



**Government of Sierra Leone**

---

# FY2025 GENDER BUDGET STATEMENT

---

**MINISTRY OF FINANCE  
TREASURY BUILDING  
GEORGE STREET  
FREETOWN**

**DECEMBER 2024**

## **Preface**

The passing of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act 2023 institutionalized a Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) approach. The approach uses fiscal policy and public financial management to promote gender equality as articulated in Cluster 5 of the Medium-Term National Development Plan IV. It is therefore a requirement that all public agencies focus on gender priorities in budgetary decision-making, reporting and accountability to foster desired impact towards reduction of gender inequality from current and new budget measures in every budget cycle.

To enforce GEWE Act, 2023 in a phased manner, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) in collaboration with the Ministry for Gender and Children's Affairs (MGCA) issued guidelines for GRB for Financial Year (FY) 2025 budget preparation process. In addition, the partnership identified 5 pilot Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) – Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs; Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Defence; and Sierra Leone Police to adopt the GRB approach. The pilot MDAs demonstrated readiness to adopt the approach because they had prerequisites which include: (i) clear gender specific policy or strategies; (ii) evidence-based gender baselines and equality objectives with performance indicators; and (iii) existence of practices that mainstream gender concerns in the planning, budgeting and accountability functions.

With technical support from Ministry of Finance, MGCA, International Monetary Fund/Afritac West 2 (IMF/AFW2) and other partners, the pilot MDAs undertook mainstream gender equality concerns and spending decisions in the FY2025 budget. At the ministry level, the reform was spearheaded by Programme Working Groups and involved the following tasks:

- (i) Clear demonstration on how the budget programmes contributed to the National Development Plan (NDPIV) goals- reflecting gender and equity concerns for the medium-term, whether explicitly and implicitly.
- (ii) Assessment of the impact of the previous budgets on gender and equity objectives, and progress towards gender equality, and social inclusion.
- (iv) Indication of both gender priorities with - performance targets and indicators- and interventions to address gender and equity issues as well as projected spending within a given resource envelope and timeframe.

Accordingly, each pilot ministry was tasked to prepare and submit a clear Gender Budget Statement (GBS) that shows how the FY2025 budget intends to respond to the specific gender inequality issues or needs of women, men, girls and boys disaggregated by age and disability, as may be deemed appropriate.

Therefore, Ministry of Finance is happy to present a consolidated **Gender Budget Statement** that offers a clear and concise overview of resource allocations for gender responsive interventions in FY2025. The target priority areas relate to:

- (i) gender mainstreaming in policy formulation and budgeting; addressing SBGV and related forensic analysis and investigation;
- (ii) accessing free and quality healthcare for reproductive health, family planning, and child health services;
- (iii) enhancing women participation in governance and decision-making, including SLE police and defence;
- (iv) improvement in completion rates and learning outcomes for girls; and
- (v) enhanced access and better learning opportunities for school-age going persons with disabilities and drop-outs.

The Statement should support transparent monitoring, evaluation, reporting and accounting for the impact of fiscal policy and budget measures on the reduction of gender inequalities against the national gender policy objectives.

In conclusion, Ministry of Finance urges all policy makers and technocrats to use the **Gender Budget Statement** to foster compliance with not only the GEWE Act, 2023 but also ensure promotion of inclusive growth and development as articulated in Medium Term National Development Plan (MT-NDP 2024-2030) in a systematic and transparent manner.

## Table of Contents

<i>Preface</i> .....	<i>i</i>
<b>1) Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Gender Responsive Budgeting .....	1
1.2 What is a Gender Budget Statement (GBS)? .....	2
1.3 GRB Preparation Process for FY 2025 .....	2
1.4 An Overview of GBS FY 2025.....	3
<b>2) MINISTRY OF GENDER AND CHILDREN’S AFFAIRS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 Background.....	5
2.2 Enforcement of GEWE Act, 2023 .....	5
2.3 Women’s Participation in Governance and Decision Making.....	6
2.4 Addressing Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) .....	8
2.5 Gender Priorities for FY 2025 .....	9
<b>3) MINISTRY OF BASIC AND SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION</b> .....	<b>11</b>
3.1 Recent Gender Responsive Policy and Strategic Framework .....	11
3.2 Persistent Gender Disparities in Basic and Senior Secondary Education .....	11
3.3 Priority Interventions to Reduce Gender Disparities (FY 2025) .....	14
<b>4) MINISTRY OF HEALTH</b> .....	<b>16</b>
4.1 An Overview of Gender Concerns in Health Sector .....	16
4.2 Gender Responsive Health Policy and Strategic Framework.....	17
4.3 Gender Priorities and Interventions for FY 2025 and medium-term .....	17

**5) MINISTRY OF DEFENCE..... 21**  
5.1 Background..... 21

**6) SIERRA LEONE POLICE (SLP)..... 25**  
6.1 Situation Analysis..... 25  
6.2 Gender Related Policy framework..... 25  
6.3 Institutional Development for Mainstreaming Gender and Equity ..... 25  
6.4 Progress in Gender Inequality..... 26  
6.5 Emerging Gender Inequalities in the SLP ..... 27

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of
CEDAW	Discrimination Against Women
CPIMS	Child Protection Information Management System
CRC	Convention on the Right of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EPI	Extended Programme on Immunisation
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation
FSA	Financial Services Association
FSU	Family Support Unit
GBV	Gender Based Violence
	Gender-Based Violence Information Management
GBVIMS	System
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HIV/AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HMIS	Health Management Information System
HQ JFC	Headquarter, Military Joint Force Command
ICC	International Criminal Court
JLU	Joint Logistics Unit
JSS	Junior Secondary School
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MoD	Ministry of Defence

MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoGCA	Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Mainstreaming
MTDP	Medium-Term Development Plan
NGP	National Gender Policy
PHU	Peripheral Health Units
PPRC	Political Party Registration Commission
PWD	Persons with Disability
SGBV	Sexual Gender Based Violence
SILNAP II	Sierra Leone National Action Plan
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SSS	Senior Secondary School
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations
WASSCE	West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination

# 1) Introduction

## 1.1 Gender Responsive Budgeting

The Government of Sierra Leone is committed to promote gender equality and empowerment of men and women, boys and girls, as fundamental policy objective for Cluster 5 of the Medium-Term National Development Plan IV. Accordingly, the Government has further resolved to enforce the GEWE Act, 2023 in a phased manner. This is a requirement that all public agencies to mainstream gender priorities in the budgetary decision-making, reporting and accountability to foster desired impact towards reduction of gender inequality from all current and new budget measures in every budget cycle and submit gender budget statement to be consolidated into a National Budget Statement.

Government stated its commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in Cluster 5 of the Medium-Term National Development Plan IV. The main thrust is to continue advancing efforts in gender and women's empowerment and to separately treat the issue of gender mainstreaming as a critical and outstanding enabler. Under this *enabling area*, therefore, the Government commits to focus on specific catalytic strategies under the following broad sectoral areas:

- Gender and governance.
- Gender and education, economic participation, technology and communication.
- Gender and health, living with disability and sexual and gender-based violence.
- Gender and justice, human rights and peacebuilding.
- Gender and environment.
- Mainstreaming gender into policies, programmes and legal frameworks.

