance in agricultural, the country has not been able to fully exploit its resources and has fallen prey to corruption and misappropriation of funds from the sectors earnings.

With rising costs of oil and inputs in the 1980s, growth deteriorated as rice production fell drastically. From 1980 to 1989, the country grew at an average rate of 0.923 percent per year.¹⁶ This anaemic growth was caused in part by inflation, decreases in export earnings, a severe imbalance in external payments, and more generally by inappropriate domestic policies which weakened public institutions, distorted markets and blocked infrastructure development.¹⁷ Agriculture and services (with a high concentration in tourism) dominated in the economy up to 1989.

The civil war from 1991 to 2002 devastated the country. Two million people fleeing the violence became internally displaced¹⁸ while about 30 percent of the educated nationals left the country.¹⁹ Critical infrastructure such as water, electricity, and roads were destroyed. A sharp decline in GDP growth in 1992 was a result of mining activities coming to a standstill as the rebels attacked and took over the diamond mines.²⁰ Agriculture output dropped and manufacturing ceased as people sought safety in urban areas. By 1997, a military junta ruled the country²¹, further affecting the economic and political stability of Sierra Leone. Growth rates continued to decline, as did the quality of life of citizens. Table 2 outlines the country's GDP growth in percentage during the war.

¹⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization: FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Sierra Leone, <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/004/W3985E/W3985E00.HTM>

¹⁶ Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) 2005 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), p.73

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 52

¹⁸ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) Employment Promotion Program: Youth Resettlement and Reintegration in Sierra Leone

¹⁹ UNCTAD: Investment Policy Review of Sierra Leone, p. 2

²⁰ GOSL PRSP 2005, p.54

²¹ Ibid.

Table 2. Sierra Leone GDP during civil war – 1990 to 2002

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
GDP growth (annual %)	3	2	-19	1	-2	-8	5	-17	-1	-8	4	18	27

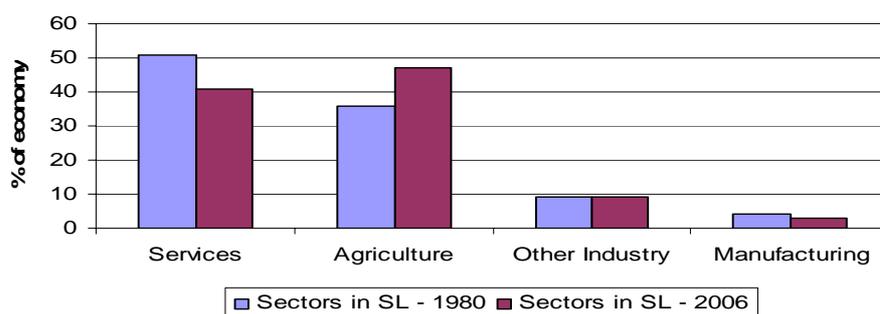
Sources: World bank World Development Indicators: Sierra Leone GDP

With the formal economy shrinking by nearly 40 percent²² and institutions in complete collapse²³, the country faced an incredible challenge of rebuilding its economy, institutions, and social morale in the post-war period.

The economic recovery beginning from 2000 onwards was largely supported by the re-population of the country. Once people began to return home to their farms and cities, the country shifted from a nearly zero production level to a growth rate of 18 percent in 2001 and 27 percent in 2002²⁴. Although the war continued until 2002, this positive trend was observed after 2000. What was clear is that relative political stability in the post-war period brought about positive GDP growth, and the country's economy began to grow at an average rate of 10.10 percent²⁵.

However, despite the abundance of natural resources, including minerals, agriculture and fisheries, the economy remains dominated by production of cash crops and services. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Sectoral shifts in Sierra Leone - 1980 to 2006



Source: UNCTAD Statistics, 2008

Foreign direct investment trends in Sierra Leone

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) reached 32.5 million US Dollars (USD) in 1990, but evaporated during Sierra Leone's civil war. At the end of the war in 2002, FDI began to increase again, and became instrumental in restoring economic growth rates of 6 percent and more, concentrated in the agriculture, diamond, and construction sectors. After years of

²² UNCTAD Investment Policy Review of Sierra Leone, p. 2

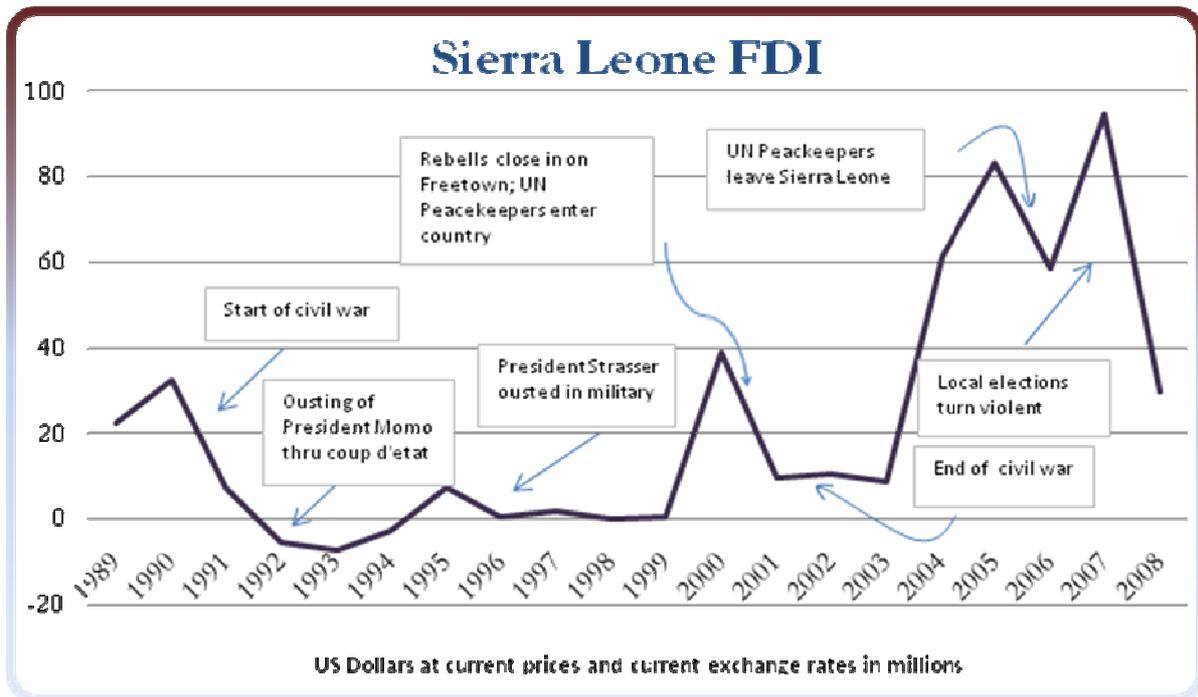
²³ Ibid.

²⁴ World Bank Development Indicators

²⁵ IMF GDP for Sierra Leone. Average rate is calculated from GDP percentage changes from 2002 to 2008

instability and stalled investments, Sierra Leone's FDI finally began to grow, reaching 97 million USD in 2007²⁶.

Figure 2. Sierra Leone FDI Inflows from 1989 to 2008



Source: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Statistical Database²⁷

As the figure indicates, FDI into the country was extremely volatile, particularly during key historical periods marked by violence and political instability. The period between 1992 and 1995 FDI plummeted during heavy periods of violence which forced companies to leave the country. Although the war officially ended in 2002, the 2007 local and presidential elections triggered outbursts of violence around the country²⁸. Fortunately, the violence has subsided and the political environment has stabilized. The government hosted a trade and investment conference in November 2009 to highlight its political stability and development progress and present investment opportunities now available.²⁹

Employment trends

Up-to-date employment-related statistics and data are limited in Sierra Leone. Published data on unemployment varies, due to differences in methodologies used and how unemployment is defined. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP-II) put the rate at 6.5% (11.1% in urban area and 4.3% in rural area)³⁰ in 2007. The Core Welfare Indicator

²⁶ UNCTAD, Statistical Database <http://stats.unctad.org/FDI/>

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ BBC News International, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7004686.stm>

²⁹ Sierra Leone Conference, <http://www.sierraleoneconference2009.org/index.html>

³⁰ PRSP-II 2008, p.31

Questionnaire survey (CWIQ) 2007³¹ estimated the overall unemployment rate at 5.9% (9.5% in urban area and 4.2% in rural area) and underemployment at 34.9% (34.2% in urban area and 35.2% in rural area, 37.1% for men and 33.1% for women).

Unemployment, however, is just one dimension of the labour market, and what is perhaps more important is the prevalence of vulnerable employment (own account or unpaid workers) and working poverty. Many workers are at risk of falling below the extreme poverty line.

Lack of employment opportunities and insufficient education affect Sierra Leone's youth population. The number of youths seeking jobs in 2007 was put at 500,000.³² Of the whole population, 53.4 percent of youth are illiterate and most live in urban areas³³.

