REVIEW OF PAST AGRICULTURAL POLICIES IN SIERRA LEONE
**List of Abbreviations:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABUs</td>
<td>Agricultural Business Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Anti Corruption Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGDP</td>
<td>Agricultural Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSP</td>
<td>Agricultural Sector Support Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAADP</td>
<td>Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEP</td>
<td>Economic Emergency Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSP</td>
<td>Food Security Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRP</td>
<td>Green Revolution Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIPC</td>
<td>Highly Indebted Poor Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IADPs</td>
<td>Integrated Agricultural Development Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPRSP</td>
<td>Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISI</td>
<td>Import Substitution Industrialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NaCSA</td>
<td>National Commission for Social Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NERICA</td>
<td>New Rice for Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRS</td>
<td>National Recovery Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIP</td>
<td>Public Investment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGDP</td>
<td>Share Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLPMB</td>
<td>Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the current global economic malaise and the acute food crisis experienced late last year and this year attention has again focused on the productivity of the agricultural sector particularly in developing countries such as Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone has since independence implemented several agricultural policies but no comprehensive study of past agricultural policies has been undertaken so assess their impact on the current state of what is a very important sector. This policy review is an attempt at looking at past agricultural policy objectives, strategies and their impact on the present state of the agricultural sector. It is expected that the recommendations made in this study will contribute to the development of a sustainable agricultural development plan.

The key findings are as follows:

1. The agricultural sector in Sierra Leone has never lacked good policy contents neither has there been a dearth of policy; for diverse reasons the problems that have plagued past agricultural policies mainly stemmed from two broad angles: (a) policies lacked the necessary stakeholder support (both financial and moral) or commitment and ended up being poorly and inconsistently implemented; and (b) the inadequate and poor capacity of the agriculture sector to absorb and sustain policy implementation activities and control exogenous factors. Policy problems that emanated from the first instance relate to policy parody, inconsistency, limited financial and material support and administrative mismanagement. Problems from the second instance come from issues relating to inadequate administrative capacity, limited research, inputs, and pest and crop failures etc:

2. The failure of past agricultural policies is largely as a result of Sierra Leone’s over-reliance on donor support for most of its development projects which does not particularly augur well for the agricultural sector. National economic or agricultural development policies should always create a soft landing impact or allow an entry point for donor or international development policies with an exit strategy that will have minimal impact on the programmes implemented.
3. One major factor which most past policies suffered from and which still remains a gangrene is the problem of outrageous political interference into sector activities and consequent mismanagement and corruption. It is sometimes difficult to actually draw a line between the government and the policies it implement. However, using agricultural policy to promote a secluded political interest often distort the progress of the sector. The PL 480 rice programme for instance, though implemented to salvage hunger at the time was perceived as mainly serving political interest. The price distortion it created and its negative effects on the farmers, the agriculture sector and the economy were destructive but little considered because of the benefits it accrued to politicians. Most of the projects implemented through past agricultural policies (SLPMB, Corporative, GRP, IADPs and the all of the specific rice projects) met their ultimate demise because of mismanagement and corruption.

4. The institutional environment for agriculture also significantly affects the sector’s productivity and performance. Institutional support in the form of research centres and institutes, the provision of extension and support services, and agricultural trade fairs will further boost the production of marketable surpluses. The regulatory framework for agriculture must also be taken into account, including the encouragement of local community leadership in rural areas, and the involvement of these communities in policy and the provision of services. For most of the failed policy projects of the past, there are evidences of undefined sectoral mandate and inadequate sectoral service delivery to promote local participation, involvement and commitment. There were limited monitoring, evaluation and follow-ups on projects.

5. With the intension of earning more foreign exchange, producer pricing have greatly affected the agriculture sector in the past and needs closer attention. Agricultural produce pricing was actively used by government to generate income especially in the 1970s and 1980s. The economy was largely dependent on the
agriculture sector for food supplies and foreign exchange from cash crop exports. Coupled with the adjustment process, this hampered the declining agriculture sector that was unable to provide surplus and highly needed subsidy support. The farmers have being selling their produce to the SLPMB (mostly through corporative societies) which was responsible for the purchase and marketing of exports. Under this condition, producer prices were set at the beginning of the crop season with a positive revenue margin for SLPMB per unit of export. The surplus earnings were used to mostly finance general government expenditures rather reinvesting into the farmers. Although the SLPMB sometimes invested into oil palm and rice production, growing inefficiency of the entity led to management and operating losses. Consequently, the farmers bore the brunt. They were sometimes not paid for their produce and producer prices were kept low so that the organization and government’s expenditures can be maintained.