Gender mainstreaming has been accepted as an enabler for development to ensure maximizing efforts in narrowing the gender gap in critical socioeconomic areas, drawing from the National Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy and Legislation.

While tremendous efforts have been made to address gender differential, the state continues to remain widely gender unequal across several development areas. Addressing the gender gaps and weaknesses in both economic development and human development (including skills, knowledge, health,) is critical in expediting the structural transformation in development.



## **1.2 What is a Gender Budget Statement (GBS)?**

The government's unwavering commitment to advancing gender equality is evident with the production of a Gender Budget Statement for FY 2025. A Gender Budget Statement (GBS) is a policy and accountability document that outlines the government's commitment to implementation of gender equality objectives. It lays out details of gender equity priorities, identifies key gender gaps, and outlines approved strategies, interventions and the resources available in the budget to implement the objectives and achieve desired and trackable gender targets. It also provides an evaluation of the impact of previous expenditure towards realization of gender equality and thus serves as an accountable framework for the Legislature and the public for the delivery of the commitments made in GBS.

Therefore, the main thrust of GBS covers the following:

- a) Provision of a systematic and evidence-based mechanism to mainstream gender concerns and underlying causes in policies and programme as well as budget.
- b) Support cost effectiveness in the design and funding of programmes (interventions)-by allowing assessment of opportunities within existing budget measures, identifying of weaknesses or gender gaps critical gaps in the implementation and appraising of the gender responsiveness of the interventions.
- c) Enhancing the precision of interventions and sectoral fiscal allocations, particularly directed towards gender inequalities thereby fortifying diverse, specific and strategic needs; for the forth coming fiscal year
- d) Support in-year and end-year monitor and account for actual expenditures from the previous year (quarter) and their impact on set gender equality targets and progress toward reduction of gender inequality.

## **1.3 GRB Preparation Process for FY 2025**

To enforce the GEWE Act, 2023, the Ministry of Finance in collaboration with the Ministry for Gender and Children's Affairs (MoGCA) introduced Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) as an approach that uses fiscal policy and public financial management instruments to promote gender equality.

The Ministry of Finance issued guidelines (under 1st Budget Call Circular) for gender responsive budgeting under the FY2025 budget preparation process for 5 pilot MDAs. The pilot MDAs demonstrated readiness to adopt the approach because they had prerequisites which included:

- (i) clear gender specific policy or strategies;
- (ii) evidence-based gender baselines and equality objectives with performance indicators; and
- (iii) existence of practices that mainstream gender concerns in the planning, budgeting and accountability functions.

With technical support from MoF, MoGCA, IMF/AFW2 and other partners, the pilot ministries undertook mainstream gender equality concerns and spending decisions in the preparation of the FY2025 budget. At ministry level, the GRB reform was spearheaded by Programme Working Groups supported by Gender Units and Planning Directorates. The initiative covered the following tasks:

Step 1: *Program Review*: a clear demonstration on how the budget programmes contributed to the NDPIV goals- reflecting gender and equity concerns for the medium-term, whether explicitly and implicitly.

Step 2: *Evaluation of past performance of the programmes* to ascertain the impact of the previous budget on gender and equity objectives, outputs and outcomes, emphasizing progress towards gender equality, social inclusion.

Step 3: *Indication of both gender priorities over the medium-term* with clear performance targets and indicators- and interventions to address gender and equity issues and achieve the targets; and

Step 4: *Projected spending*, to reduce gender inequality within a given resource envelope for FY2025 budget.

Accordingly, each pilot ministry was also required to prepare and submit a clear Gender Budget Statement (GBS) that shows how the budget intends to respond to the specific gender inequality issues or needs of women, men, girls and boys disaggregated by age and disability, as may be deemed appropriate.

#### **1.4 An Overview of GBS FY 2025**

The GBS from the pilot MDAs have been consolidated into a National Gender Budget Statement (GBS) for FY 2025 that lays out the current gender responsive actions and selected gender priorities to be executed during the Financial Year. In 2025, the pilot MDAs will pursue the priorities as indicated below:

- ❖ **MGCA**: implementation of the GEWE Act, 2023, and enhancing women participation in governance and prevention of SGBV
- ❖ **MBSSSE** : (i)increasing the rate of retention and pass rate girls child in BECE and WASSCE; (ii) provision of education subsidies to compliment school fees for girls whose parents have low financial capacity; (iii) provision of facilities to both formal schools and Special Needs Institutions to enhance access and benefit the students with disabilities school, (iv) provision of opportunities for school drop-outs to be trained and develop a lifetime essential vocational skill.
- ❖ **Ministry of Health**: (i)enhancing access to free and quality healthcare for reproductive health, family planning, child health services, and (ii) continuous improvement of disease prevention, control, and surveillance among men, women, girls and boys.

- ❖ **MOD:** (i) strengthening the understanding and (ii) adoption of gender mainstreaming within the operations of the ministry and RSLAF and capacity building of women officers to enhance their performance and eligibility for promotion.
- ❖ **SLP:** (i) building capacity to enforce GEWE Act; (ii) increase the number and competence of policewomen in decision making positions, deployments at all levels and recruitment by at least 30% and ensure SGBV cases are thoroughly investigated and handled in a conclusive manner.

The submission from each pilot ministry contains the following:

- a) **A Narrative** that covers the following: (i) an assessment of implementation progress of on-going interventions (both affirmative and mainstreamed) towards achieving gender equality; (ii) current or emerging gender inequalities or gaps and underlying causes, where possible, with performance indicators; and (iii) current policies and interventions to address existing gaps.
- b) **Summary Matrix** that spells out the following:
  - a. *Gender Concern/Gap:* description of the gender inequality or gender problem(s) - with baseline indicators, where gender data exists, - that require the Ministry to undertake the interventions in the selected Program.
  - b. *Policy Objective:* Government intention towards reducing the gender gap from a given baseline indicator towards a targeted result or output. The outputs should be realistic related to the annual activities to be undertaken. Where possible, performance indicators are used to measure the achievement of each output.
  - c. *Planned Activity:* Intervention(s) —could be affirmative or mainstreamed— that will be carried out by the Ministry to achieve the output identified in (b). There may be more than one activity for each target output/result but should be realistic or affordable within expenditure ceilings.
  - d. *Indicative Budget allocation:* estimated allocation for the interventions(s) with source of funding

The subsequent chapters provide the narrative and summary matrix for each of the pilot ministries.

## **2) MINISTRY OF GENDER AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS**

### **2.1 Background**

The Government is committed to achieving the Strategic Development Goals (SDGs), out of which the 17 SDGs have gender and child protection implications. It passed the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy in 2020; and the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act 2023. Accordingly, Government has spearheaded a paradigm shift from victim's centered response legislations (such as Domestic Violence Act, Sexual Offences Act etc.) to legislations that promote empowerment, equality and political participation of women. The legislation includes the Customary Land Rights Act 2022; Land Commission Act 2022; Public Elections Act 2022; Political Parties Regulation Commission Act 2022; Mines and Minerals Development Act 2022.