A study conducted by the World Bank in 2009³⁴ on youth employment found the following:

- Youth constitute 34 percent of the population.
- Employment of young people is concentrated in agricultural activities, in the informal sector, and among the self-employed.
- Four percent of all young people are unemployed yet the number of underemployed youth is staggering.
- One in five youth are underemployed, defined as having a 'job that is not sufficient either due to low wages or to the part time or seasonal nature of employment [or] having a lower quality job than one that offers fulltime employment'.
- Urban residents between 15 and 24 years of age are 25 times as likely to be unemployed than their rural counterparts.
- Among those aged 20-24, one in three urban youth and one in six rural youth is inactive in the labour market, with similar inactivity rates for male and female youth.
- Formal sector employment increases with age, but it remains very low across the life cycle (at just 9 percent of the working-age population).
- Less than half of young workers receive payment for their labour, compared with two-thirds of adults 35 and older, even though young people tend to be better educated than adults.
- In the short term, the agricultural and agribusiness sector and public sector works hold the greatest potential to absorb a large number of unskilled young workers.
- In the medium to longer term, promotion of export products, such as cocoa and gari, offers the greatest potential for major increases in employment opportunities and incomes in rural areas.

A survey of employers, also conducted by the World Bank, found that "limited job opportunities for young people are linked more closely to the general lack of economic opportunities for business operation and development than to age-related factors"³⁵.

³¹ Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire Survey (CWIQ) 2007 Final statistical report, November 2007, p.110

³² Date-Bah and Delelignie, ILO 2008, p.12

³³ Sierra Leone Decent Work Country Programme (2010-2012), p.3

³⁴ Peeter et al., 2009

³⁵ World Bank, Youth Employment in Sierra Leone, p. 5

However, some features of the labour market in Sierra Leone do disadvantage young people. Many employers prefer not to hire people between the age of 18 and 24, especially women. They instead prefer to hire workers based on strong social connections, which young people generally lack. Employers perceive the skill level of their workers as low and problematic. The skill shortage is more serious for agricultural businesses, larger businesses, and formal enterprises.

Government strategies

With transparent elections taking place since the end of the war, Sierra Leone has been on a positive track in trying to rebuild its economy. The country's Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility programme to help “stabilize economic growth and reduce inflation” has been supported by the international financial institutions. While it is still early to assess the effect of those efforts, increased political stability in the country will no doubt encourage further development to continue.

The 2005 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper - which covers the years 2005 to 2007 - focused on three main pillars: 1) promoting good governance, security and peace; 2) promoting pro-poor sustainable growth for food security; and 3) promoting human development. Based on these pillars, the Government has shifted its focus towards economic and human development through the proper and transparent use of natural resources – particularly agricultural resources³⁶. The Second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP-II), covering the period between 2008 and 2012, focuses on: 1) sustaining peace, security and good governance; 2) sustaining macroeconomic stability; 3) growing the private sector; and 4) efficient management of natural resources.

The Government has identified youth empowerment and employment as a necessary precondition for a secure environment³⁷, especially since youth between the ages of 15 and 35 represent over 33 percent of the population³⁸. However, in order to adequately provide for youth, changes within the overall economic and social environment must be attained. As such, the government has focused on four key areas as strategic priorities in its Agenda for Change:

- **Energy** – considered to be the lifeline for development of an economy, the government believes that revitalizing this sector to provide a reliable and sustainable energy service would provide the industry, agriculture, and commercial sectors with the necessary catalysts ‘for achieving high economic growth and hence poverty reduction’.
- **Agriculture** – as the largest sector in the country, more than two thirds of the population rely on agriculture for work and sustenance. Therefore the Government stresses that improvement of this sector is vital for economic growth and poverty reduction.
- **Transport** – the destruction of roads and infrastructure during the war prevented other economic sectors from developing, particularly agriculture. Construction of reliable roads would support the mining and agriculture sectors while providing people with access to markets and other parts of the country.

³⁶ GOSL PRSP-II; p. 5

³⁷ GOSL PRSP-II, p. 101

³⁸ Government of Sierra Leone ‘Employment for Youth’

- **Human Development** – investing in people is fundamental for the country’s overall economic, political and social development. Focus areas include health, education, and access to clean water.

The Government has committed itself to addressing issues associated with youth employment. In its two PRSPs, the government has identified the need to improve employment opportunities for youth. The United Nations Joint Vision for Sierra Leone also addresses issues of youth marginalisation, unemployment and general instability. “Youth problem” is a priority for this post-conflict state, and programmes to promote employment creation, income generation and reintegration have also begun.

In 2006, the government launched the Youth Employment Scheme (YES) to improve employment prospects for youth, focusing on youth agricultural engagement, public works, youth enterprise development, and youth policy development.

The growth strategy which has an overarching objective to ‘ensure [that] all programs for poverty reduction give priority to employment of youth’³⁹ has three prongs:

Private sector development: the Government endeavours to increase employment opportunities for youth by:

- Improving access to finance
- Supporting small and medium sized enterprises
- Increasing labour intensive public works
- Increasing Public Private Partnerships (PPP)
- Reintegrating youth into rural economies

Establishing National Enterprise and Skills Development and Training: enhancing the employability of youth requires the establishment of training institutions. The Government plans to:

- Make vocational training demand driven
- Improve the quality of vocational training
- Improve demand driven non-formal skills training
- Support youth empowerment and life skills training
- Increase Public Private Partnerships in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)
- Increase apprenticeships

Strengthening active labour market policies and institutions: systematically matching job seekers’ skills to employer needs by:

- Improving provisional occupational information
- Creating employer outreach and job development
- Developing training referral
- Creating career advising and placement services
- Revising labour laws and policies
- Promoting internships for job seekers
- Creating a national youth service⁴⁰

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

An ILO Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) was developed in 2010 as a result of dialogues held amongst the representatives of the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security (MoELSS), Sierra Leone Employers Federation (SLEF) and the Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC) covering the period 2010-12. It will support the delivery efforts towards national development framework priorities including those stated in “An Agenda for Change” (PRSP-II) and the UN Vision for Sierra Leone, with emphasis placed on employment. The three principal objectives are⁴¹:

1. Public and private investment generate a substantial and growing demand for labour and income;
2. Increased socio-economic stability and higher productivity through basic social protection schemes (social transfers, social assistance, social health protection) and safer workplaces; and
3. Strengthened ILO constituents effectively contribute to governance for an integrated economy and a healthy labour market.

In this connection, the ILO is supporting the Government in developing its employment policy as well as policies to promote youth employment. Technical assistance will be provided in a number of areas including the establishment of job centres around the country, upgrading of the Ministry’s employment registration services, as well as establishment of a functional labour market information system. In partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), ILO is conducting a needs assessment for the introduction of the system⁴². A labour force survey will also be undertaken in the coming year.

Dialogue and stakeholder engagement at national level

Tripartite dialogue between the government and the representatives of the employers and workers has become institutionalised, especially through the process of developing the Decent Work Country Programme that was finalised in May 2010. However, MNEs have not been involved in any meaningful way in these discussions. Instead, MNEs have steered away from engaging in initiatives which they consider should be implemented by the Government, such as providing training to non-employees, building roads or schools (unless it is specified in their concession agreements), or providing suggestions on ways of strengthening policy on education and skills development for employment promotion. Those MNEs interviewed indicated a need for further involvement of the private sector in policy-making in an organized manner and to increase Government’s support towards the private sector.

Part of the challenge for the type of social dialogue which includes MNEs, as advocated in the ILO MNE Declaration,⁴³ is the lack of MNE participation in business

⁴¹ Sierra Leone Decent Work Country Programme (2010-2012), p.7

⁴² Sykes, Private Sector and Youth Employment Mapping, p. 28

⁴³ ILO MNE Declaration, para. 10. “Multinational enterprises should take fully into account established general policy objectives of the countries in which they operate. Their activities should be in harmony with the development priorities and social aims and structure of the country in which they operate. To this effect, consultations should be held between multinational enterprises, the government and, wherever appropriate, the national employers’ and workers’ organizations concerned.”

associations. Most are primarily concerned about overcoming their own challenges, and are generally not part of any associations in a significant way.

Nonetheless, the Government has been active in initiating public-private partnerships (PPP) – particularly in the agriculture sector – through investment opportunities and donor partnerships. At the Consultative Group Meeting and Trade and Investment Forum held in London in November 2009 substantive discussions were held on the promotion of PPPs to develop value chains, a skilled labour force, and outgrower schemes⁴⁴ for agriculture⁴⁵.

With a view to strengthening dialogue between the government and MNEs, third parties such as international organizations and donors have been providing support in bringing the two sides together to initiate discussions. For example, the GTZ Employment Promotion Programme focuses on ‘private sector development and employment promotion to develop sustainable employment opportunities’⁴⁶, and works with the government in providing support to youth and marginalized individuals and with MNEs to identify employment opportunities. These types of initiatives pave the first step in creating a platform for dialogue, and should be further promoted.