6. For the effective implementation of agricultural policies circumstances external to implementing agencies must not impose crippling constraints. But this has not been the case in Sierra Leone. The poor macroeconomic performance of the country has imposed crippling constraints on the implementation of often sound agricultural policies and programmes as the economy has not been able to generate enough resources to support the sector. The lack of sufficient resources or the required combination of resources has over the years constrained the development of the agricultural sector. Furthermore productivity improvement in agriculture rests on the removal of a number of structural constraints affecting the sector. The key constraints are the adherence to the subsistence method of farming, rudimentary use of tools, climatic uncertainty and high rate of illiteracy, which increases the risk factor facing intensive agriculture activities. There is lack of significant and committed inflow of private investment into the sector. Where attempt was made to promote private investment in the late 1980s, it was merely done to fill the gap after the collapse of the SLPMB. Although the FSP has made wider provisions for private sector investment, there is current little response. Consequently, government has to support the provision of improved variety,
mechanized equipment and develop arable lands when private agents are unwilling to do so. The improvement of other rural infrastructure (stores, mills and roads in particular, etc.) and social amenities to discourage rural urban migration are also essential. The urgent need to achieve food security in Africa countries requires that the problem of inadequate agricultural systems be addressed, so that food production can be increased and nutritional standards raised.

7. The annual recurrent expenditure on the agricultural sector has consistently not matched policy pronouncements. While the sector experienced an increase from $1.8m in 2002 to $9.0m in 2005 the resources required to meet the food security pledge far outstrips what is currently made available by government allocation.

Recommendations

1. **Policy Formulation:**
   a) Agricultural programs and policies that are formulated should reflect the real cultural, political and economic conditions at hand. Policies must seek stakeholder support (both moral and financial support for instance through consultative meetings) for sustainability. Policy proposals must have the support of prominent politicians and interest groups, must take into account the views and concerns of the people (farmers) as the ultimate beneficiaries and the resources for implementation should not be tied to donor conditionality.

   b) For agricultural policies to be effective, it is important to recognize at the onset that with the limited resources and weak institutional capacity too many policy objectives and sector programs cannot be tackled simultaneously. For instance policies can hardly be effective if implemented with economic growth objectives in view and at the same time trying to create sector equity or pursuing conservation objectives. It is essential that the most important
issues be tackled first and that priorities are firmly established. The danger is that governments will utilize scarce resources on issues which are relatively unimportant at the point in time. Past policies appear to be overloaded with objectives and events.

c) Agricultural Policy in Sierra Leone should be directed towards exploiting the country’s comparative advantage in those food crops that we consume most and the cash crops that we have the ability to export with relative ease. For instance the Ministry should formulate policies specific to rice and cocoa production focusing on yield increase, pest control, labour saving technologies and increased investment into research and extension services especially for these crops. Following from the point above, policies with many objectives breeds the temptation of targeting many agriculture production sub sectors which brings the danger of jack of all trade master of none syndrome.

d) Most importantly, policy “lesson drawing” should not come as a quick-fix solution to agriculture sector problems. The government should have home-grown policies befitting our own conditions and lessons or programs borrowed from other countries should be streamlined to fit into the home-grown policy vision. The Ministry of Agriculture should therefore utilize the services of trained policy analysts whose responsibility will be:

- To identify and prioritize policy issues
- To clarify government policy objectives relevant to the agriculture sector and to identify potential conflicts in terms of objectives and interests
- To identify current policies and their consequences
- To identify alternative viable policy instruments, their probable direct and indirect consequences and the risk if they fail
- To develop criteria and indicators to assess progress towards objectives
- To design viable policy packages, with associated strategies to obtain political support and to ensure organizational effectiveness
To advocate these viable policy packages in a clear, brief and persuasive way to the farmers and the general public.

2. **Donor Relationship:**
   a) Government must endeavour to maintain a healthy relationship with donor partners over the implementation of agriculture sector policies. Donor projects have failed in the past because government could not meet its obligation to such projects. Any possible conflict between the Ministry’s policies and donor programs and financial support must be resolved before the implementation of such programs.

   b) The efforts of most donor projects to integrate the agriculture sector into the global economy must be planned and strategized. The process should be gradual. The proper integration of the country’s agriculture sector into regional and global economic policy actions and markets will better help harness and maintain new market opportunities accessed which will be more advantageous for home farmers and consumers.

   c) Government must ensure that donor projects and financial support to the agriculture sector have identified entry points into sector programs, specified time frame and exit strategy taking into consideration the resource and institutional capacity for continuity, rolling out or disposal. This presupposes point 1d above that the government has to put in place its own home-grown policies and resources.

2. **Economic Considerations:**
   a) Government should attempt to increase its revenue from other sources rather than being over-dependent on the agriculture sector for its foreign exchange. Any policy that attempts to increase revenue from the agriculture sub sector (e.g. cocoa export) should be followed by a policy to subsidize or increase government expenditure to that sub sector.
b) Heavy dependence on a few commodities for the generation of foreign exchange poses a higher risk to economic growth and stability. Sierra Leone has experienced a decline in price for several of its export commodities and a resulting deterioration in its balance of payments. One conceivable policy reaction would be to provide support for producers of those commodities in an attempt to raise the volume of exports to its previous level. Instead of creating a buffer for farmers like the SLPMB program did, government should subsidize farmers and enable them directly compete in the international market.

c) Market price and trade policies directly affect the prices and amounts of commodities produced or inputs required. Such policies normally have both domestic and international trade effects. Having the importance of the agriculture sector to the country’s development in mind, government needs to establish appropriate policies that stimulate price stability.