The shift demands strong sectoral and institutional leadership that can engender a multi-sectoral approach to advance gender equality and the rights of women and children. Therefore, the government has adopted a two-pronged approach involving affirmative action and mainstreaming gender into policy and programme initiatives. Accordingly, Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (MGCA) has pursued gender responsive reforms in three priority areas:

- (i) Enforcement of GEWE Act, 2023 to underpin the main thrust of government to reduce gender inequalities;
- (ii) increase women participation women in governance; and
- (iii) elimination sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

### **2.2 Enforcement of GEWE Act, 2023**

MGCA has undertaken to increase awareness, understanding and enforcement of the GEWE Act, 2023 in all public agencies. The main thrust is GEWE ACT, 2023 is to provide for the following:

- 1) Gender responsive appointment to Public Office (Part 11).
- 2) Women's Empowerment through equity pay, education and training, and access to credit (Part 111);
- 3) Establishment of functional Gender Units in Planning Directorate in all MDAs to be facilitated by fiscal and administrative policies adopted by MoF (Part V).
- 4) Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting on expenditures and impact on gender targets and progress towards reduction of gender inequality through Annual Reviews and Annual Auditing to Parliament not later than 3 months (Part V).

5) Putting in place measures/mechanisms /regulation to enforce the Part VI of the Act.

Accordingly, MoGCA will work closely with MoF to provide a conducive environment for the enforcement of the Act by undertaking the following actions:

- a) Drafting a regulatory framework and a manual to guide the enforcement the Act and roles of stakeholders.
- b) Conduct awareness raising sessions the value of the Act and responsibilities of the policy makers and technocrats in its enforcement.
- c) Design a capacity building plan and training manual to enhance competence of public official and policy makers in the enforcement of the Act.
- d) Conduct training program to equip technocrats, parliamentarians and councillors with necessary knowledge, skills for implementation of the Act.
- e) Training CSOs, including women's groups, in gender responsive budget, gender analysis of fiscal policies, gender impact assessments and hold GoSL accountable.
- f) Support collection of collection and publish gender disaggregated statistics and data on gender priority areas.
- g) Undertake or support gender-responsive monitoring, tracking, evaluation, accountability of public expenditure and its impact towards reduction of gender inequality.

### **2.3 Women's Participation in Governance and Decision Making**

Government is committed to enhance girls and women's meaningful participation at national, regional and international decision-making platforms such as UNGA, AU, ECOWAS and MRU mechanisms that deal with gender equality and promote gender responsiveness governance, and democracy.

The current women representation in governance has improved but remained low in specific positions as indicated in Table 3.1 below. Sierra Leonean women are still under-represented in parliament, political parties, Government of Sierra Leone, boards, agencies and educational institutions especially universities, national and local committees. Women's full and active participation in political leadership and decision-making is crucial for sustained economic development and peace and security.

Table 3.1: WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING 2023					
Positions	Total Number	MALES		FEMALES	
		Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Candidates Nominated as Chairpersons/ Mayors	107	79	74	28	26
Candidates Nominated as Councilors	2725	1691	66	1034	34
Candidates Nominated as MPs	889	590	66	299	34
Elected as Mayors / Chairpersons	32	19	59	13	41
Elected as Councilors	467	310	66	157	34
Elected as MPs (excluding PCMPs)	135	94	70	41	30
Elected as MPs (including PCMPs)	149	107	72	42	28
Ambassadors/ High Commissioners	24	20	83	4	17
Dep. Ambassadors/ High Commissioners	24	21	87.5	3	12.5
Cabinet Ministers	29	19	65.5	10	34.5
Deputy Ministers	33	22	67	11	33

*Source: Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs 2023*

Therefore, Government has planned to raise the representation to at least 30% of females in governance at all levels by 2028. Accordingly, MGCA has prioritised the following interventions:

- Provide special support for women including female youth interested in politics, and remove barriers that prevent women from participation in politics, including advocating for fee waiver for female candidates in public elections
- Provide capacity building for elected and appointed female officials to effectively deliver on their mandates.
- Advocate for reforms to amend the Constitution, Political Parties' Act, Local and Traditional laws to anchor affirmative actions to ensure women's participation in decision-making and political leadership as provided within GEWE Act, 2023
- Create a database of potential women for leadership and decision-making positions and regularly share this with stakeholders including the office of the president and MDAs.

Likewise, MGCA has also adopted a multi-pronged strategy to resuscitate the Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians (NEWMAP); Network of Female Ministers; and Association of Female Councillors and strengthen the collaboration with the Ministry of Youths and the National

Commission for Youths to promote leadership and participation of female youths. This will involve collaboration with CSOs to train women that are competing for leadership positions.

#### 2.4 Addressing Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

Sierra Leone has provided substantial number of legal frameworks, policies for the protection of women from GBV and recently implemented the SGBV Response Strategy, 2021. In addition to these, the country has ascribed to regional and international relevant human rights instruments. However, the commitment has not yet been translated into a significant decrease in the prevalence of GBV in the country. Table 3.2 below shows a steady reduction in reported cases. 2022 witnessed a 32% decrease in reported cases

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
# of sexual assault cases	2900	4000	3339	2966	2705	15,910
# of physical assault cases	237	196	209	236	234	1202
# of psychological assault cases	0	0	0	0	2	2
# of pregnancy cases	602	598	559	537	451	2747
# of HIV/AIDs cases	7	4	10	18	4	43
# of other STIs	1914	3041	2498	2351	1885	11689
# of referrals from FSU	2900	3668	3174	2960	2762	15464
<i>Source: Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs 2023</i>						

Government is cognizant of the need to adopt a multispectral approach that addresses prevention, awareness-raising, advocacy and lobbying, rehabilitation, and coordination of efforts as demonstrated by on-going interventions:

- *Intensified awareness arising on the prevention of SGBV* through effective community and media engagement. The previous actions have included Launch of (i) *Hands Off our Girls Campaign* on a pilot district in December 2018 and 16 districts in 2019 in a phased manner; (ii) *Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Marriage 2018 – 2022*, and (iii) His Excellency (H.E.) declaration of *State of Emergency on Sexual Violence and Rape* in February 2019. Other interventions have included: scaling up the Male Involvement Strategy to prevent SGBV and training Youth Leaders on the Strategy to become advocates in their communities.

- *Popularisation of the legal and policy frameworks* aimed at prevention of SGBV through user-friendly manuals, radio programmes, religious gatherings, workshops, seminars, workplaces and learning institutions, including a review of the Sexual Offences Act 2019 (amended) to include stringent new penalties.
- *Other institutional development related interventions include:* (i) establishment of One Stop Centres;(ii) Free Rape Hotline 116 in 2020; (iii) Sexual Offences Model Court; and (iv)operationalization of District Steering Committee chaired by local councils in all districts to address bottlenecks frustrating SGBV prevention; and launch of Gender-Based Violence Information Management System GBVIMS in 3 pilot districts.
- *Capacity building of relevant entities* to enhance service delivery to prevent or respond to Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV). The target personnel include: medical personnel, security staff in Family Support Units (FSUs) in Police, law enforcement agencies (courts, and Police Prosecutors); and social workers.
- *Monitoring and Oversight of SGBV:* Government commits to monitor and provide oversight the extent to which enforcement of all legislation and policies have contributed to eradicating all forms of GBV in all spheres of society. This would cover monitoring the adjudication of SGBV cases, monitor the implementation of free medical services for survivors of SGBV at Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) health facilities especially in rural areas and produce an annual consolidated report for meaningful oversight and advocacy.

