MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF STATISTICS SIERRA LEONE COUNCIL

Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL) like most countries in the region is evolving and transforming into a more sound statistical management system capable of ensuring the best-practiced collection, processing, analysis and communication of statistics and dissemination of the same to policy makers, donors, planners, researchers and the business community. Establishing a reliable and functioning statistical system is no mean feat. A functioning statistical system requires universally acceptable methodology, data management system, accreditation code and standards for the production of official statistics and cooperation with key data producers. The goal of SSL is thus to operationalise a functioning, reliable and digitized statistical system over the lifespan of this strategic plan, which aims to establish a robust digitised statistical data system that provides reliable, comprehensive and harmonized statistical information on Sierra Leone.

The NSDS (2016-2020) has been developed following the implementation of the first generation NSDS (2008-2012). Although it extended its lifespan, some elements of the NSDS 2008-2012/15 were not carried out due to reasons including funding gap, and lack of cooperation that was expected from partners and stakeholders. This notwithstanding, most of the activities of the document were implemented including updating the poverty profile of Sierra Leone and improving on the national account statistics and other relevant statistics. On the downside, a key goal of the NSDS that seeks to integrate, harmonise and operationalise the national statistical system was not achieved.

The NSDS 2016-2020 therefore seeks to builds on one part the successes of the NSDS 2008-2012/15 and on the other to serve as both Statistic Sierra Leone's road map and management game plan to reinforce best-practice statistical data collection, processing and dissemination for informed decision-making in Sierra Leone for the next five years. Given the government of Sierra Leone's desire to significantly reduce poverty in all its forms to it barest minimum, if not totally eradicate it in Sierra Leone, and the backdrop of the demand for improved quality, reliable and timely statistical data required to monitor progress towards the attainment of this broad national objective, SSL is positioning itself to provide necessary and sufficient statistical information to guide policy makers and implementing partners. This will inform on the progress attained or not in the implementation of not only our Agenda for Prosperity (AfP), but also the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Consequently, the fragmented National Statistical System (NSS) is being scrutinized, and challenged to be more coordinated and integrated to produce more harmonised and quality data to meet this growing demand for reliable statistics for national development and policy formulation. It is in this light that SSL's Council favourably view the NSDS II as a transformation Agenda and thus expect to see at the end of the five years lifespan of the NSDS the achievement of the following:

(i)   Transformation that will lead to the modernisation and development of the state-of-the-art institutional and physical environment of SSL to enable the operation and delivery of high quality statistics to inform the transformation and development of Sierra Leone.

(ii)   Sustainable transformation of the National Statistical System to a well-coordinated integrated and harmonised system to ensure that that the necessary and relevant statistics will be increasingly made available to measure, monitor and evaluate progress towards meeting the targets of the AfP and the SDGs in the country;

(iii)   Transforming the entire Statistical Cycle Management System (SCMS) by ensuring best-practiced data collection, processing, analysis methodologies, and data management and communication to serve as a road map for the development, improvement, support, strengthening and resource mobilization of all statistics and statistical activities in the country,

(iv)   Transforming SSL from paper system of data collection to more ICT-based data collection and processing to ensure reliability and timely delivery of statistical outcomes, and

(v)   Systematically transform SSL to not only produce statistics for its own sake but to systematically ensure the collection and production of evidence-based statistics to evaluate the PRS progress and to inform new policies aimed at achieving the SDGs and sustainable transformation of Sierra Leone.

This NSDS (2016-20) thus marks an end of the chapter of "business as usual" in the production, analysis and dissemination of statistics in Statistics Sierra Leone. I am very hopeful that with the support and cooperation of both the Government and our development partners, the implementation of this NSDS will be a success.

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