3. Support to Farmers:

a) Farmer education is very important in the future development of the agriculture sector. Adult education programs should be put in place for the rural farmers. Some farmers are already cultivating the new rice variety (NERICA) developed by Dr. Monty Jones. Government must promote its cultivation by providing enhanced mechanized production methods.

b) Farmers should be encouraged to see farming as a business rather than an activity undertaken only for family sustenance. The recently established Agricultural Business Units (ABU) has the potential of enhancing extension services and mobilizing financial resources for the sector. However, such should be reorganized to accrue direct financial benefit to the farmers rather than using the project mainly for seed multiplication.
c) In addition to the subsidy provision mentioned in 3a above for the agriculture sector, government should provide direct subsidy for farmers engaged in the production of the staples and important export crops. This may be done through the provision of farm inputs (tools, fertilizers and pesticides), transportation, extension services, access to rural finance and community infrastructure relevant to production.

4. Sector Capacity and Management:
   a) Government budgetary allocation to the agriculture sector should not only be increased but the 40-50% of money actually accessed from this allocation should be improved considerably. Government allocated Le 16.7 billion to agriculture sector in 2008, of which Le 7.1 billion was to support the Food security Programme, Le 2.5 billion to support agricultural institutions and Le 4.3 billion as transfers to local councils for the delivery of agricultural services at the local levels. In addition, Le 3.2 billion was provided to complement donor support to current agricultural projects. This allocation is however still inadequate and the actual money accessed by the ministry has not increased. There is, therefore, the need for the current allocation to be improved upon or reviewed in the future.

   b) The agriculture sector should be capacitated both in human and logistical resources especially at regional and district levels. The local offices of the Ministry of Agriculture should be strengthened to provide extension and input support to farmers at very minimal cost. There should be frequent training for staff and remuneration for field staff should be enhanced as an incentive for them to stay at their duty posts.

   c) Government should strengthen its anti corruption mechanism in the sector to monitor the effective implementation of projects especially those meant to be direct support to the farmers and rural communities.
d) The Ministry should organize and encourage the involvement of the non-formal sector into agriculture programs and activities. The creation of an enabling environment (e.g. for NGO operation) and farmer organization might have important role to play in the dissemination, market development, storage facility, micro financing, health promotion and other ancillary services.

e) The problems posed by exogenous factors like poor infrastructure, the country’s land tenure system and environmental degradation to the agriculture sector are well known. While these were not identified as the direct reasons for the failure of the agricultural policies and programs reviewed they are bound to increase the cost of production for any project.
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Economic and Agricultural Performance

Sierra Leone is a typical example of a low income earning African country. Despite the general opinion that the British colonial administration sapped the country of its wealth, at independence in April 1961, there were still very high expectations for rapid economic development. These expectations were based on the country’s abundant natural resource endowment, variety of rich mineral deposit, agricultural, forestry and marine resources. The annual economic growth averaged about 4% and 3.5% in the 1960s and 1970s respectively. These development expectations were however frustrated in the 1980s to early 1990s due to negative external donor interference, inconsistent policy strategies, corruption and economic mismanagement; the economic growth dropped dramatically to an annual average of 1.5% and -4.5% respectively and until the beginning of the new millennium, the country experienced severe economic conditions that were compounded by the political instability engendered by the rebel war. However there were signs of recovery and growth at the end of the war in 2002 as shown in Table1. The economic growth rate expanded to 7.4% in 2004 from 6.3% and 6.5% in 2002 and 2003 respectively.¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP Growth Rate (%)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>-5.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Sierra Leone economy is mainly non-industrialized with a high ratio of foreign trade to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), mostly supported by a high subsistence agricultural

sector. Most development documents\(^2\) in the country indicate that the agriculture sector is the largest employer and contributor to the national economy in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Foreign Exchange earnings, and is the major source of economic growth and development in Sierra Leone. It employs about 60 - 70\% of the country’s population and on average provides 45\% of the country’s GDP (See Table 2); of this percentage, rice which is considered as the staple food accounts for 75\% and cash crops like cocoa, coffee and piassava contributes 14\%.\(^3\) Invariably although the country still has the resource potentials, economic development, poverty reduction and food security remains doubtful without the appropriate policy to accelerate the agriculture sector. However various reports suggest that food production which dropped drastically during the 1990s was returning to pre-war levels\(^4\).

### Table 2: Trends of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Agricultural GDP (AGDP) and the Percentage Share of Agriculture to the GDP (SGDP); 1981-1991.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>GDP</th>
<th>AGDP</th>
<th>SGDP (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>4547.6</td>
<td>1819.6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>4714.5</td>
<td>1877.7</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>4754.3</td>
<td>1860.1</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>4702</td>
<td>1866.9</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>4563.1</td>
<td>2069.5</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>4553</td>
<td>2008.1</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>4726.5</td>
<td>2152.4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>4837.4</td>
<td>2309.5</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>4953.8</td>
<td>2225.6</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>5247</td>
<td>2341.3</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>5293.3</td>
<td>2360.2</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


---


The agriculture sector has since independence being and is still a major component of the GDP and foreign exchange earnings of the country and a major source of food supply. Even at the time when the economy was struggling (late 1970s to 1990s), the sector remained a major source of government revenue.