## **2.5 Gender Priorities for FY 2025**

**During fiscal year 2025,** the ministry will support activities related to the following areas:

- (i) enforcement of GEWE Act, 2023;
- (ii) women’s participation in governance and decision making; and
- (iii) addressing Sexual Gender-Based Violence (GBV).



**MATRIX 1: MINISTRY OF GENDER AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS  
SUMMARY OF GENDER BUDGET STATEMENT 2025**

Ministry: <b>Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs</b>						
Total Budget: NLe 4,592,100=						
Total GRB: NLe 550,750=						
<i>Gender Equity Issue plus underlying causes)</i>	<i>Policy Objective (with GE indicators)</i>		<i>Activity</i>	<i>Indicative Budget Allocation</i>		<i>Programme</i>
	<i>Baseline Indicator</i>	<i>Target Indicator</i>		<i>Estimates</i>	<i>Source (ON or OFF budget)</i>	
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Low implementation of GEWE Act, 2023.	Limited awareness and enforcement of the GEWE Act by November 2024.	50% of the population (40% male – 60% female)	Formulation of a regulatory and operational framework and manual.  Popularization of the GEWE Act through media and community sensitization workshops	150,000  288,250	On-Budget	Program 1: Roll out of Existing legislative, policy and Strategic frameworks on Gender equality and women's empowerment
Limited access to treatment and therapy by survivors of Sexual and Gender Base violence	Significant number of survivors do not have access to treatment, protection; psycho-social support and legal services.	40% of survivors (95% females and 5% males)	Activity 1: Support to One Stop Centers	112,500	On-budget	Program 2: Strengthen SGBV response mechanisms/ services

### 3) MINISTRY OF BASIC AND SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION

#### 3.1 Recent Gender Responsive Policy and Strategic Framework

The Government committed to achieving gender equality in and through Education. Therefore, it has invested considerable resources in the subsectors and adopted three major policy and strategic frameworks as demonstrated below:

- **Free Quality School Education Programme (FQSE).** It was launched in August 2018 to provide all children in Sierra Leone with access to free, quality education at government-approved schools.
- **Introduction of the National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools (2021).**

The policy marks Sierra Leone's first effort to establish a comprehensive framework that guides the daily functions of educational institutions to foster an inclusive and equitable educational environment for all students, irrespective of their societal standing.

It focuses on children with disabilities, girls (especially pregnant girls and parents), children in rural remote areas, and children from poor households. The policy has four sub-objectives, namely: creating inclusive learning environments; targeting support to vulnerable learners; engaging families and communities; and creating an enabling policy environment
- **Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan 2022-2026: Transforming Learning for All (ESP)**

The Plan focuses on improving learning outcomes for all children and youth. The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) envisages that every child, regardless of circumstance, should have the opportunity to access and complete quality education, whilst showing proficiency in all assessed areas.
- **Other concrete positive steps** include National Strategy for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Marriage (2018-2022), to address teenage pregnancy; the launch of a task force on SRGBV in December 2019; and the abolition of the controversial policy that barred pregnant girls from attending school.

#### 3.2 Persistent Gender Disparities in Basic and Senior Secondary Education

The Government continues to commit considerable resources to education resulting into recent improvements in enrolment and transition rates for Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) nationwide. There is an

improvement in access and completion rates across all levels. However, disparities continue to influence educational access, experience, and outcomes for marginalized children. The disparities are discussed below:

### Enrolment Rates

The government has witnessed a sharp increase in enrolments following implementation of the FQSE programme. Although this increase appears to be small for primary education, there are considerable increases for JSS and SSS. Specifically, access to JSS education was relatively low for all quintiles. Over the years, access to public schools increased remarkably (especially for poorer quintiles). The GER for the poorest quintile is, however, around 50 percent. This indicates that more needs to be done to increase access for this income group.

<b>Table 1: Trend in Enrolment and Class Sizes 2011-2019</b>			
<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2018</b>
Basic Education	GER	109%	140%
	Class size	42	51
<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2019</b>
SSS	GER	31%	45%
	Class size	34	53

### Completion Rates

Completion rates have largely improved between 2003 and 2018 in primary education and JSS at the national level.

At the primary level, completion rates improved by 29 percentage points for the poorest quintile. However, there was a much lower improvement for the poorest quintile at JSS (16 percentage points). In richer quintiles, the gains in completion rates for primary education are higher than for JSS. 5

At the national level, completion rates have more than doubled for primary schools. However, pronounced disparities exist between rural and urban locations. Overall rates remain at undesirable levels for secondary schools, indicating that more efforts are needed to improve performance. At the primary level, there is almost an even percentage of boys who finish compared to girls (63 percent versus 65 percent) in Sierra Leone.

However, this pattern changes at the secondary school level, especially at the upper secondary level where 27% of males complete upper secondary as compared to 18% of females suggesting factors specific to girls that impede their education.

Boys tend to outperform girls in the national exams (NPSE and BECE). The gap in educational attainment between children from the richest and poorest quintiles widens significantly as they progress through school.

### **Drop-out Rates**

Schooling patterns are characterized by significant gender, geographical and socio-economic disparities, with poverty being the most discriminatory factor. Access is almost universal, however, still one child out of ten never attends school. The probability of accessing primary education is slightly higher for girls than for boys, but retention, completion and transition rates from primary to junior and senior secondary are still persistently lower for girls.

As children progress through the system, most of those who dropout does so for financial reasons, and this factor disproportionately affects more boys (67%) than girls (53%).

However, in 2017, almost a third of girls dropped out of school because of pregnancy. Data also indicate that intersectionality between gender, poverty, disability and location significantly exacerbates inequalities. In addition, inadequate sanitation facilities at schools and limited access to hygiene products reduces girls' attendance, particularly during menstruation.

The probability of completing senior secondary school is estimated at 50% for urban children against 12% for their rural peers. Pregnancy and child marriage are two of the most common reasons why girls drop out of school at the secondary level.

Overall, 39% of children between the ages of 5 and 17 were involved in child labour in 2017, with boys more likely to be involved in economic activities and girls more likely to be responsible for household chores.

Household wealth is the most dominant factor in explaining schooling patterns, with only 7% of the poorest quintile completing senior secondary school, against 60% of the wealthiest quintile. When the three factors are combined, only 5% of the poorest rural girls complete secondary education in comparison to 68% of the richest urban boys.

### **Huge gender imbalance within the teaching workforce**

Sierra Leone has one of the lowest ratios of female teachers in secondary education across West Africa, with only 13% of women educators (16% at JSS level and 9% at SSS level). Additionally, men dominate leadership and management positions, with very few head teachers or senior staff being women. At SSS level, 90% of principals and 89% of senior teachers are male. A recruitment drive to attract more women to teaching and into leadership positions is needed, as well as an investigation into the reasons why female teachers, particularly in rural areas, leave the profession.