As part of this ILO MNE study, the Minister brought together the representatives of Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security (MoELSS), the Sierra Leone Employers Federation (SLEF), and Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC) to discuss about issues related to employment in multinational enterprises and their supply chains. The Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture was also invited to participate in this focus group discussion. It was the first time to hold a collective dialogue on the topic, and various challenges were discussed. Issues identified ranged from the lack of reliable employment statistics and terms and conditions of employment to coordination with MNEs including their reporting on employment-related matters.

The following three chapters look more in depth at the particular challenges for promotion of youth employment in the agriculture, mining and banking sectors, specially concerning MNE operations. And they provide an assessment of current employment trends, impediments to hiring and potential for MNEs in each of the three sectors to expand youth employment, and provide the way forward based on the recommendations made by MNEs.

⁴⁴ Outgrower schemes are ‘contractual partnerships between growers or landholders and a company for the production of commercial products’ (as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization)

⁴⁵ Government of Sierra Leone, Employment for Youth

⁴⁶ GTZ Employment Promotion Programme Sierra Leone

Chapter 2 Youth employment in agriculture

Although fundamentally an agro-rural nation state, Sierra Leone's agricultural sector has yet to fully develop. In the early years of the new nation, policy distortions and weak institutions deterred growth in the sector; and development was severely impaired during the civil war decade, especially within the food and cash crop sub-sectors, due to deteriorating infrastructure, acute shortages of essential inputs, falling international prices for the main export commodities, and above all, from the disruption of farm production.⁴⁷ But production has rebounded; at the end of the war the sector's contribution rose to 47 percent and steadily increased since then.⁴⁸ Agriculture now contributes to almost 50 percent of GDP.⁴⁹

Agriculture also attracts substantial FDI through concession agreements for oil palm production, sugar, and fisheries. It is the most important sector in terms of employment generation, with almost two-thirds of the population employed as smallholder farmers. And development of the agricultural sector is essential for increasing food security for the nation. Consequently, the Government has made this sector a top priority and aims to increase productivity in food cultivation as well as export earnings derived from agriculture.⁵⁰

Rice, a key staple in the Sierra Leonean diet and important export commodity, accounted for over 65 percent of crop production in 2006.⁵¹ Increasing production levels to reduce imports is a critical component of the government's strategy for economic development. Post-war levels of rice production are now double pre-war levels, and rice imports have been declining at an 8% average since 2002.⁵² Given that only 15% of arable land is currently being used for agriculture,⁵³ clearly there are opportunities, if new investments are anticipated, to expand production and further shift the balance of trade in rice while creating more jobs, particularly for youth and marginalized individuals.

The agriculture sector has received substantial support from both the government and the international donor community. For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security (MAFFS) has supplied tractors, lent farmers rice seeds, and provided training. In response to the global food crisis, the MAFFS also initiated a National Agricultural Response Programme, which provides additional support to smallholder farmers, and facilitated second cropping (farming twice a year on the same farm land, using improved varieties).

⁴⁷ World Bank Rural and Private Sector Development Project: Agricultural Industries Emerging from Conflict – Analysis of Six Value Chains in Sierra Leone, p. 1

⁴⁸ Statistics Sierra Leone : 2006 Production Table, p. 4

⁴⁹ GOSL PRSP-II p. 129

⁵⁰ GOSL PRSP Progress Report, p. 49

⁵¹ FAO Statistics Division, 2008.

http://faostat.fao.org/desk_reviewdefault.aspx?pageid=342&lang=en&country=123

⁵² DFID Sierra Leone Private Sector Development Strategy Program, p. 4-13

⁵³ Sierra Leone Investment and Donor Conference: Agriculture brochure

The Government is also looking to expand in other sub-sectors, including sugar plantations for both consumable goods and ethanol; biofuel and biodiesel; and growing rice together with other crops such as cocoa, coffee, and oil palm.

FDI in agriculture is expected to grow, but not without adequate infrastructure, including roads, electricity, water, and telecommunications. Further expansion of production into arable areas is also required to enable sufficient growth and diversification. Such improvements could lead to increased exports as well as moving up the value chain into food processing.

There are a total of nine MNEs operating in agriculture. These companies are headquartered in various countries, including Canada, China, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Portugal. Production ranges from sugar, flour, and beverages to palm oil, cocoa, and bio energy. They also vary a great deal by size; one start-up employs only 6 full-time permanent employees, while another has over 150 full-time permanent employees. Seasonal employees also range in size from less than 100 during a 6 month period to up to 400.

MNEs in this sector are producing mainly primary commodities and raw materials for export, with very little processing done in the country. There are MNEs engaged in light manufacturing; however, ingredients are imported as companies are unable to find the necessary products in the country, hindering job generation. Production is solely for local consumption, in particular flour and beverages. Companies have expressed interest in expanding up the value chain or diversifying their product lines but the investment climate and business environment needs to be strengthened to accommodate advanced technologies. For instance, electricity supply is unreliable, leading one MNE to use instead bagasse, a residue of crushed sugarcane, to produce steam power. Furthermore, the supplier base needs to expand—currently at least 85 percent of inputs must be imported although many could be produced locally, such as quicklime, fertilizer and seedlings.

Those involved in palm, cocoa, and bio-energy are just beginning their activities and anticipate the Government will attract other FDI to the sector in the coming year, particularly in rubber, as well as rice, coffee, and cassava. However, increased investment will require the infrastructure in the country to improve to accommodate expanded production.

Through the support of international partners, donors, and investors, the Government plans to promote development by increasing private sector activities, targeting agriculture. The key challenges that must be addressed include:

- **Poor coordination:** strategies have not been adequately organized or planned with partnerships between the government and agriculture businesses.
- **Insufficient support:** Although there is great encouragement to invest in the country, it wanes once investment has been committed. Without continued support from the government, the sector risks continued ill-perception, lack of access to a skilled workforce, and stagnation in its development.
- **Very weak institutions:** training institutions are either very weak with low capacity or nonexistent, restricting ‘their ability to carry out the necessary activities for the development of the sector’⁵⁴. The lack of specialized institutions and a comprehensive curriculum focusing on agriculture have not allowed the country to produce a skilled workforce for the sector. Although the

⁵⁴ GOSL PRSP-II, p. 70

Sierra Leone Agriculture Research Institute is currently being reopened by the government, there has been no indication of what type of training, if any, will be available at the institute.

- **Absence of a sector database for policy, planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting:** the lack of an organized database to track the necessary information and needs of the sector will continue to negatively affect the efficiency and advancement of the sector.
- **Weak rural infrastructure:** the poor quality of roads, power supply, transportation, inadequate water supply and lack of internet access seriously hinders the productivity of agriculture activities and deters workers from migrating away from urban areas.

In light of these challenges, the Government has developed a number of strategies to address the constraints faced by the agriculture sector, including:

- increasing overall support to agriculture and other priority sectors;
- increasing agricultural productivity by acquiring tractors, power tillers, and harvesters, and establishing supply chains to meet the needs of commercial farming;
- improving agricultural research and extension delivery systems by rehabilitating existing institutes such as the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI);
- establishing a database for agricultural statistics as well as creating a sector coordination mechanism⁵⁵.

The Government of Sierra Leone is also receiving support from various international organizations and donors in the area of rural finance, food security, and support to small-holder farmers. The World Bank made available 7 million USD to respond to the food crisis; the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) provided a 87 million USD grant for poverty alleviation and food security. And the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Government of Sierra Leone jointly signed a Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) providing 100 million USD towards achieving food security, education and improved health services.⁵⁶

Overall data on youth employment in the MNEs surveyed

Jobs are concentrated in unskilled labour in farming and manufacturing. Farm workers have low education levels; while workers in office positions have either a high school or university degree. Six of the nine MNEs operating in agriculture were interviewed, indicating the following:

- At the time of the study, the MNEs interviewed employed 475 full-time employees.

⁵⁵ GOSL PRSP-II, p.71

⁵⁶ Bank of Sierra Leone, Annual Report 2008

- Over 60 percent of these employees are under the age of 35. Although there have only been 11 additional youth employed in the past year, this number is likely to increase in the next 10 months due to an increase in the number of MNEs starting operation in this sector.
- More than half of the interviewed companies were engaged in light manufacturing, but were in the process of downsizing. One considered closing its operations because although it is overstaffed by 30 employees, it is still short of the skills it needs and is producing at a third of capacity due to competition from imports.
- MNEs engaged primarily in farming activities are expecting to increase their staffing levels, particularly the companies involved in palm, cocoa, and coffee which have just begun operations.
- Only eight percent of employees are female workers who hold mainly administrative and office jobs. The MNEs interviewed stated that men were more suitable for manufacturing which requires physical endurance; and they viewed women as more trustworthy to handle accounting and other office jobs.
- Expatriates hold about 7 percent of the jobs, filling senior positions such as managers, plant supervisors, and technicians. Some companies expressed their wish to employ Sierra Leonean staff for all positions. However, they have not yet been able to identify all of the needed skills among local recruits, and also face difficulties attracting workers to rural locations.

Table 3 summarizes the direct employment data from the 6 MNEs interviewed.