1.2 Policy Methodology
Most agricultural policy instruments in Sierra Leone have been influenced by either donor partners or external economic conditions and theories. For agricultural policies to be result-oriented, especially within a national development context, the policy strategists are preferably expected to go through a ‘policy process’, which presupposes that the policies are formulated and implemented taking into account the prevailing economic, social and historical contexts. These contexts are very important – they generate the very reasons for which issues are put on the policy agenda, they shape the policy objectives and strategies and policy institutions, determine the budget allocations, the implementation process and the outcome of the policies.

Suggesting that agricultural policy strategies should go through a ‘policy process’ partly implies that we should avoid having agricultural policies as ‘prescriptions’, wherein agricultural policies are generated or rather prescribed, based on a supposedly rational identification of problems by donors, institutional and foreign experts or benevolent agencies who heavily depend on lesson drawing from other countries. In most cases, these policies fail not because they lack content or not well-intentioned but they prove to be non-fungible as they portray different values and the resources and institutional capacity to absorb them are inadequate or lacking. This has generally being the case for most development and agricultural policies in particular, in Sierra Leone. While the ‘policy as prescription’ approach is still important, especially as a quick solution to public issues or emergency situations – in much of the public administration today- public policy analysts, explain or conceptualize the process dimensions of policy. The agriculture sector is undoubtedly the gateway to the country’s economy development and poverty alleviation. This implies that the problems that agricultural policy strategies are meant to solve are multi-faceted and multi-dimensional; therefore a holistic
conceptualization of agricultural policy as a process is a better option for a sustainable policy strategy for the country.

1.3 Past Policy Overview

Having mentioned a policy methodology approach, it should be noted that the search for Agricultural Development Policy is not a new phenomenon in Sierra Leone; but whereas agriculture has always being on the government’s development agenda and many policies have been engendered in its direction, what remained significantly absent was a holistic and sustainable implementation of such policies. These often high sounding policies based on external orientations and financial support, were inconsistent with and mostly devoid of the national context. The economic history of Sierra Leone reveals that even before independence, the colonial administration has established an interest in agricultural development. A Department for Agriculture was established at Mabang in 1911 and according to official policy, the government’s goal for the agriculture sector was threefold: conservation of land and forest, attainment of self-sufficiency in food crop production and rapid expansion of agricultural exports. In essence colonial government agricultural policies, with piecemeal support to rice development schemes and research, were mainly geared towards generating favourable foreign exchange earnings through export crop production. Even at independence, the agriculture sector continued to play an unenviable resource-providing role.

At independence in 1961, drawing inferences from this colonial policy legacy, Sierra Leone embarked on industrialization as a strategy to accelerate economic growth and output. Accordingly, until the mid 1970s government resources and policies were focused on the promotion of industry development, and the agricultural sector was thought of primarily as a pool from which resources for industrialisation could be squeezed. The capital for new industrial investment was obtained from taxes on the rural agricultural population or on agricultural output, and labour requirement was met by the attraction of

---

5 Again, this has been reiterated by the Agricultural Sector Review and Agricultural Development Strategy (MAFFS, 2004), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP, 2005), the Vision 2025, the National Recovery Strategy (NRS, 2001) and Policies and Strategies for Promoting Food security in Sierra Leone (2007).

labour from the agricultural sector as much of the agricultural work force was
erroneously thought to be unproductive. These agro-based policies were expected to have
a pulling-up effect on the agricultural sector, but even before the economic and oil shocks
of the 1970s (which generally affected development policies within that era) these
policies have already shown signs of non-achievement. In recent times, government has
embarked on much more liberal agricultural policies to enhance development, but
looking at the gamut of unachievable agricultural policies in government bookshelves, a
policy postmortem and rethinking is required for better direction.

There is an urgent need for a review of government’s agricultural policies, which is the
basis of ‘policy as a process’, in the context of formulating and implementing new ones.
Even where they might have proved unsuccessful, there is much to be learnt from
previous agricultural policies and programmes; their goals and objectives, and outcomes
in terms of successes and failures, and their impact on the agriculture sector. While
policies can be usefully analyzed in component parts, it is always helpful when one
adopts a broader view. The objective of this study is to review all the major agricultural
policies and programmes and how their strategies might have impacted on the present
state of the agricultural sector. The recent economic history of Sierra Leone can be
segmented into five distinct phases\(^7\): the colonial era (mainly the period towards
independence, 1945-1961), the post-independence era (1961-90), the period of civil
conflict (1991-99), the period of the post-conflict reconstruction (2000-2004) and the
period of the move to development and poverty reduction (2005 to date). The review of
past agricultural development policies and the structure of this report are based on these
segmentations or periodisation.

\(^7\) See JICA: Development Policy and Strategy in Sierra Leone (2007, p.70).
REVIEW OF PAST AGRICULTURAL POLICIES

2.1 Agricultural Policies in the Colonial and Decolonization Era: 1900 to 1961.
Apart from some narratives given about the rudimentary agricultural practices of the indigenous ethic groups of Sierra Leone, there is no written evidence as to the existence of a formal agricultural policy in pre-historic Sierra Leone. Formal agricultural practices and policy institutions seem to have started with the advent of the British colonial government; and even so, such institutions were not established until the 1900s. The British colonial government’s agricultural policies were mainly policy prescriptions meant to tackle certain socio-political problems. Albeit a Department for Agriculture was established as early as 1911, the colonial government’s agricultural policies laid much emphasis on the cultivation of export crops, particularly tree crops. This policy necessitated the construction of railway and feeder roads between 1896 and the 1920s to facilitate the transportation of agricultural produce (cocoa, coffee, palm kernel, ginger etc) from the provinces to Freetown, from where they were shipped overseas. Since local foodstuffs were not in high demand in Europe, colonial agricultural policies were bias against local foodstuff production until after the Anti-Syrian Riot of 1919.