### 3.3 Priority Interventions to Reduce Gender Disparities (FY 2025)

The Matrix below summarizes the selected priority intentions to address the critical gender inequalities in access to basic education and learning outcomes.

#### MATRIX 2: MINISTRY OF BASIC AND SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION SUMMARY OF GENDER BUDGET STATEMENT 2025

MATRIX 2 MINISTRY OF BASIC AND SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION						
<b>TOTAL BUDGET: NLE1,105,971,000</b>						
<b>TOTAL GRB: NLE153,063,200</b>						
GENDER EQUITY ISSUE PLUS UNDERLINING CAUSES	POLICY OBJECTIVE (WITH GE INDICATORS)		Activity	Indicative Budget Allocation		Programme
	Baseline (Indicator)	Target/Result/Output Indicator		Estimates	Source (ON or OFF Budget)	
The girl child education at the JSS level is severely affected/disrupted due to lack of welfare & Hygiene packages for school going girls.	The number of Girls pupils who sat to and pass the 2023 BECE – Girls-64,314 attempted the Exam and Girls-61,408 (95%) Passed	Increased the rate of retention of the girl child in School. Increased pass rate of Girl children who are taking the B.E.C.E. (Target-70,000 girls for FY2025)	Procurement of Welfare & Hygiene Packages for School Going Girls	25,000,000	<b>ON Budget</b>	Free Quality Education
The girl child education at the SSS level is severely affected/disrupted due to lack of welfare & Hygiene packages for school going girls.	WASSCE – Girls-116,324 sat the exam. Candidates obtaining University requirements: Girls-100,245	Increased the rate of retention of the girl child in School. Increased pass rate and obtaining University requirement of the Girl child who are taking WASSCE (Targeting 75,000 girls candidates for FY2025)	Procurement of Welfare & Hygiene Packages for School Going Girls			Free Quality Education

**MATRIX 2**  
**MINISTRY OF BASIC AND SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION**

**TOTAL BUDGET: NLE1,105,971,000**

**TOTAL GRB: NLE153,063,200**

GENDER EQUITY ISSUE PLUS UNDERLINING CAUSES	POLICY OBJECTIVE (WITH GE INDICATORS)		Activity	Indicative Budget Allocation		Programme
	Baseline (Indicator)	Target/Result/Output Indicator		Estimates	Source (ON or OFF Budget)	
Low financial capacity of parent to pay tuition fees, examination fees for their children especially the girl child as compared to their male counterpart.			School Fee Subsidies	80,000,000	<b>ON Budget</b>	Free Quality Education
			Examination Fees for B.E.C.E & WASSCE	45,000,000	<b>ON Budget</b>	Free Quality Education
Vulnerable disable kids lack the appropriate tools, equipment and infrastructure to effectively acquire education.	Low enrollment in Special Needs Institutions in 2023. Boys-1,750, Girls-1,530 and Total-3,280	Increase enrollment to 5,000 pupils. Boys-2,700, Girls-2,300.	Subvention to 15 Special Needs Institutions	3,063,200	<b>ON Budget</b>	Special Needs
	15 Special Needs Institutions are not fully functional	Special Needs Institutions are well equipped with specialized facilities and fully functional.	Purchase assistive devices for the 15 Special Needs Institutions			
Children who are overaged for a given formal class and drop-outs lack opportunities to be trained and develop a lifetime essential vocational skill.	Baseline: Only 10 Literacy Learning Centres nationwide	At least 1 Literacy Learning Centre developed per district for 6 districts.	Subvention to Literacy Learning Centre's	305,000		

#### 4) MINISTRY OF HEALTH

##### 4.1 An Overview of Gender Concerns in Health Sector

Government adopted a National Health Sector Strategic Plan (NHSSP 2021–2025), developed in line with the vision and mission set out in the National Health and Sanitation Policy (2021) and the Roadmap for Universal Health Coverage 2021–2030.

The plan is intended to promote delivering quality healthcare services in tandem with the pursuit of universal access. Specifically, it is envisioned that the Plan will address the immense gender biases or inequalities in the health care delivery, which include the following in the Box below but not limited to:

<b>Maternal mortality rate:</b> 120 out of 100,000 Sierra Leonean women are expected to die due to complications from pregnancy or childbirth.
<b>Infant mortality rate per 1,000 is 96. Child mortality rate per 1,000 is 67. Under 5 mortality rate per 1,000 is 157.</b>
<b>Life expectancy at birth:</b> 47.6 for males and 51.3 for females.
<b>Early Marriage:</b> Median age at first marriage among women is 19.8 years for those aged 20-49, indicating high rates of child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM). 30% of girls in Sierra Leone were married before their 18th birthday; and 13% before their 15th birthday
<b>Teenage Pregnancy:</b> For every 1,000 girls in Sierra Leone, it is estimated that 112 will become mothers between ages 15 and 19
<b>Gender-Based Violence (GBV):</b> 61% of women in the Sierra Leone will experience gender-based violence (GBV) in their lifetime. There is increasing concerns that that Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is an issue, and that GBV contributes to adolescent pregnancy.

The prevailing situation can be explained by the following challenges in the health care delivery system:

**Harmful gender and social norms:** especially those that inhibit women’s and girls’ education and decision-making, pose significant obstacles to advancing reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (RMNCAH), including access to modern contraceptives, and reducing the prevalence of malaria. *Men have more influence over decisions for the household than women*—including the seeking of healthcare—and women lack control over key decisions related to sex, marriage, and children, including if, and when to use contraception. Women’s mobility is limited by social norms which require male permission for movement

**Sexual and reproductive health practices:** *Contraceptive use is low.* Despite around 70% of people knowing about contraceptives and where to get them, only 50% are currently using them. Many community members believe modern forms of family planning are haram or unhealthy, with anecdotal evidence suggesting there is perception that it promotes extramarital affairs. Inadequate access to *evidence-based health information*

*for pregnant women:* only 27% of pregnant women in the study reported having received any information related to sexual and reproductive health or associated risks.

**Limited access to quality health care.** Front Line Health Workers (FLHW) face major barriers to effective service delivery: almost half of FLHWs interviewed are unpaid, effectively operating as volunteers, struggle with difficult living conditions and lack of supplies, and report inequitable treatment between male and female workers. Despite generally positive health-seeking behavior, both women and men are concerned by lack of availability of medicine.

**Gender responsive decision making is still lacking:** Participation in decision-making structures at the community and public level is influenced by age and gender, with women and youth less likely to hold positions of power and influence key decisions. Gender mainstreaming and integration within policy formulation and training is limited, especially at central and decentralized levels.

