

PRESENTATION BY AMBASSADOR ALHAJI FANDAY TURAY FOR THE SOUTH-SOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXPO 2022 SIDE EVENT ON 13TH SEPTEMBER 2022, 9AM NEW YORK TIME

“South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace”-Sierra Leone Perspective

Mr. Moderator,

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to be part of this side event on South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace on the margins of the Global South-South Development Expo. At the outset, let me thank the DPPA and UNDP respectively for inviting me to give the Sierra Leone and g7+ perspective to today's discussion.

Question 1:

How does Sierra Leone view the value added of SSTC in the peace and development sector, and do you have any experiences you can share? Sierra Leone is also currently the Chair of the g7+. What role does SSTC play in the g7+?

Sierra Leone agrees with the UN Office for South-South Cooperation, (UNOSSC) that South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation offers an additional and complementary path to renew, revitalize and multiply the alternatives to sustain inclusive development and peace. Importantly, this is already being done with Global South countries directly affected by insecurity, instability and violence and are at the forefront of policy and programming processes. South-South Cooperation is a prospect to increase knowledge transfer and enhance policy coordination in a multipolar world.

In terms of our experiences that we can share, it is important to note that Sierra Leone was plagued with eleven-year civil war that led to not only the loss of lives and properties, but a break down in institutions and a retardation of development in all forms. However, through

regional and cross regional interventions and cooperation, Sierra Leone was reinstated to a democratic and peaceful State.

South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) is centered around three major areas namely partnership, collaboration and networking and Sierra Leone being a part of the global south has benefitted and contributed in various ways to actualizing the goal of South-South Cooperation.

Through partnership, Sierra Leone benefitted from the deployment of a Peace Keeping Mission from the West African peacekeeping Force named ECOMOG and later larger Missions from the United Nations such as UNOMSIL, UNIOSIL and UNAMSIL (UNAMSIL). These Missions were mandated to implement the Lomé Peace Accord and restore sanity to the Country.

It is very clear that the civil war in Sierra Leone ended as a result of a collaborative efforts from Members States of the global south and other development partners. One of the major transnational justice mechanisms instituted in Sierra Leone at the end of the civil war-the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) stems from the Lomé Peace Agreement, signed on 7th July 1999. The Commission was set to respond to the needs of the victims, promote healing and reconciliation and prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered.

There was also the Special Court for Sierra Leone set up in 2002, to address serious crimes against civilians and the UN Peacekeepers committed during the country's decade-long civil war (1991-2002).

Shortly after, the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission accompanied Sierra Leone in its peacebuilding journey in 2006 leading up to the signing of a Cooperation Framework between the two parties in December 2007.

Sierra Leone has successfully held national presidential, parliamentary and local council elections in 2007, 2012 and 2018, representing an important democratic and peacebuilding milestone.

The country has made significant progress in rebuilding and strengthening post-conflict institutions and addressing some of the immediate needs of its people. The root causes of the civil war, (such as youth exclusion and unemployment, corruption, inequality, centralization, food insecurity and access to land, particularly for women and girls) as was identified in the findings of the TRC are gradually being addressed through policy formulation, inclusion and cooperation with partners of the global south.

Sierra Leone has exited the formal agenda of the PBC which is remarkable progress. The country still engages with the PBC to consolidate peace gains within the identified Sierra Leone PBC roadmap priorities, focusing mainly on national cohesion, human capital development, economic diversification, institutional resilience and governance, as well as COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

In terms of the role played by SSTC in the g7+ countries it is worth noting that the g7+ came into being to convene conflict affected countries on a platform that would serve as an avenue to advocate for better peacebuilding, statebuilding and development policies. Since its establishment, the group has grown in impact and has become an influential voice. The g7+ played an indispensable role in securing a stand-alone goal on Peace, Justice, and Effective institutions in Agenda 2030. The group has been instrumental in promoting the cause of pursuing dialogue and reconciliation for lasting peace. The g7+ has also provided a platform to member countries to collectively engage in dialogue with peacebuilding, humanitarian, and development actors to enhance the effectiveness of cooperation. Agreement on The New Deal for engagement in fragile states among g7+, donors and civil society was a major milestone in this regard. Country ownership and asserting nexus between peace and development are the principles of the New Deal that has shaped the dialogue since its endorsement.

Serra Leone, as the Chair of the Group and a country that has experienced conflict and still recovering from its impacts have been greatly involved in peer-to peer- learning, providing support to elections in fragile states, like Guinea Bissau, being part of a mediation Mission in the Central African Republic for peaceful settlement of their conflicts, and also was part of the delegation that engaged the warring factions in south- Sudan during their conflicts.

On the whole, the g7+ countries support each other in experience sharing through the fragile-to-fragile cooperation and these include:

Question 2: How do you think the UN System can scale up support and facilitation of the SSTC in support of Conflict prevention and development in the g7+ Countries? How can the g7+ work with the UN System to strengthen SSTC??

We can all attest that due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and other global tensions, UN Member States, especially those of the global south are falling back drastically on the implementation of the 2030 agenda. For significant progress to be made the UN System can scale up support and facilitation of SSTC in support of conflict prevention and development in the g7+ countries by:

1. Increasing the capacity of Member States through exchange programmes, dialogues and other means of trainings.
2. Strengthening national implementation systems and mechanisms, and the need to reinforce multilateral partnership and cooperation and the use of whole-of-society approach to increase the focus on the SDGs.
3. Increasing Resource mobilization and maximization efforts and to ensure resources are directed to the specific goals.
4. Policy formulation should be supported by scientific data, therefore the need to improve STEM system of learning, in g7+ countries, with special incentives to the girl child and women in general. The UN system can be of assistance in this regard.

Just recently, a delegation from Sierra Leone embarked on a week-long study tour to learn from Uganda's experiences for championing the South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) framework, through which Uganda has registered significant progress in agricultural production. Sierra Leone has resolved to adopt the STTC model to accelerate the country's target for rice self-sufficiency.

At regional level, ECOWAS provides volunteers in critical areas of need including teachers, doctors, consultants and experts in various fields to support member states in achieving the SDGs. ECOWAS also provides mediation to sustain and promote democracy in Member States.

Continentially, the AU provides mediation when the peace and security of Member States is threatened.

In the global south, Sierra Leone during the scourge of the Ebola virus and COVID-19 pandemic was supported by medical personnel from Cuba.

There are other exchange programmes on ICT, environmental sciences, marine biological to other countries in the global south to build the capacities of professionals in the various fields.

The UN system and the g7+ can work together to replicate the above initiatives in g7+ countries with the UN System providing the requisite human and financial resources and the g7+ countries scaling up peer to peer learning and experience sharing with other countries in the global south.

Thank you for your kind attention.