Table 3. Direct employment data within the six MNEs surveyed in the agriculture sector

Sector	Number of full-time employees	Employees under 35 years of age	Female Employees	Number of foreign employees	Number of youth employed in the past year
Agriculture	475	287	42	33	11

Eighty percent of jobs are unskilled, requiring minimal training, especially for light manufacturing. Many of the MNEs interviewed praised the high level of motivation of employees, including youth, but lamented the low level of education and experience hindering recruitment of locals for supervisory, managerial, and senior positions. Table 4 outlines the skills needs within the current categories of jobs.

Table 4. Positions available and skills needs of MNEs in the agriculture sector

Position	Nature of Job	Skills needs/ Gaps
Farmers	Clearing and raking of land, sowing, and planting seeds	Literacy, particularly strong English skills; an understanding of plant spacing; experience working on a farm.
Land clearers	Physical endurance, the ability to use a machete to clear land and carry heavy weight	The skills gap for land clearers includes literacy and knowledge of English; ability to calculate the amount of land needed to be cleared; time management.
Manufacturing workers	Predominantly repetitive work: washing, cutting, trimming, and sorting, using equipment to perform these duties	Skills gap include sufficient literacy to operate machinery; English.

Position	Nature of Job	Skills needs/ Gaps
Feeders	Predominantly repetitive work: feeding materials into and from machines in a production line	Skills gaps include literacy; time management; and the ability to work with others.
Shift leaders	High level of literacy for tasks such as scheduling employees' hours and shifts	Skills gaps include literacy; soft skills; time management.
Plantation/Factory managers	Several years of experience working on plantations.	The ideal profile for this position includes university or advanced degrees; experience managing plantations/factories and people; understanding of agronomical principles in relation to business objectives. The current skills gap here include finding degreed candidates with several years experience and knowledge of current technologies to maintain equipment.
Supervisory staff	Several years of experience working on plantations	The skills associated with this position include university or advanced degree; experience managing employees; management, including human resources management; soft skills, particularly listening and delegating. The skills gap outlined by MNEs includes soft skills, candidates with university degrees and management skills.
Accounting	Processing of payments and invoices, assistance on all financial aspects of the company including payment of staff and vendors	The skills and requirements for this position include university degree, knowledge of basic accounting principles, bookkeeping, computer skills, and basic mathematics. The skills gap identified by MNEs includes knowledge of basic accounting principles, basic knowledge of math, and computing.

For the majority of these job categories the skills lacking are literacy, educational attainment and soft skills. The poor quality of education along with the negative impacts of the war is the main reasons behind the low supply of skilled labour.

Other positions include carpenters, electricians, and general office staff. Jobs contracted out include security, transportation and cleaning services. Indirect jobs generated through the supply chain are also limited as over 90 percent of supplies are imported. Other indirect jobs include employment in construction, restaurant/catering, and other services needed by employees and companies.

Sectoral outlook

The number of new hires is expected to be over 4,500 within the coming year, although this will be offset by some downsizing in food manufacturing; and weak infrastructure and discouraging access to reliable communications may deter expansion. Many of the new jobs will be unskilled, primarily in plantations, and it is estimated that youth will take up over 80 percent of these new employment opportunities. However, workers will likely have to be brought in from neighbouring countries unless conditions and incentives improve to induce workers to leave Freetown.

Strong potential exists for diversification of production into areas such as ethanol and bio degradable fuel. One MNE has already begun to use sorghum, supplied by over 4,000 farmers who are guaranteed to sell their production to this particular MNE; another plans to use baggasse not only for their energy needs, but also to supply energy to Freetown.

However, in order for sector diversification to materialise, current challenges such as infrastructure, particularly electricity and water, need to be resolved.

MNEs believe that improvements in the quality of education and infrastructure will result in the shift in production in this sector, thus giving rise to vast job opportunities for youth. These changes will not happen immediately. However, there will be opportunities for those equipped with appropriate skills and a willingness to relocate to rural areas as the sector gradually advances. The potential for specific jobs in the agriculture sector are outlined in Table 5 along with the necessary skills for each of the job categories.

Table 5. Potential skilled jobs in the agriculture sector as identified by the MNEs interviewed

Position	Required Skills
Farmers	Literacy; ability to plant, cultivate, and harvest crops; understanding of crop rotation; knowledge of farming equipment.
Plantation supervisors	High school or university degree; experience working on farms or plantations; ability to manage people, schedule, assign, and supervise the work of employees.
Agronomists	Advanced degree in plant genetics, plant physiology, meteorology, or soil science; experience in managing plantations.
Engineers	Electrical, mechanical, and computer engineers with advanced university degrees; experience developing new products and devices; knowledge of more efficient production methods.
Bio-fuel engineer	Advanced university degree, particularly in biochemical engineering or biotechnology; experience designing, assembling, and operating biomass equipment.
Product development specialists	University degree in agriculture; knowledge and skills in crop production, identification of weeds, machinery operation, trial methodology, and insects and crop diseases.
Heavy equipment operators	University degree; experience operating and maintaining heavy equipment such as caterpillars, sprayers, combines, harvesters, planters, seeders, and tractors.
Civil and irrigation engineers	Advanced university degree in engineering; experience and knowledge in planning, designing and overseeing the construction or irrigation projects, particularly for transportation and distribution of clean water to plantations and farms.
Quality control specialists	University degree and understanding of farming principles; experience identifying and auditing products, working on plantations or farms.

As the table shows, the need for experienced and skilled labour will increase as the sector develops and advances. Sierra Leonean supervisors, agronomists, and heavy equipment operators will be in demand if the necessary skills become more available. And it is anticipated that more advanced skills will be needed in research and design, sales, management, and manufacturing, depending on the future development trends in the sector. However, university graduates typically view agriculture as a sector for unskilled workers. The understanding of the sector and existing opportunities need to be improved.

Each of the companies interviewed stated that they provide training to their employees, particularly in English language skills. Some have tried to motivate employees to go back to school; however, continuing education programs are not widely available. Also, many believe that the type and quality of training they provide to their employees is better than the local education system primarily because the schools do not have the necessary equipment, trainers, or technology to provide for adequate training. MNEs have also created partnerships at the local level to address the gaps, with international development partners, to improve the skills of youth in the local labour market. One MNE is also involved in youth resettlement programs. Although MNEs have made investments

to address the skills gap and induce youth to relocate, they believe that health and education, provision of training and improvement of infrastructure are the responsibilities of the Government and their role as private entities is limited to concentrating on their bottom line and ensuring that they are equipped with the necessary elements to run their businesses.

CSR practices in the agriculture sector

Socially responsible labour practices are understood as hiring locals and paying decent wages on time. Data on employees is generally not broken up into age categories, nor is hiring youth at the forefront of labour practices. MNEs are more concerned with finding employees with the relevant skills needed. One MNE, however, was very active in promoting and respecting the ILO fundamental principles and rights at work, along with the promotion of other socially responsible practices.

In addition, many of the companies have environmental policies and community development policies which include financial support provided to local schools and ensuring that their activities do not interfere with the communities.

Dialogue and stakeholder engagement

MNE participation in dialogue among enterprises operating in the agriculture sector has been very limited. Currently, there are no sector associations, committees, or groups where MNEs are active. Companies concentrate mainly on their own internal activities. Additionally, since all of the MNEs must import most of their inputs, there is little dialogue with suppliers operating in the country. Nonetheless, almost all the MNEs interviewed are members of the Chamber of Commerce, which is open to all areas of business.

There is more dialogue between MNEs and the Government, although there is still room for improvement. The Government of Sierra Leone is very keen on improving the agriculture sector and increasing investment. However, companies stated that dialogue is predominantly concentrated on abiding by rules and regulations, particularly in relation to paying the Goods and Services Taxes (GST).

The MNEs stressed a lack of incentive to engage with government and disappointment with government support to the sector. Many MNEs have stated that their relationship is either 'cordial', 'professional', or more plainly: 'it is what it is'.

The way forward

The agriculture sector has the opportunity to develop tremendously, especially since the government has been making positive efforts to increase FDI into this sector. Yet, these efforts are deemed inconsistent by the MNEs that were interviewed. For the opportunities in the sector to be realized, the poor perception around a career in agriculture needs to be modified, particularly amongst the youth. Promotion of dialogue is an important first step in this direction.

In light of these findings, recommendations for this sector are:

- **Stimulate MNE involvement and engagement in the sector:** The lack of dialogue in the sector is a major constraint to its development. The MNEs that were interviewed have not demonstrated much interest to engage in dialogue, nor has a leader been identified which can set the stage for sectoral dialogue. The creation of associations specifically for key sub-sectors such as palm oil,

sugar, cocoa, and coffee could complement the work of the Chamber of Commerce and build the foundation for MNEs to engage and collaborate.

- **Create opportunities for partnerships:** Dialogues at the sector and sub-sector levels could also occasionally include Government. Both sides could clearly articulate their needs, and engage on the commonalities. Third parties such as international or bilateral organizations that are already working with MNEs and government on various projects could facilitate this dialogue.
- **Diversify relationships with educational institutions:** MNEs have stressed that the quality of education is one of the main constraints to identifying skilled labour. To address this issue, MNEs should diversify their relationships and engage in a proactive manner with the various education facilities including the Sierra Leone Agriculture Research Institute, and articulate their skills needs. It would enhance school to work transition.