#### **4.2 Gender Responsive Health Policy and Strategic Framework**

To address the above health challenges, Government remains committed to the following undertakings:

- *NHS and Universal Health Coverage Roadmap* emphasizes enhancing access to maternal and child health services, including specific measures to improve data collection and reporting on gender-related health issues. This ensures that health programs are tailored to meet the unique needs of women and girls.
- *Free Healthcare Initiative:* Established in 2010 and expanded upon, the Free Healthcare Initiative aims to improve maternal and child health outcomes. This program offers free healthcare services to pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under five, resulting in increased access to essential maternal health services. For example, antenatal care access rose from 76% in 2019 to 85% in 2023 among pregnant women.
- *Reducing impact for Survivors of SGBV:* The Ministry has adopted various policies aimed at reducing gender-based violence (GBV) and improving the health status of women and girls. For instance, specialized clinics and Eight One-Stop Centers have been established for survivors of gender-based violence, offering comprehensive care that includes medical, legal, and psychosocial support.

#### **4.3 Gender Priorities and Interventions for FY 2025 and medium-term**

Objectives: To reduce overall preventable death, especially maternal and child mortality and provide access to quality health services for all in Sierra Leone.

Specifically:



- a) *Adapt and Streamline the GEWE Act:* Integration and alignment of the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) Act, 2023 with the Ministry of Health’s goals and objectives to support Universal Health Coverage (UHC) 2030. This involves tailoring the Act’s provisions to the specific context of the health sector to ensure gender considerations in the realisation of health coverage goals.
- b) *Mitigate Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Sexual Exploitation, and Harassment:* Implement strategies and measures to prevent, respond to, and address GBV, sexual exploitation, and harassment within the Ministry. This includes developing comprehensive policies and support systems to protect employees and create a zero-tolerance environment for such abuses. Develop a culture of respect, equality, and safety for all employees within the Ministry. Provide a framework for preventing and effectively addressing sexual harassment, thus ensuring a safe and respectful work environment.
- c) *Promote Equal Opportunities and Address Discrimination:* Ensure equal opportunities for all employees by addressing gender-based discrimination in the workplace, ensuring pay equity, and creating a supportive and inclusive working environment. This includes establishing clear protocols to prevent and address incidents of inequality and disparities in a timely and effective manner.
- d) *Provide Gender-Sensitive Services:* Offer services that cater to the diverse gender needs and socio-economic statuses of beneficiaries served by the Ministry. This will involve adapting health services to meet varying gender-related needs and ensuring equitable access.
- e) *Promote Gender Equality in Health:* Support the elimination of all forms of gender-based discrimination and infringement of human rights by promoting gender equality in health. This will involve integrating gender sensitivity into health service delivery to support effective and efficient programming.
- f) *Collaboration on Gender Issues:* Partner with relevant organizations and stakeholders on gender-related issues and programming to leverage resources and expertise in advancing gender equality within the health sector.

**The programme interventions for FY 2025 will cover:** (i) expansion and improved management of free and quality healthcare for reproductive health, child diseases family planning and HIV/AIDS; (ii) continued improvement of disease prevention, control, and surveillance among men, women, girls and boys; and training of health workers on primary health care, hepatitis, measles, and malaria

**MATRIX 3: MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
SUMMARY OF GENDER BUDGET STATEMENT 2025**

**MATRIX 3 : MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

**GENDER BUDGET STATEMENT FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**Ministry: HEALTH**

**Total Budget: NLe 131,692,700**

**Total GRB: NLe 50,000,000**

Gender Equity Issue plus underlying causes)	Policy Objective (with GE indicators)		Activity	Indicative Budget Allocation		Programme
	Baseline (Indicator)	Target /Result/ Output (Indicator)		Estimates	Source (on or off budget)	
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Maternal Mortality Rate is high	443/100,000 live birth (UN maternal Mortality inter agency Group)	Reduce by 221/100,000 in all districts by 2030 (MTNDP 2030)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enact Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Bill</li> <li>-Improve access, quality, Drugs and Medical supplies</li> <li>- Community engagement and training in SRH and Community participation and ownership</li> </ul>	20,000,000	GOSL/Donor	DPPI/DRCH/DPH C/DMS and NMSA
<b>Under-five mortality rate</b>	112/1000 live birth (DHS2019 & UN Inter-agency group for Child Mortality 2022)	Reduce to 5/1000 deaths by 2030 (MTNDP 2030)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Community engagement and sensitization on SRHR (Gender, ANC, PNC)</li> <li>-National campaign on EPI, Nutritional Malaria</li> </ul>	15,000,000	GOSL/Donor	Gender Unit/DPPI/DRCH DPC

**MATRIX 3 : MINISTRY OF HEALTH**  
**GENDER BUDGET STATEMENT FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**Ministry: HEALTH**

**Total Budget: NLe 131,692,700**

**Total GRB: NLe 50,000,000**

Gender Equity Issue plus underlying causes)	Policy Objective (with GE indicators)		Activity	Indicative Budget Allocation		Programme
	Baseline (Indicator)	Target /Result/ Output (Indicator)		Estimates	Source (on or off budget)	
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
<b>Women in Leadership and Governance Role at MOH</b>	4/18 of women in Leadership role	Increase to 8/18 by 2030	-Institutionalize Mentorship Programs  -Training of females in gender mainstreaming and Budgeting across all 16 districts	2,000,000	GOSL/Donor	gender unit/ MOH leadership/ HRH
<b>Adolescent Mortality Rate is high</b>	102/1,000 (DHS 2019) of Adolescent Mortality rate	Reduce by 6/1000 in all districts by 2030	Establish 6 adolescent friendly center in UHC scale up district	10,000,000	GOSL/Donor	DRCH/Gender unit/DPPI
<b>Lack of a Health Sector Gender Policy and Strategy</b>	National Gender Policy is a draft.	Health Sector Gender Policy and Strategy finalized and launched.	Develop Health sector gender policy and Strategy	3,000,000	GOSL/Donor	DPPI

## 5) MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

### 5.1 Background

The mission of the Ministry is to formulate, implement, monitor, and evaluate strategic defense policy for the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) that is effective and fostered within a framework of democratic governance. Therefore, the Ministry is mandated to undertake the following:

- To formulate and implement strategic defence policy.
- To develop and maintain a re-structured and robust RSLAF that is well trained, well-disciplined and well cared for;
- To equip and provide logistics support to the RSLAF.
- To transform the RSLAF into an organization that is accountable, incorruptible and subject to democratic control.
- To continually evolve and improve the RSLAF.
- To deliver the endorsed Defence Missions and Military Tasks.

Ministry of Defense (MOD) is cognizant that effective gender mainstreaming and participation of all gender groups (men, women, boys, girls) are critical elements in the operationalization of the strategies for the ministry and RSLAF. Accordingly, in 2023, MoD updated its Gender (Equal Opportunities) Policy aimed at informing and driving the aspiration for the attainment of gender equality in the Ministry of Defense and Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF). The Policy is designed to accelerate gender mainstreaming across uniformed and civilian structures of MOD.

Therefore, during the financial year 2025, MOD will undertake interventions categorized as follows:

- Awareness raising on the objective and practices related to gender mainstreaming within MOD and RSLAF.
- Capacity building aimed at enhancing not only competence for female officers but also their eligibility for promotion.
- Strengthen the practices of gender mainstreaming through enhanced competence of gender focal officers as well as well-equipped and functional gender units.