2.1.1 The Swamp Rice Cultivation and Improved Variety Scheme
Government policies (partly as a political tool to forestall disturbances) supported swamp rice cultivation through irrigation practices in the Rokel and Scarcies estuary in the northwest of the country from the 1920s onwards. To further support this venture, the Colonial Government in 1934 established the Rokupr Rice Research Station with the initial mandate of carrying out research in: the improvement of the yield and quality of both indigenous and introduced rice with a view to increasing their distribution in the region and to research in cultural practices such as sowing rates, planting dates etc.

---

8 The Syrians and Lebanese took advantage of the food scarcity at the end of the First World War in 1918 and hoarded rice to increase its price. This and other related price issues ignited the riots in 1919. See A.J.G. Wyse, ‘The 1919 Strike- a Krio Plot?’
Government’s effort to introduce research and mechanized farming into the country as early as that stage was a laudable venture. The country’s agriculture sector is still in dire need of mechanized farming and research into new technologies is either inadequate or lacking. However, local farmers were less involved in the implementation of such a policy and traditional farming methods generally seemed to have highly favoured upland rice production by then instead of swamp rice. Upland rice production had the advantage of mixed cropping which provided variety of food for the extended families at harvest time. Similarly, irrigation and improved variety rice production, apart from the fact that it was not cost effective for local farmers and government to continue, was incompatible with ecologies in the country except for the north. In an effort to woo local farmers, the resulting policy modification in the following years saw the involvement of farmers into high yielding variety crop trials and the establishment of agricultural cooperative societies.

2.1.2 The Establishment of Cooperative Societies.

Colonial government policy for the creation of cooperative societies through the Cooperative Ordinance in 1939 was based on the notion that they could improve the productive capacity of the farmers and also help them get better value for their produce since foreign firms were accused of exploiting the farmers. The formation of cooperative societies appears to be the most outstanding success story of the colonial government’s agricultural policies. Cooperative societies quickly sprout across the country and by 1950 there were about 43 registered cooperatives in the provinces. Hubert Childs accounts the following reasons for the successes of cooperative societies in Sierra Leone: (a) cooperative farming helped in finding the answer as to how peasant farming could be converted into an efficient form of agriculture; cooperative marketing proved a corrective measure to some of the ills of the middlemen system; (b) cooperative credits helped to release producers from their monetary difficulties, and (c) membership of a cooperative society offered psychological benefits to farmers by reminding them of the value that is deeply ingrained in the African mentality that in unity there is strength.

---

10 Hubert Childs (1949): ‘A Plan of Economic Development for Sierra Leone’ p. 11.
however be noted that although well-accepted by the people, the cooperatives were initiated by government and implemented by its agencies to provide support for agricultural programs that were of particular interest to government. They were therefore administered by government officials and not by the co-operators. Again although other agricultural products were catered for, Government placed a lot of premium on agricultural export marketing cooperative societies than on the others; and consequently, they became the most successful at the expense of food crop production. In the same vein, there was no direct chain of administrative command. The appointed government officials were in charge of the cooperatives’ finances but lacked control over how the farmers managed their own affairs. The farmers had their produce but prices were determined from above. The cooperatives collapsed when corruption and financial difficulties set in. Most of the marketing cooperative societies were amalgamated into a marketing union and later found entry points into the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board.

2.1.3 The Producing Marketing Boards

The British colonial government’s agricultural policy continually favoured cash crop production. The Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board (SLPMB) was established in 1949 as the sole legal entity responsible for the purchase, export and marketing of the country’s agricultural cash crop products (cocoa, coffee, palm kernel, piassava and ginger). It was later provided with a stabilization or mechanization fund to create a buffer between world produce prices and producer prices received by farmers in order to give relatively stable prices to farmers for their goods regardless of whether world prices were high or low. Like the cooperatives, SLPMB had success stories which continued after independence and as late as the 1980s. It is recorded that barely six months into its formative year; the board accumulated huge surplus funds amounting to 1,881,000 British pounds. The same reasons which plagued the cooperative societies (corruption, mismanagement, poor liaison between farmers and appointed officials) brought disrepute for the SLPMB. The negative consequences were not immediately felt by farmers in the

---

12 Joe A.D Alie: Ibid, p.121
1950s and early 1960s because they received reasonably high prices for their produce sold to SLPMB at a time when international market prices were favourable. But by the late 1960s prices for most of the export crops have started falling. This coincided with SLPMB’s investments spree into diverse agricultural activities that it could hardly sustain. The repercussions of such a move was felt by the farmers who received lower prices for their produce and were exploited to pay for projects that had little benefit for them. The SLPMB faced serious financial and management problems during the harsh economic conditions of the 1980s and was forced to close down by 1989.