Chapter 3 Youth employment in mining

Sierra Leone is rich with mineral deposits, including diamonds, iron ore, rutile, bauxite, gold, iron ore, platinum, nickel, and ilmenite. Mining accounts for 20 percent of GDP and 80 percent of domestic exports⁵⁷ and is the second most important sector for employment and income generation.⁵⁸ There are three sub-sectors: a) large-scale production of non-precious minerals; b) large scale production of precious minerals; and c) artisanal and small-scale production of precious minerals.⁵⁹ Despite the country's efforts in attracting new investment, most mining remains non-capital intensive.

De Beers was the only mining company with the right to operate in Sierra Leone until the 1970s when the industry was nationalised. The mines closed in 1995 due to the war, and the sector's contribution to GDP fell from a high of 20.3 percent⁶⁰ to just 5 percent in 2007⁶¹. Diamonds continued to be mined throughout the 1990s without any Government oversight, leading to corruption and smuggling, and an overall negative impact on GDP.

Post-war, mining revenues have increased, with contributions to GDP averaging about 5.5 percent for the last five years; but the sector is only just beginning to recover. Production fell in 2007 when one company's dredge collapsed and another MNE stopped all its operations; and with the decline in international demand, diamond revenues dropped from 604.7 million USD in 2007 to 371.29 million USD in 2008.⁶²

Since mining has had serious implications for the country's political and economic history, the Government has initiated a new Mines Act to ensure the proper use of revenue from minerals, exploration licenses, and guidelines on the 'specific duties, responsibilities, and conduct of those charged with administering the Act'. The Act includes provisions for health and safety, environmental protection, and community development; states zero tolerance against use of child labour; tightens rules for administrators and mineral rights holders, including application and reporting requirements; promotes investment and mineral sector development by ensuring security of tenure and preventing companies from holding land under licence for too long without demonstrable activities; and rebalances fiscal benefits between companies, communities, and government. With a formal policy in place, the mining sector is expected to be more transparent and better managed, generating revenue and offering employment opportunities, especially for youth.⁶³

Historically there have not been significant FDI flows into Sierra Leone's mining sector, due to the low-capital intensity of the mining being conducted; and investment left during the war. The return of political stability coupled with positive global developments in the mining sector could offer an ideal opportunity to rejuvenate the domestic mining sector and to allow it to once again underpin the formal economy and support the government's developmental objectives. At present, there are only a few mining

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 137

⁵⁸ GOSL PRSP-II, p. 138

⁵⁹ GOSL PRSP-II, p. 138

⁶⁰ UNCTAD Investment Policy Review, p. 6

⁶¹ Statistics Sierra Leone Production Table, p. 4

⁶² Bank of Sierra Leone Annual Report 2008, p. 2

⁶³ GOSL, Ministry of Mineral Resources and Political Affairs: A Guide to the Mines and Minerals Act 2009; Understanding the Mines and Minerals Act 2009 Frequently Asked Questions

companies active in the diamond, gold, and mineral sectors that operate fully in Sierra Leone, largely due to the cost of building roads, rail links, port facilities and large-scale electricity generators. And a number of companies have closed since 2008, mainly due to financial mismanagement.

The Government aims to entice more investment through leveraging newly built infrastructure to create new mining contracts and allowing abandoned mines to be refurbished. Both of these measures are expected to add to FDI inflows and should continue the upward trend of export revenues for the coming 3-5 years.

There are five MNEs active in the mining sector, primarily involved in rutile, diamond and gold mining. While the majority are British, some are Canadian and South African owned. The companies interviewed are highly experienced in working in the Sub-Saharan Africa region and have mine sites all over the continent. Yet, unlike their other mine sites, they have not established value-added manufacturing due to the lack of or the instability of existing infrastructure, and thus focus primarily on basic mineral extraction; and some are still in the exploratory stage. Activities are currently broad, including restoring mines that were destroyed, exploring other mineral resources, and expanding their areas of concentration and investment. These companies range in size from as little as 60 to over 600 full-time employees.

Overall data on youth employment in the MNEs surveyed

At the time of the research, the three MNEs interviewed employed 844 full-time workers. Most jobs require unskilled labour; however, professional and technical specialists are needed in engineering, geology and operating heavy machinery. Other findings include:

- Over 60 percent of the employees are youth under the age of 35. Last year, however, only 1 worker under the age of 35 was newly recruited. According to the MNEs, this is due to the global financial crisis and to the fact that companies did not require additional staff. A few MNEs are commencing operations at the moment and are scheduled to recruit more employees once the mine sites are ready.
- Women represent a little over 1 percent of total employees in this sector. MNEs have stated that this is mainly due to the fact that most jobs require physical strength, for which men are better suited. Female workers in this sector are primarily engaged in administrative and office positions.
- Expatriates represent over 6% of the total labour force. Expatriates mainly occupy senior and technical positions that require experience, accreditation, and advanced degrees – skills that MNEs could not readily find in the local workforce. Other explanations offered for recruiting expatriates included avoiding ethnic tensions, issues in the local culture with sharing information, and minimizing collusion.

Table 6 outlines the employment breakdown in the MNEs interviewed.

Table 6. Direct employment data within the three MNEs surveyed in the mining sector

Sector	Number of full-time employees	Employees under 35 years of age	Female Employees	Number of foreign employees	Number of youth employed in the past year
Mining	844	519	12	53	1

Current employment opportunities in the mining sector are primarily found in unskilled positions.

Positions such as surveyors and geologists are currently available in the country; however, they are primarily filled by expatriates who have the technical skills and experience required for the position. MNEs have also stated that although there are individuals within the local labour force who are amenable to learning and may have the necessary paper degree for technical positions, practical experience was lacking and they do not hold specialized degrees. One of the MNEs reported that they had a very capable applicant with a degree in engineering; however, their degree did not provide them with the necessary technical skills needed for the job. Though the person was well versed in theoretical systems, his or her knowledge of new technology and practices was missing.

Although there are numerous types of positions available within the sector, skills gap continues to be an issue. Careers in mining demand specialized skills that call for a high degree of training and soft skills. MNEs have commented on the skills gap within the current positions in the mining sector. Table 7 outlines the skills still in need by the MNEs interviewed.

Table 7. Positions available and skills needs of MNEs in the mining sector

Position	Nature of Job	Skills Needs/Gaps
Truck drivers	Drive trucks	High degree of literacy, training in commercial driving with accreditation and hazardous-material driving certification. Knowledge and experience in maintaining equipment.
Miners	Carry minerals from the depths of the mines; loading trucks	Literacy, English, knowledge and experience in using machinery for excavating minerals.
Heavy machinery operators	Operate heavy machinery such as caterpillars, excavators, and bulldozers.	Minimum requirements for this position is a high school diploma. Operators are provided basic training in maintenance and driving. The missing skills under this position include literacy, experience in operating heavy machinery, and knowledge of how to maintain and repair equipments.
Land Clearers	Clear land and plantations using a machete, carry heavy loads	Requirements for this position are literacy, ability to calculate the amount of land needing to be cleared, to work with others and time management. The primary skills gap identified by MNEs is and literacy.
Pickers/sorters	Pick diamonds from debris; sort them by size and in some cases by colour	The minimum requirements for this position are English and literacy. According to MNEs, English is the largest skills gap.
Geologist	Determine mineral makeup and rock formation in an area.	These positions require trained geologists with university degrees and at least 3 to 5 years of experience in mining and mineral exploration. These positions are usually filled by expatriates as local geologists are difficult to identify.
Accountant	Process payments and invoices; assist with all financial aspects of the company including payment of staff and vendors	The skills and requirements for this position include university degree, basic accounting, bookkeeping, computer skills, basic mathematics. MNEs have noted difficulty in identifying candidates with basic knowledge of math, accounting and computing.

Position	Nature of Job	Skills Needs/Gaps
Civil and Electrical Engineers	Examine sites to determine land foundation; design and plan construction sites	These positions require a university degree in engineering; experience designing, planning, and constructing mine sites. The skills gap here includes degreed candidates with experience in engineering and mining.
Operations Managers	Manage daily operations; work closely with engineers, geologists and scientists to ensure business objectives are met	The skills required for this position include having an advanced university degree; experience in administration, financial operations, and knowledge of mining operations. Skills gaps include candidates holding degrees with several years of experience in managing staff and large financial portfolios.
Mine Surveyors	Determine terrestrial or three-dimensional space position of points and the distances and angles between them on the earth's surface	The skills requirements include engineering degrees with specialization in surveying. These positions are usually filled by expatriates as MNEs noted difficulty in identifying Sierra Leoneans with degrees and experience as surveyors.

Applicants are motivated and ready to learn and take on positions; however they are not equipped with the necessary skill-sets for the sector. There is a huge disconnect between what is being taught in schools and what MNEs need - workers who have received a quality education that combines practical knowledge with theoretical principles. The lack of specialized institutions with up-to-date technology is also preventing the sector from becoming more modernized and from engaging in more value-added production and services.