**MATRIX 4: MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
SUMMARY OF GENDER BUDGET STATEMENT FY 2025**

<b>Ministry: MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (MOD)</b>							
<b>Total Budget: NLe 340,435,300.00</b>							
<b>Total GRB: NLe 1,500,000.00</b>							
<b>Issue/ Concern #</b>	<b>Gender Equity Issue plus underlying causes)</b>	<b>Policy Objective (with GE indicators)</b>		<b>Activity</b>	<b>Indicative Budget</b>		<b>Programme</b>
		<b>Baseline Indicator</b>	<b>Target Indicator (2025)</b>		<b>Estimates (NLe)</b>	<b>Source (ON/OFF budget )</b>	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Limited understanding of GEWE Act, 2023 across the Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very limited understanding of GEWE Act, 2023 among majority of unformed and non-unformed staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 % of Senior Management of the Force; (Lieutenant General to Colonels).</li> <li>10% of Middle Level Officers; Lieutenant Colonels to Majors.</li> <li>20% of Lower Level Officers; Captains to Privates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 X Seminars for Seniors Civilians and Military Officers.</li> <li>2 X Workshops for Middle Level Officers.</li> <li>6 X Workshops for Lower Level Officers and men across the Force.</li> </ul>	200,000	On-budget	Training & Doctrine
2	Low number of female representations at Strategic and Operational Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0% female representative at strategic level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2% female representative</li> </ul>	Promotion of Senior Female Personnel to Strategic level in the RSLAF to enforce GEWE Act, 2023- Part 1(3) Appointment to Public Office. Conduct leadership training for Senior Female Personnel. Annual Meeting for Female Service Personal.	Payroll Cost	On-budget	Gender and Equal Opportunity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3% female representative at the operational level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5% female representative</li> </ul>	Conduct leadership and career development training focusing on women.	100,000.00	On-budget	
3		0% Gender Unit	21% establishment of gender units at MoD,	Allocation of office space by Unit commanders.		On budget	

<b>Ministry: MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (MOD)</b>
<b>Total Budget:</b> NLe 340,435,300.00
<b>Total GRB:</b> NLe 1,500,000.00

Issue/ Concern #	Gender Equity Issue plus underlying causes)	Policy Objective (with GE indicators)		Activity	Indicative Budget		Programme
		Baseline Indicator	Target Indicator (2025)		Estimates (NLe)	Source (ON/OFF budget )	
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
	Lack of Gender Units at Brigade & Battalion <i>72 personnel were trained as Gender Focal Persons (GFP) but not actively engage in decision-making Units lack of equipment and office space.</i>		JFC, W/Wing, A/Wing and Brigade level	Purchase of office furniture and equipment for 7 units.	200,000.00	On budget	Gender and Equal Opportunity
				Conduct refresher training for GFP.	50,000.00		
4	Female staff lack necessary competence execute their mandates .	Only 30% of female officers have undergone requisite training. <sup>1</sup> . either done	20% of Junior and middle level officers	Conduct staff and combat training (Junior, Intermediate and Senior staff courses; Platoon and company commander’s battle courses.	250,000	On-budget	Training & Doctrine
		For Other ranks less than 2 % have done combat training (section and platoon sergeant courses).	10% of Lance Corporal to Staff Sergeant.	Conduct section and platoon battle courses.	200,000		

▪ <sup>1</sup> Junior, Intermediate and Senior Staff training or combat training for *platoon and company commanders’ course*.

<b>Ministry: MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (MOD)</b>
<b>Total Budget:</b> NLe 340,435,300.00
<b>Total GRB:</b> NLe 1,500,000.00

Issue/ Concern #	Gender Equity Issue plus underlying causes)	Policy Objective (with GE indicators)		Activity	Indicative Budget		Programme
		Baseline Indicator	Target Indicator (2025)		Estimates (NLe)	Source (ON/OFF budget )	
A		B	C	D	E	F	G
		10% ICT knowledge among female across the ranks	15% ICT training among females across the especially officers and those in administrative	Conduct Information Communication Technology Course for females.	200,000	On-budget	
		Zero percent mentorship done in the RSLAF.	100% mentorship of female personnel by direct supervisors/commanding	Supervisors/commanding officers to ensure mentorship programmes are developed within their units that are devoid of fraternization	100,000		Gender and Equal Opportunity

## **6) SIERRA LEONE POLICE (SLP)**

### **6.1 Situation Analysis**

Since 1997, the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) has undergone major reforms- demonstrating a shift from its traditional way of policing to 21<sup>st</sup> century policing based on intelligence led and problem solving. The reforms have adopted a holistic approach in problem solving to enhance access to criminal justice, security, and stability conducive for economic, social, and political development in Sierra Leone, with key focus on human rights, and gender related war crimes, crimes against humanity and other related violence against women and children.

Government is committed to ratify the international, regional, and national norms and standards, treaties, protocols, and laws related to protection of life and property, maintain public order, crime prevention, apprehension, detention, investigation, and prosecution of perpetrators and ensure access to justice. Accordingly, SLP has pursued mainstreaming gender and equity issues in its various mandates and undertaken the following reforms:

### **6.2 Gender Related Policy framework**

SLP developed two gender policies namely: (i) Gender Mainstreaming Policy a highlighted 30% gender representation at all levels; and (ii) Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment policies) and then reviewed in 2014 with guiding principles to: eliminate all forms of discrimination including, discrimination based on gender; ensure gender balance and equal representation of both women and men in all ranks, particularly in decision-making positions; and build an efficient police force.

### **6.3 Institutional Development for Mainstreaming Gender and Equity**

- 7 Establishment of the Domestic Violence Unit as a branch under CID to investigate and prosecute rape, assaults, abuses, and other offences against women and children.
- 8 The Domestic Violence Unit was later renamed the Family Support Unit, with the enactment of the country's gender justice laws in 2007. The unit was charged with investigating and prosecuting crimes against women and children including rape, sexual penetration, domestic violence, human trafficking, and other related crimes; following up victims.
- 9 Set-up of Equal Opportunities Unit with the aims of promoting and protecting human rights of all personnel, increasing policewomen in some police deployments like investigations Branch ('I' Branch), Criminal Investigations Department (CID) and administrative positions at senior



management level, and, deploying policewomen in other areas like operations, OSD, and other areas. That drive led to the change of stockings and use of uniform trousers by policewomen.

- 10 Creation of the Sierra Leone Police Female Staff Association (SLPFSA) to advocate and promote professional, administrative, and operational needs of policewomen force wide and all levels of leadership and policewomen were allowed to were trousers as part of their uniforms.
- 11 Introduction of “*the Accelerated Promotion Scheme for Female Graduates*” 2005, To date, more than 77 female university graduates have benefited from that scheme. This has also contributed to the huge increase of policewomen in leadership positions; motivated serving policewomen to empower themselves by attaining university degrees, HTCs, diplomas, and certificates in different disciplines.
- 12 Establishments of Interpol, of Trans Organised Crime Unit (TOCU) led by SLP and Cyber Units in recent years, also investigate gender related drugs, criminal and cybercrimes.