Table 3: SLPMB Revenue Distribution for Selected Years between 1968 and 1977

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Year and Payment on Palm Kernels, Cocoa and Coffee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palm Kernels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export Price</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission to Buying Agents</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Charges*</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export Duty</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Paid to Farmers</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocoa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export Price</td>
<td>713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission to Buying Agents</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Charges*</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export Duty</td>
<td>185.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Paid to Farmers</td>
<td>302.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export Price</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission to Buying Agents</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Charges*</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export Duty</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Paid to Farmers</td>
<td>313.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bank of Sierra Leone Annual Reports.
*This included freight and administrative costs.

2.1.4 Impacts on the Agriculture Sector and Lessons Learnt

A critical review of the British colonial government’s agricultural policies shows that these policies were mainly policy prescriptions or rather non-interventionist; which never took a broad view of issues faced by farmers or the agricultural sector. Though the
policies had good contents, they were unsustainable and limited in scope. These policies pursued:

1. Export crop cultivation and production,
2. Development of road transport network to facilitate the movement of agricultural produce to Freetown for export,
3. Research into swamp rice and export crop cultivation,
4. Provision of minimal extension service for rice cultivation.
5. Policy of monopsony in marketing agricultural produce
6. Gradual support to local farmers through corporative societies

These policies therefore brings to mind the fact that agricultural export crops can be a viable area of external trade if properly managed, and that research, good road infrastructure and support to local farmers are necessary conditions for the growth of the agriculture sector. However, the policy put in place to support rice cultivation and production; was mainly to abate discontent over local food prices and not necessarily to develop and substantially increase what is the staple food of Sierra Leone. Similarly, some policies designed to support the above (community development and cooperative societies) were later thwarted to serve the over-arching interest of export produce marketing through the SLPMB. The resulting poor producer pricing, widen the economic gap among farmers. It should be noted also that the colonial government’s interest in alluvial diamond mining, especially during the 1950 diamond boom, saw a huge migration of farm labour to the mining fields. The policy strategists ignored the fact that policies interact and compete for limited financial and human resources. This greatly affected food production. For instance there was a sharp increase in rice importation from 1953 onwards and this situation was gradually reversed from 1957 to the era of independence.

Table 4: Rice Importation in Sierra Leone: 1953-1958

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Quantity (cwt)</th>
<th>Value (in British Pounds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>91,722</td>
<td>289,858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>421,314</td>
<td>968,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>735,993</td>
<td>1,650,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>621,033</td>
<td>1,429,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>435,674</td>
<td>1,027,356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports (1953-1958) of the Former Sierra Leone Department of Commerce and Industry
However, at independence the country was still about 95% food sufficient in rice\textsuperscript{13} and the economy showed prospects of growth averaging about 5.6% per annum which came mainly from mining and agriculture sectors.


2.2.1 Ten-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development: 1962 to 1971.

The blueprint for the country’s development at independence was the ‘Ten-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development’ (1962-1971). This document highlighted two major problems of the agriculture sector: (a) low productivity despite the fact that the sector employed majority of the population and (b) the instability of the export market. To address this condition the Plan proposed to diversify the agriculture sector rather than one dependent on primary produce, and at the same time increase export for foreign exchange. The Plan anticipated spending 7.7% of the country’s capital expenditure on agriculture. The government even nursed the idea of establishing a Co-operative Bank that would give assistance primarily to agriculture related activities. However, although the Plan considered the pursuance of agricultural development as a major plank of the country’s economic strategy, the government’s economic policies in the first decade after independence seemed to have shifted emphasis from agricultural crop production to industrialization. Industrialization was seen as the engine of growth to kick-start the rest of the economy for national development\textsuperscript{14} and agricultural policies therefore simply became conduits for the enhancement of industrialization. The SLPMB and the other agricultural Trading Corporations were encouraged to embark on agro-processing through an industrial plantation program and until the late 1960s; the major strategy that fostered the economic process was based on the Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) program\textsuperscript{15}. Under this program, the discrimination in favour of industry as against

\textsuperscript{13} MAFFS: Agricultural Sector Policy for Sierra Leone (2007) p.15

\textsuperscript{14} These policies were based on capitalist development theories of the 1950s which propounded investment in industries as the ‘take-off’ point for the development of the underdeveloped nations. See the writings of W.W. Rostow, Gallagher and Wallenstein.

\textsuperscript{15} It was based on the assumption that through modernization and industrialization, the underdeveloped countries will catch-up with the industrialized West.
agriculture took two forms: firstly, the terms of trade were turned against agriculture through a pricing policy that extracted resources from the sector and secondly, there were minimal allocations of resources to the agriculture sector. Most of the gains made in the 1950s were lost due to poor planning, corruption, and mismanagement. Due to ISI, producer prices were slashed, the SLPMB and cooperatives later collapsed, leaving farmers with no institutional support for credit and other needs. However, with the collapse of ISI as a development strategy, some agriculture-related projects conceived and were implemented to cushion the economy.