Companies are compensating by providing in-house training themselves. One company is in the process of re-building an on-site training centre equipped with the necessary technology and staffed with knowledgeable expatriates. Some MNEs have hired away skilled nationals from other firms. Some have repatriated technical staff but recognize the limits of this strategy, particularly because hiring nationals living abroad is just as costly as hiring an expatriate staff.

Although the skills gap poses challenges in recruitment, the greatest issue, as with agriculture, is that most workers are not willing to live in remote mining areas without access to basic services such as electricity, clean water, internet access and reliable roads.

Sectoral outlook

The mining sector presents significant opportunities for youth in the next 12 to 18 months. The number of new hires is expected to be 1,580 with at least 80 percent of new jobs likely to be held by youth under the age of 35. Future hires are expected to increase as new companies enter the market.

The local labour force is expected to absorb the majority of new jobs. However, considering the reluctance of many to relocate outside of the capital, MNEs believe that they will face a shortage of available skilled and unskilled labour in the short to medium term, and that expatriates will need to be brought in to fill technical positions and train local employees.

Opportunities exist for sectoral advancement in the near future, particularly in value-added production for diamond and gold, and for new industries in the near future, such as gemmology and jewellery design, if the government provides support to develop small and

medium enterprises. However, these job opportunities will require changes to the education system for workers to develop the requisite specialized skills.

MNEs stated that they are willing to support efforts for the advancement of the sector mainly because it would in turn contribute towards achieving their long-term business objectives. Concession agreements with the government range from 25 to 30 years, giving the MNEs a long-term perspective, and therefore, they are interested in seeing sectoral development. They are also willing to support schools and training institutions; however, the initiative must come from the schools and not the private sector. For instance, MNEs are willing to share training materials in order to support the overall advancement of skills in the sector.

Advancement of this sector is also highly likely as companies are already bringing in their own state-of-the-art equipment and technology to operate the mines. However, companies in the sector are predominantly involved in raw materials extraction with no value-added production in the country. Companies see some future possibilities of downstream manufacturing in the mining sector along with an increase in the categories of jobs. Table 8 outlines the potential skilled jobs in mining if improvement in the educational system and the advancement in this sector could be realized.

Table 8. Potential skilled jobs in the mining sector as identified by the MNEs interviewed

Position	Required Skills
Gemmologists	The specialized skills associated with gemmology include appraising gems and special stones and understanding the scientific makeup of precious stones. Gemmologists also design jewellery, grade gemstones, and own jewellery stores.
Jewellers	The specialized skill associated with jewellery includes the ability to and knowledge in goldsmithing, engraving, stone-setting, and other specialized skilled learned from specialized training institutions and on the job.
Geologists	Geologists play a major role in the mining industry as they are responsible for studying the earth and determining mineral makeup including rock formation and the types of minerals that actually exist in the chosen area. With an increase in students studying this science, more Sierra Leoneans can take over geologist positions.
Heavy Machine Operators	As stated above, operators generally use heavy machinery. Most of these positions are filled by expatriates, but with the right amount of training and education Sierra Leoneans could fill the posts.
Operations Managers	These senior positions require years of experience and advanced degrees in science and business administration; however, for now are they primarily held by expatriates.
Engineers	The necessary skills for this position include advanced degrees in engineering along with practical experience.

The potential jobs outlined in the table reflect both present and future opportunities within the sector. There are potentials for supply chain development. A new industry requiring specialised skills could also emerge. Many of the positions which are currently available in the country are those that are held by expatriates and require specialised training and experience. These positions have the potential to be assumed by the local labour force should training institutions reform its programmes accordingly, generating the skilled labour needed in the sector. Gemmologists and jewellers would be in demand should value-added manufacturing take place in the country. However, without the necessary infrastructure and skilled labour to meet the potential demand, such expansion and diversification have yet to be realized.

CSR practices in the mining sector

CSR policies are mainly focused on community rehabilitation projects, wildlife preservation, and environmental initiatives. Companies also offer financial support to local schools and support police stations, orphanages, and sports teams, generally in the areas where they operate. Labour-related CSR policies include providing people with employment opportunities and paying them decent wages within a decent time frame. They do not include a specific focus on youth employment or youth issues as the MNEs believe that employment is a general problem in the country, regardless of the age of candidates.

Dialogue and stakeholder engagement

MNEs are active in the Chamber of Mines. Dialogue so far has focused on how to create a school for training engineers and technicians for the mining sectors. However, with the recent closing of some companies, the Chamber was in the process of being reorganized and these talks were put on hold until it becomes clear how many companies remain active in the sector.

Dialogue between the Government and the private sector is very minimal, as the Government's focus has shifted to the agriculture sector.

The way forward

The opportunities for youth employment are encouraging for the mining sector. However, the poor quality of education and difficulty in recruiting workers to live near mining sites is deterring expansion and diversification of production. MNEs are keen to see increased government support to the sector. Recommendations for this sector include:

- **Strengthen sector associations and dialogue:** The Chamber of Mines had initiated talks on how to reduce the skills gap in the sector, but has put them on hold during its reorganization. MNEs need to re-engage in these talks and begin planning to create a comprehensive strategy to improve the mining sector, with a strong focus on training and skills transfer. The Chamber of Mines is a possible entry point in creating a solid platform that will foster dialogue between the stakeholders, including the government, with the possibility of planning the future improvement of the sector.
- **Revitalize partnerships:** Although it has become clear that the government intends to focus its support in the agriculture sector, the mining sector still remains one of the key economic sectors in Sierra Leone. Government-MNEs relationship should be revitalized, stressing the significance of the sector in the general economy, and employment prospects in the longer-run. Strengthening of the public-private relationship is necessary for the long-term development of the sector including potential spinoff industries after the life of mining. Spin-off effect to be brought about around the mining areas also cannot be ignored.
- **Develop and modify partnership:** The MNEs interviewed expressed their willingness to work with local schools. Although MNEs are keen to see the schools initiate the dialogue, MNEs could also express their skills needs in order for schools to be proactive in meeting MNE skills needs. MNEs should work closely with schools and other stakeholders, and to organize workshops between them to discuss constraints, potential roles, and key initiatives to be taken jointly to meet the various bottlenecks in the sector.

Chapter 4 Youth employment in banking

Sierra Leone's financial sector is dominated by banking. However, current banking activities are not diverse when compared internationally, which may be restricting investment and impeding economic development.

The banking sector grew an average of 3.2 percent per annum from 1985 to 1989.⁶⁴ During the war many banks were looted or burned and many international banks pulled out of the country,⁶⁵ causing the sector to contract by an average of -9.7 percent between 1990 and 1994 and -14.6 percent between 1995 and 1999.⁶⁶ The sector is slowly rebounding, with an average growth rate of 6.3 percent from 2000 to 2003⁶⁷ despite meager inflows of FDI. And growth has picked up more in recent years with new market entrants.

The Government is reviewing the Banking Act of 2002, the Bank of Sierra Leone Act 2000, the Other Financial Services Act 2001, and the Anti-Monetary Laundering Act of 2005⁶⁸ to reform the legal infrastructure and strengthen the role of the Central Bank.⁶⁹ It also aims to improve macro-economic stability and efficiency in the banking system by creating more robust short-term investment, liquidity management, and inter-bank market activities; and to facilitate inter-bank transactions through increased use of electronic payments and credit. To further enhance the stability of the sector, banks are encouraged to seek local partners to put up a minimum of 20 percent of capital.⁷⁰

Foreign-owned commercial banks in Sierra Leone engage in commercial and retail banking, money transfer services, and some corporate finance. The MNEs are headquartered primarily in African countries, in particular Nigeria, but there are some European banks as well. They currently operate mainly in Freetown and the provincial capitals but plan to establish branches in less urban centres when reliable infrastructure becomes available and the political environment is sufficiently stable that there is no longer a significant risk of burning or looting. The MNEs range in size from 40 to over 200 full-time employees.

Overall data on youth employment in the MNEs surveyed

The four MNEs interviewed employed a total of 544 full-time staff. The majority of the staff engages in traditional banking functions, including tellers and back-office processing. Close to 70 percent of the jobs within these banks are held by youth under the age of 35. MNEs tend to recruit young graduates with business degrees. All of the banks interviewed have put in place internal policies that actively employ staff youth, based on their belief that youth are more amenable to rapidly learning new technologies and systems. Table 9 outlines the employment breakdown within the MNEs interviewed in the banking sector.

⁶⁴ GOSL PRSP-II, p. 73

⁶⁵ GOSL 2005 PRSP, p. 58

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.

⁶⁸ GOSL PRSP-II, p. 132

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ UNCTAD, Investment Policy Review for Sierra Leone, p. 16.