**6.4 Progress in Gender Inequality**

In 2011, a gender impact assessment was conducted to progress towards realising of gender equality targets in the operations of SLP. The findings and recommendations influenced further reforms and targets that included:

- Establishment of the Gender Unit in March 2012.
- Increase in, the number of females in strategic positions increased from 1 to 3 and many more in other decision-making levels between including positions<sup>2</sup> between 2005.

**Gender Disaggregation of Personnel Strength 2024**

<b>Scope of Employment or /Deployment</b>	<b>Percentage of Female</b>
331 Leadership positions at all levels	57 (17%) of those positions are occupied by Policewomen.
Senior Management (IGP and Directors)- 11	Only one female (9%)
Regional Commanders: 6	0% female;
Local Unit Commanders: 38	2 (5%) females
Heads of Departments & Units:57	(15 %) females;
Regional Crime Officers: 6	Zero females;
Gender Officers & Focal Points (Support Officers) – 42.	7 (17%) females

<sup>2</sup> Deputy Inspector General of Police, Directors, Regional Commanders, Local Unit Commanders, Heads of Departments/Units and held other administrative positions and peace operations

A total of 2,119 police officers went on peace operations at MINUSTAH, UNAMID, UNIPSIL, AMISOM, ATMIS, UNHQ, UNMISS, and UNISFA. (2009-2023)	Only 608(29%) policewomen joined the operations.
--	--

### 6.5 Emerging Gender Inequalities in the SLP

While cognizant of many adopted gender responsive reforms, that are still very huge gender gaps or challenges both at administrative and operational levels of the organizations attributed to several bottlenecks that can be categorized as follows:

- Apparent disaggregation in retirements, dismissals, death, self-retirement, institutional pay, retentions of policewomen.
- Laxity among women to take up operational positions, and other related matters.
- Reported cases<sup>3</sup> of sexual abuse, exploitation, harassment, among policewomen by police men but beside one policewoman in 2016, no policewomen had ever formally reported any cases for actions.
- Weak scientific and forensic investigative analysis of SGBV attributed to: (i) inadequate tools and lack of modern day or well-equipped structure for police forensic investigations and analysis; (ii) poor work environment and preservations of blood samples, semen, finger prints, crime exhibits and Witness/victims’ protection. These deter successful SBGV prosecutions.
- Gender disaggregated data missing for deployments in the following: Regional FSU Coordinators; Regional and Divisional TCG members; Crime Officers; Officers commanding Police Stations and Posts; FSU Line Managers; Peace Operations, and CRD.
- Inadequate leadership commitment to increase the number of policewomen and their meaningful participation.

In that vein, SLP is committed to become more gender responsive and align its annual activities with recent gender justices laws and policies including the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Act 2022, and gender priorities as articulated in Medium-Term National Development Plan, and the National Security Policy and Strategy (NSPS – 2024), and Sierra Leone National Action Plan (SiLNAP) 3.

Accordingly, SLP plans to pursue the following objectives in fiscal year 2025:

---

<sup>3</sup> Gender or human rights researchers report that many police women allegedly raise concerns of been abuse, exploitation and/or harassment by their male counterparts, especially by some in higher ranks/positions.,

- 1) Address gender gaps in the organization by increasing the number of policewomen in decision making positions and deployments at all levels and recruitment by at least 30%.
- 2) Contribute to the increase of women in public and private officers through 30% of women during recruitment and conclusive investigation of all GBV reported cases. (Including sexual penetration, rape, exploitation, abuse, and harassment);
- 3) Improve institutional ownership and leadership commitment in implementing GEWE Act 2022 by training managers at all levels and 3,000 policewomen at national, regional and local level.

**MATRIX 5: SIERRA LEONE POLICE (SLP)  
GENDER BUDGET STATEMENT FY2025**

Ministry/Agency: <b>Sierra Leone Police (SLP)</b>						
Total Budget: <b>NLe300,806,500.0</b>						
Total GRB: <b>NLe7,575,100.0</b>						
Gender Equity Issue plus underlying causes)	Policy Objective (with GE indicators)		Activity	Indicative Budget Allocation		Programme
	Baseline Indicator	Target Indicator		Estimates NLe	Source of budget)	
Limited traction in enforcing the GEWE, Act 2023	Many police officers, of all ranks' and regardless of sex, have little or no knowledge of gender justice laws & policies, and their enforcement	All officials at decision making position understand the Act, its enforcement and requirement.	Train officials in mainstreaming gender and equity in SLP mandate, Standard Operation and Procedures, especially Local Policing Partnership Boards, (LPPBs) and related Committees.	2,000,000	On budget	

Ministry/Agency: <b>Sierra Leone Police (SLP)</b>
Total Budget: <b>NLe300,806,500.0</b>
Total GRB: <b>NLe7,575,100.0</b>

Gender Equity Issue plus underlying causes)	Policy Objective (with GE indicators)		Activity	Indicative Budget Allocation		Programme
	Baseline Indicator	Target Indicator		Estimates NLe	Source of budget)	
		Timely & regular publication of Gender Audit Report, Gender Monitoring Reports. Gender Monthly, Quarterly and Annual Reports as GEWE, Act.	Establish and or update the existing systems and procedures to generate gender responsive standard reports.	Nil	Development Partners	Gender mainstreaming and Community Relations Operations.
	Existing legal, policy, regulation and procedural framework are outdated and not gender responsive.	Update of relevant Policy and Procedural Documents <sup>4</sup> by 2025	Production and sharing of copies of relevant policy, and procedural documents	Nil	Development Partners	
		Adoption of guidelines and practices to support enforcement of 30 % female recruits. and production of GR statistics and Reports	of gender disaggregated training Statistics and reports			

<sup>4</sup> Copies of revised policies and procedurals produced and distributed: (i) Peacekeeping Policy (202); (ii) revised of Gender Mainstreaming Policy; (iii) revised of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy (2025); (iv) revised of Promotion Policy (2025); (v) revised of Recruitment Policy (2025); (vi) Police Medical Policy (2025); (vii) Revised Police Welfare Policy (2025); (viii) revised Policy Recruit Training Manual; and (ix) revised LPPB

Ministry/Agency: <b>Sierra Leone Police (SLP)</b>
Total Budget: <b>NLe300,806,500.0</b>
Total GRB: <b>NLe7,575,100.0</b>

Gender Equity Issue plus underlying causes)	Policy Objective (with GE indicators)		Activity	Indicative Budget Allocation		Programme
	Baseline Indicator	Target Indicator		Estimates NLe	Source of budget)	
	Gender disaggregated data for select positions is missing.	Updated systems that produce gender disaggregated databases of ranks and deployments at all levels.	Training HRM staff in design and use of gender disaggregated personnel systems.	2,500,000	On budget	Capacity Building
Weak GBV case analysis and prosecution		GBV cases (covering sexual penetration, rape, exploitation, abuse and harassment) are (i) investigated, (ii) and charged to court; (iii) officially and informally resolved, (iv) files closed and (v) kept in view.	Family Support Unit Operations (FSU)	1,075,100	On budget	Family Support Operations
			Support to Intelligence gathering (CID, IIS and Cyber Security Unit.)	2,000,000	On budget	Intelligence Gathering