The National Development Plan of 1974 to 1978 was similar to that of the Ten-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development in aspiration but different in scope and content. The main trust of the Plan regarding agricultural development was to increase productivity of the sector and income from it thereby improving the living standard of the rural population through the integrated agricultural development projects. Although the plan indicated a great attempt to re-shape the country’s development process, the international economic situation by then was unfavourable and the allocation of limited national resources unfortunately did not favour agriculture as the productive sector. Like the ISI, the government neglected the agriculture sector and instead concentrated on infrastructural development, tourism and electrification. A second National Development Plan was developed for the country (1983-1985) but it was never formally adopted because of adverse economic conditions and donor neglect.

2.2.3 The Integrated Agricultural Development Projects (IADPs)

The agriculture sector faced serious setbacks in the late 1960s to mid 1970s; institutional capacity and farmers’ confidence suffered. Partly as an attempt to revive the sector government policy focused on support for small scale agriculture and this stimulated support for the Integrated Agricultural Development Projects (IADPs). The IADPs like the ISI, was a policy prescription sanctioned by international agencies like Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) etc. The broad objectives of these projects were: to
improve the living standards of the people by securing their basic needs and to make the rural communities more productive and less vulnerable to economic depression and the oil shocks of the time\textsuperscript{16}. These objectives were to be achieved through the provision of intensive extension services to small scale farmers, supply of improved planting materials, tools, fertilizers and other chemicals at subsidized prices, provision of seasonal credit to farmers, the development of infrastructure such as feeder roads and wells, and the employment of expatriate management staff on contract\textsuperscript{17}. The IADP was a very ambitious plan covering most aspects of the agricultural sector; road infrastructure, credit for farmers, animal husbandry, cash crop production, rice cultivation etc. However, these projects were limited to specific locations within the country and because they were mainly donor-dependent, the projects ended when donor funds were exhausted. Donor fatigue became apparent with the emergence of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP). Though the IADPs succeeded in introducing and stressing the importance of soft loans to local farmers, the projects were generally not sustainable. Most of the infrastructure left behind by the program could not even be maintained because of mismanagement and lack of financial support from government.

2.2.4 The Agricultural Sector Support Project

The Agricultural Sector Support Project (ASSP) was introduced by the World Bank and other donor partners to re-structure the agriculture sector and reform policies in line with the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) then prescribed for Sierra Leone. The project aimed at harmonizing all agricultural programmes at national level as opposed to the IADPs which had regional orientation. However, ASSP like the proposed National Development Plan of the same period never took-off the ground. The programme was suspended mainly because of the government’s unwillingness to fully comply with the structural adjustment conditions put forward by the IMF.

2.2.5 Impacts on the Agriculture Sector and Lessons Learnt

\textsuperscript{17} MAFFS: The Food Security Policy for Sierra Leone (2007).
The economy showed slight improvement in the early 1960s but stagnated by the close of the decade. The decade was like a trial period for the agriculture sector and most of the gains made in the 1950s were lost in the process. By 1967 the SLPMB was struggling and most of the Corporative Societies had collapsed. The financial and psychological ramifications on the agriculture sector and the farmers in particular were telling. There was a fall in producer prices and in most cases farmers were not paid for their produce. This acted as a disincentive to farmers to produce more crops. The government’s attempt to restore hope saw the implementation of IADPs. The IADPs took-off in grand style with the hope of meeting the needs of farmers, but each zonal project was so elaborate in scope that when donor funding dwindled and altogether came to an end, government or local farmers were not able sustain them. The failure of agricultural policies within this period is largely as a result of Sierra Leone’s over-reliance on donor support for most of its development projects which does not particularly augur well for the agricultural sector. National economic or agricultural development policies should always create a soft landing impact or allow an entry point for donor or international development policies with an exit strategy that will have minimal impact on the programmes implemented.


The Sierra Leone government faced great economic challenges from 1985 onwards. Foreign debt, inflation and unemployment spiralled out of control, foreign exchange dropped to its lowest, and relation with international donors was at its lowest ebb. While adverse external economic conditions could be partly responsible for this trend, the fundamental reasons for the poor economic performance lay squarely with the inappropriate macroeconomic and fiscal management policies pursued by the government of Sierra Leone. When the new administration took over in 1985, a ‘new economic order’ was declared and the country agreed to implement the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in its bid to please the donor community and to stabilize the economy.

---

19 President J.S. Momoh’s Inaugural Speech on November 28, 1985.
But this policy zigzag had a disastrous impact on the economy as a whole and greatly affected the government’s ability to implement its agricultural policies.

2.3.1 The Structural Adjustment Programmes

It became quite clear that the international donor support which the government relied upon for its economic activities was not forthcoming until and unless the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) with the conditions attached to it were fulfilled. This programme saw the removal of subsidies from gas, rice, electricity, an end to price control and government’s incentives to farmers; and the influx of grains and semi-processed agricultural products brought about by the open market conditionality. These economic prescription skyrocketed food prices and destroyed the local production base of the country. Instead of triggering the expected spiral of economic growth, the SAP further saddled the country with low investment, increased unemployment and reduced government spending on food production; all combining to create vicious economic stagnation for the country. The little support government received for agriculture was skewed towards export crop production to help the country service its foreign debts and bring in much needed foreign exchange. However this had little economic impact because international prices for most of the export crops (e.g. cocoa) had declined and local farmers could not get the required returns on their produce. SLPMB which was playing the role of a buffer between farmers and the world market was forced to close down in 1989. Once again policy prescription by particularly by international financial institutions (in this case World Bank and International Monetary Fund-IMF) obscured the policy process and the values of participatory governance. With public discontent over food prices rising, government sought alternative options that would positively impact upon the food production sector rather than just meeting the demands of the financial institutions.