Table 9. Direct employment data within the four MNEs surveyed in the banking sector

Sector	Number of full-time employees	Employees under 35 years of age	Female Employees	Number of foreign employees	Number of youth employed in the past year
Banking	544	379	272	12	83

Unlike in agriculture and mining, about 50% of the employees in the sector are women. This is because women are viewed by the banks as more honest and organized in their work. And in contrast to the other two sectors, in banking expatriates fill only 3% of posts, albeit mainly the senior management positions such as country risk operations, top executive management, and marketing specialists.

Banks hire only skilled labour and most posts require at least a university degree. Unskilled functions are usually procured through suppliers, mainly in the security services sector.

Recruiting and holding on to skilled staff is the primary challenge in their operations. Employers seek potential candidates either from the Institute of Public Administration & Management (IPAM) at the University of Sierra Leone or from other local universities within the country. And they aggressively poach talent.

Marketing agents are the most difficult positions to fill. Historically, competition has been limited so banks did not need to aggressively market themselves to attract and retain customers. Since marketing skills were not sought after, universities did not offer marketing courses for the banking sector. New competitors have introduced a customer-service approach in the last few years, changing the market dynamics and creating demand for marketing specialists within the banking sector. But schools have yet to catch up to demand.

MNEs also have difficulties filling senior and technical positions that require a minimum of a university degree. The majority of senior management posts that require years of experience beyond academic degrees are currently held by expatriates. Even posts such as accountants, office clerks, and bookkeepers are difficult to fill because banks must compete with other sectors for talent.

Banking does not generate a lot of employment through the supply chain because materials are imported. Most of the indirect jobs associated with this sector are generated by employee consumption, mainly in construction and other services.

As with agriculture and mining, the negative impact of the war on the quality of education is apparent in the sub-optimal level of skills of new recruits. Banks view university training as inadequate; and lamented the quality of education received at primary and secondary school. Some questioned the value of courses being taught and wished to see modules on work ethics included in curricula. Table 10 lists the bank positions, nature of job and skills needed.

Table 10. Positions available and skills needs of MNEs in the banking sector

Position	Nature of Job	Skills needs/ Gaps
Bank Tellers	Primarily deals with customers, processing requests such as cashing checks, accepting deposits and loan payments, and processing withdrawals	Soft skills are the primary gap in this position along with basic mathematics skills.

Position	Nature of Job	Skills needs/ Gaps
Accountant	Processing of payments and invoices, balancing financial records, and assisting with all financial aspects of the company	This position requires understanding of basic accounting principles, bookkeeping, computer skills particularly in Microsoft Excel, basic mathematics skills and a university degree. MNEs noted gaps in each of these skills and requirements.
Bookkeeper	Maintaining accounting records such as receipts and expenditures; tracking accounts payable and receivable, and profit and loss	This position requires a university degree, mathematics and English skills, and soft skills. The skills gap identified include mathematics, English, and soft skills.
Office clerks/ Assistants	Filing, photocopying, data processing, answering phones, and delivering messages	This positions requires basic computer, mathematics and English skills with some experience and knowledge in word processing and general office skills. The skills gap here include computer and soft skills including customer service.
Customer Service Representatives	Ensuring customers receive assistance with questions, concerns, or any other service	The position requires soft skills, particularly in dealing with people and listening to their needs; basic mathematics and computer skills; and communication skills.
Marketing Agents	Developing and implementing marketing strategies to increase customer base	The ideal requirements for this position include university degree and marketing skills. Banks have noted marketing skills as the largest gap along with a "go-getter attitude" and the ability to take action.

Skills lacking include mathematics and keeping up with modern banking methods, mainly in marketing and information technology (IT), as well as the ability to communicate effectively with customers. MNEs would like to see more frequently a willingness to work hard work, plan for the future, accept responsibility and take initiative. Because of the war, young adults who grew up on the streets never had a chance to internalize these values. MNEs felt that Government should ensure that future generations are instilled with these skills at an early stage, particularly in primary and secondary school.

Although the banking sector faces serious challenges for skilled workers, unlike the other two sectors, banking does not have a problem attracting potential recruits. Consequently, some banks have attempted to set minimum standards for recruitment, including testing for English and mathematics. But many applicants failed these tests, forcing some banks to lower their standards again in order to meet their hiring needs.

The competition for jobs also means that employees fear of being replaced, so they feel threatened by interns who may have a better education and more up-to-date skills in areas such as IT. Without the practical exposure of quality internships, new recruits require even more training and support.

All of the banks interviewed offer training to newly recruited employees, including soft skills such as communication and organization. One bank, for example, provides one-month training on core banking functions to recent hires and sends some employees to its headquarters for four months of training.

Sectoral outlook

Sierra Leone’s banking sector has reached a plateau. It has become highly competitive due to new entrants entering the market, but underdeveloped infrastructure in rural areas and skills shortages prevent this competition from being channelled into expanding the customer base or developing new products and services. Furthermore, with bleak prospect for expansion to rural areas, only about 100 new posts are expected to be created in the coming year, with youth expected to take up over 90 percent of these positions.

Nonetheless, Sierra Leone’s banking sector continues to gain in sophistication, and corporate banking has been identified as a growth area. The employment outlook should be brighter, particularly for marketing, customer service and IT specialists; and as the sector diversifies new skills will be demanded, such as portfolio management. The types of skilled jobs to be potentially created are outlined in Table 11.

Table 11. Potential skilled jobs in the banking sector as identified by the MNEs interviewed

Position	Required Skills
Marketing experts	A specialized skill which requires a university or advanced degree. The focus that is required is on business development skills, to be able to bring in new clients.
Corporate banking specialists	Requires a university or advanced degree. This position is for more specialized banking, with a focus on managing client portfolios and knowledge of broader financial services. This may require advising corporate clients on investments.
IT specialists	Requires a degree in computer science or information systems management, ability to plan, coordinate, and manage the installation of hardware and software systems and to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of systems and data. With internet banking increasingly in demand by consumers, IT specialists with the necessary skills to manage complex systems are in high demand.

CSR practices in the banking sector

MNEs define socially responsible labour practices as providing workers with competitive salaries. Although banks poach from each other to find qualified labour, this practice is actually frowned upon and considered a socially irresponsible labour practice. Internship programs are also being developed, with one bank aiming to provide five three-month internships each year.

The MNEs are engaged in CSR more broadly through education, environment, and community development programmes, with most efforts are geared towards donations and sponsorships. Although they are interested in developing a more comprehensive CSR policy, most of them have just entered the market and have other pressing needs at the moment such as finding qualified and experienced staff.

Dialogue and stakeholder engagement

Dialogue at the sectoral level has been ongoing. Banks are constantly in discussions with each other, particularly over poaching, but also with regard to the number of new banks entering the market and other common problems. All banks operating in the country belong to the Bankers Association, and it is quite active. The MNEs appreciate the platform to discuss problems and concerns. The skills gap has been a recurring topic of discussion among the private banks.

Dialogue between the public and private sectors is primarily through the Bank of Sierra Leone. Discussion is mainly focused on meeting capital requirements and abiding by national banking rules and regulations, but Bank of Sierra Leone is also expanding dialogue to other key issues. It is establishing a banking school to address the skills gap, and has asked MNEs for assistance in identifying nominees within Africa to teach courses at the new institution.

At the education and training level, dialogue between the universities and banks has expanded beyond recruitment to include curriculum development. The University of Sierra Leone has invited MNEs to provide feedback on training and skills needs, and various universities were organizing job fairs. Banks have also expressed willingness to work with secondary schools. The banks, however, still see the need to deepen the dialogue to ensure a strong focus on demand-driven training.

The way forward

MNE banks operating in Sierra Leone appear to be interested in contributing more to skills development, due to the increasingly competitive nature of the sector. Universities and the banks have initiated a dialogue on revising the curriculum to better meet industry needs, including specialized marketing and corporate banking skills. Recommendations for this sector are:

- **Establish a more permanent platform for dialogue between universities and the banking sector:** The current dialogue appears to be on an ad-hoc basis with a few institutions, despite the fact that the needs are broad and concern the entire sector. The Bankers' Association could provide a platform for periodic discussion between banks, government and schools. This platform for exchange of information would contribute towards developing a market-based curriculum at the proposed mining institute.
- **Extend dialogue to address strengthening secondary education:** The Government should engage in dialogue with MNEs through the Bankers Association on how to improve other levels of education, particularly secondary schools and training facilities.
- **Develop consistent and effective dialogue amongst the banking MNEs:** Through the Bankers' Association, MNEs could initiate dialogue (or workshops) where banks, relevant institutions, and stakeholders can work together to identify constraints and develop concrete strategies for the advancement of the banking sector.

Chapter 5 Conclusions and recommendations

Sierra Leone is determined to leave behind a devastating 11-year civil war along with years of political instability and to work towards creating a peaceful environment for its population. The Government has taken initiatives to create jobs and improve the living standards of its people, but it will need to channel additional energy and resources on key issues such as improvements in the quality of education and development of reliable infrastructure. It has made significant progress; however, this is an ongoing process that must engage both the public and private sectors.

The purpose of this study was to identify the types of jobs that are currently found in MNEs in target sectors, and to gain a better understanding of the prospects of creating more and better jobs through these MNEs. The research also sought to understand the perspective of MNEs and their role in creating decent jobs for youth between the ages of 15 and 35. The findings from this action-oriented research include:

- The types of jobs within the 13 sampled MNEs are concentrated in unskilled and semi-skilled positions with Sierra Leoneans holding 100 percent of these jobs.
- Senior positions which require specialized training, experience, and education are primarily held by expatriates.
- The supply chain in each of the sectors researched was either weak or nonexistent. MNEs import a majority of their supplies because they cannot source from local producers and suppliers. Expanding backward and forward linkages in the supply chain will require infrastructure restoration and development and other enabling factors.
- More and better jobs are possible and available yet the labour market does not offer qualified human resources in sufficient numbers to be able to fill available positions. MNEs operating in rural areas with little or no infrastructure face additional recruiting challenges.
- MNEs are keen to continue or begin participating in a national dialogue on skills development for youth. However, this participation should be sector specific and requires significant participation of all social partners and other stakeholders and institutional partners.

All parties clearly understand the necessity of creating employment opportunities for youth as a key means of maintaining peace and stability. Nonetheless, MNEs are operating more on an individual basis, believing that it is the Government's responsibility to provide education and training for skills development. The two parties have yet to engage deeply to be able to better understand each other's needs and pool efforts to address shared challenges together. Table 12 below outlines the current challenges in the sectors of focus and the activities they have been engaged in to attempt to address them.

Table 12. Sectoral challenges and current MNE efforts

Sector	Challenges	Current Activities
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skills • Unsatisfactory quality of education • Lack of interest on the part of youth • Unreliable infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training provided at firm level • Government acknowledgement of its importance • Investments to use of baggasse as biofuel for energy
Mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of labour (quantity) • Lack of skilled labour • Poor quality of education • Unreliable infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training provided at firm level • Revival of the Chamber of Mines • Establishment of a Mining Institute
Banking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skills • Lack of training institutions • Poor work ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active sector association • Intra-bank dialogue • Training provided at firm level • Existing dialogue between banks and schools to address skills gap • Existing dialogue between central bank and banks to address skills gap; curriculum development • Ideas to set up banking school

The ILO MNE Declaration offers policy makers and business leaders with guidance on how to maximize the positive contribution that MNEs can make in host countries. It encourages MNEs to contribute to: the development objectives of the country in which they are operating through a process of social dialogue; to employment creation through, for example, the encouragement of backward linkages by sourcing from local enterprises; to skills development and training through partnership with all the actors concerned; and to respect of workers' rights.

The primary responsibility for promoting social welfare rests with the Government; however, MNEs and other enterprises can contribute to meeting national challenges, including poverty reduction and human development. Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of both present and future generations. A stable and sustainable society cannot be achieved when there are high levels of extreme poverty. Similarly, sustainable enterprises benefit from operating in stable and secure societies, which means that there is a symbiotic relationship between development and enterprise. The mutually reinforcing synergy is clear: business is good for development and development is good for business. Nonetheless, voluntary efforts by businesses can supplement, but not replace, the role of the public administration.

Youth employment in conditions of decent work is a concern for both Government and business. MNEs have made efforts to hire more local youth, and are willing and able to further engage. However, challenges remain. The recommendations are by sector to highlight the importance of sector level strategies, supported by the government at the national level.

Agriculture: Stimulating effective permanent dialogue

The Government of Sierra Leone has identified agriculture as an important sector for economic growth and as an opportunity to significantly increase employment opportunities for the youth. The challenges facing the sector are primarily concentrated in an unsatisfactory quality of education which produces a lack of appropriate skills, lack of

interest on the part of the youth to work in rural areas and unreliable infrastructure. While MNEs do offer training to their employees, there has yet to be any substantial dialogue within the sector or between the public and private sectors on enhancing skills development. In this context, the following are recommendations to boost youth employment in the sector:

- **Dialogue between enterprises within the sector:** MNEs wish to see an established platform other than the Chamber of Commerce or to strengthen the capacities of the Chamber, to allow MNEs to engage in an effective dialogue with each other and with other stakeholders.
- **Cooperation between MNEs and other enterprises and the Government:** MNEs expressed a strong desire to be perceived by the Government as partners, rather than as donors. They recommended that the Government create a national scholarship programme where beneficiaries are able to work for the Government or companies to reimburse their educational expenses, which would fund other beneficiaries. Third parties such as international development organizations already addressing youth employment promotion in the country could help foster this partnership.

Mining: revitalising dialogue

Despite lessening Government focus, the mining sector still has potential to generate significant employment opportunities for youth. MNEs run training facilities within their own mines, which could be made available to the general population, with incentives provided to MNEs that offer their mine sites for training. In this context, the following are recommendations to boost youth employment in the sector:

- **Dialogue between MNEs and other enterprises in the sector:** The revival of the Chamber of Mines presents an opportunity for the sector to further engage in skills development. With MNEs eager to participate in the Chamber, it offers a potentially strong entry point, particularly since MNEs have already discussed the possibility of establishing a mining institute through the Chamber.
- **Engagement between mining companies and the Government:** MNEs have suggested that industry and Government work together to improve the sector, and jointly implement strategies to address the skills gap. This opportunity should be leveraged as much as possible either through the Chamber of Mines or through individual companies.

Banking: strengthening employment dimension of existing dialogue

The banking sector has been the most active in terms of identifying constraints to hiring youth and developing and implementing strategies to address them. Dialogue has been ongoing; however it must be more consistent and involve all stakeholders. In this context, recommendations to boost youth employment in the sector include:

- **Dialogue between MNEs and other enterprises in the sector:** Banks are very active in the Bankers' Association and have regarded it as a platform to raise their concerns. The Bankers Association is a strong possible entry point to engage with MNEs in the sector. Although the Bank of Sierra Leone is currently active in formulating strategies to create a banking school, MNEs could be further involved, since all of them provide some form of training and

internships within their companies. MNEs have also had sporadic discussions with schools in regards to improving curricula. This dialogue could be increased, with the Bankers Association serving as a platform for dialogue and action.

- **Partnership between banks and the Government:** The Bank of Sierra Leone has been very active in obtaining input from multinational banks and other actors for nominees to teach courses for a potential banking school to be created. However, these activities should involve MNEs in the planning stages and at a deeper level, and not through sporadic dialogue. The opportunities for public-private partnerships are more likely in the banking sector as companies have already initiated dialogue. The proposed entry point would be to engage with the Central Bank through the Bankers Association.

In summary, the existing environment in Sierra Leone calls for sectoral dialogue before public-private partnerships can be established. MNEs are currently involved in skills transfer for their employees and, in most cases, are willing to expand these offerings to the general population should there be incentives for them to do so. Organized dialogue has not yet happened on a concerted level; however, the opportunities for far-reaching and sustained dialogue are present.

Appendix A: Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (ILO MNE Declaration)

The ILO MNE Declaration provides recommendations in five areas. It encourages enterprises to:

General policies

- Comply with national laws and respect international standards
- Contribute to the realization of fundamental principles and rights at work
- Consult the government, employers' and workers' organizations to ensure that operations are consistent with national development priorities

Employment

- Endeavour to increase employment opportunities and standards, taking the employment policies and objectives of governments into account
- Give priority to the employment, occupational development, promotion and advancement of nationals of the host country
- Use technologies which generate employment, both directly and indirectly
- Build linkages with local enterprises by sourcing local inputs, promoting the local processing of raw materials and local manufacture of parts and equipment
- Extend equality of opportunity and treatment in employment
- Assume a leading role in promoting security of employment, providing reasonable notice of intended changes in operations and avoiding arbitrary dismissal

Training

- Provide training for all levels of employees to meet the needs of enterprises, as well as the development policies of the country
- Participate in programmes to encourage skill formation and development
- Afford opportunities within the MNE for local management to broaden their experience

Conditions of work and life

- Provide wages, benefits and conditions of work not less favourable than those offered by comparable employers in the country concerned
- Provide the best possible wages, benefits and conditions of work, within the framework of government policies, to meet the basic needs of employees and their families
- Respect the minimum age for admission to employment
- Maintain the highest standards of safety and health at work
- Examine the causes of industrial safety and health hazards, provide information on good practices observed in other countries, and effect the necessary improvements

Industrial relations

- Develop industrial relations no less favourable than those observed by comparable employers
- Respect freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, providing the facilities and information required for meaningful negotiations
- Support representative employers' organizations
- Provide for regular consultation on matters of mutual concern
- Examine the grievances of worker(s), pursuant to an appropriate procedure

Appendix B: List of organizations interviewed and/or participated in the focus group discussions

Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security (MoELSS)

Sierra Leone Employers Federation (SLEF)

Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC)

Five multinational enterprises from the agriculture sector

Three multinational enterprises from the mining sector

Four multinational enterprises from the banking sector

Office of the President, Republic of Sierra Leone

Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security

Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports

Ministry of Mineral Resources

Ministry of Trade and Industry

Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture

National Commission for Social Action

Coalition of youth groups

Development for International Development (DFID)

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

United Nations Integrated Peace Building Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

World Bank

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