2.3.2 The Green Revolution Programme

The Green Revolution Programme (GRP) was aimed at making the agriculture sector more productive after years of neglect. The GRP like that of the IADPs was elaborate in
scope and objectives covering almost all aspects of the agriculture sector. The estimated cost of the GRP was slated at Le 380,329,367.00 of which the Sierra Leone government was expected to provide Le 30,650,827.00 and the bulk of the project finance was expected to come from foreign sources. The GRP policy content appeared good for the agriculture sector but to have tied its financial support mainly to donor funding was a serious policy miscalculation. Western donor assistance to Sierra Leone at this time was contingent upon the government’s willingness to fully implement the SAP, and this meant the removal of direct government support for such agricultural projects like the GRP. Although the government still went ahead with the GRP, it was already bound to fail. Policy inconsistency saw the government partly implementing the SAP which led to the closure of SLPMB that was a major financier of GRP; the constant revaluation of the Leone from 1986 onwards necessitated the constant revision of the project’s budget estimates, and moreover, the rice specific projects like the United States of America’s PL 480 created strong interest groups constituencies within government circles for these projects as against the GRP. The ineffectiveness of the GRP is another pointer to the fact that the poor performance of the agriculture sector is not simply because of a lack of good policy instruments but the inability of the Government of Sierra Leone to transform policy instruments into action because of poor management structures or institutional capacities, policy prescription through lesson drawing and a heavy reliance on foreign aid for developmental projects. Bringing in the PL 480 at a time when the IADPs and the GRP were already in progress created an unhealthy policy competition.

2.3.3 The PL 480 Agricultural Schemes

In the mid 1980s the government implemented the PL 480 project under which the country received food aid in the form of rice. The PL 480 was America’s foreign policy program which sought to dispose of the country’s excess grains by granting low interest loans to other governments that were interested in purchasing America’s agricultural commodities. A National Aid Coordinating Secretariat was set up to organize and receive the proceeds from the rice sales and to disburse the money to farmers as loans for agricultural development. Brilliant as this idea might appear to be on the surface, it had negative consequences on the agriculture sector in the long term. Although the
government has been accused of having adopted the PL 480 project to serve the interest of its political cronies or for political patronage, looking at the prevailing economic conditions and the prevalence of hardship at the time, the government was forced to accept foreign aid of any type no matter in which form and whether it impact negatively on other policy initiatives. Of course from the economic point of view, and more especially for the agriculture sector, it was a bad policy. The PL 480 program undermined the production and sale of locally produced rice. The price of imported rice was cheaper than that of the rice produced within the country and because of the prevailing hardship consumers went in for the imported rice. Similarly, the loans that were supposed to go to the farmers from the rice proceeds was bridled by corrupt politicians and those genuine farmers who would have repaid the loans went without. Government debt continues to mount and the need for a favourable balance of payment led to increased taxation on agricultural produce. In short the PL 480 programme was another policy disaster that impacted negatively on the agricultural sector.

2.3.4 The Economic Emergency Programme

Government was forced to accept the IMF conditions through the SAP as the economy continue to rapidly deteriorate. The government announced the Economic Emergency Programme (EEP) in 1987 as a drastic measure aimed at redressing the economic ills of the country. Although it was not a direct agricultural policy it however had an indirect consequence on the agriculture sector. The EEP introduced rigid exchange rate controls, revaluation of the national currency, placed limitations on cross border trade and price ceilings on basic staples; mainly comprising agricultural products. Inconsistently, while controlling domestic prices of consumer goods, attempt was made to liberalize agricultural export trade in 1988; the SLPMB closed down and private companies such as James International and Pan African Commodity Corporation moved in to fill the vacuum left by the SLPMB. This liberal policy proved to be beneficial to the farmers at least in the short-run. These companies offered higher prices than the former SLPMB and provided incentives and pre-financed farmers in the area of transportation\textsuperscript{20}. However, the operations of these companies were limited to minimal risk activities and which

\textsuperscript{20} J.A.D.Alie: Ibid; p.267
assured quick and high returns. Hence they traded mostly in coffee and cocoa, and
sometimes imported rice in exchange for these agricultural produce. They were never
interested in providing agricultural input like fertilizers, improved seeds, plantation
expansion or under-brushing or the necessary extension services. In such a volatile
economic situation, these companies were only interested in ‘squeezing’ the agriculture
sector of the little that was left. As could be expected, the EEP failed because the policy
was hurriedly conceived and inconsistent with existing agricultural policies. In 1988, the
IMF and the World Bank declared Sierra Leone ineligible for borrowing and the decade
ended with a general economy decline with virtually no concrete policy management
even at sectoral level to provide the enabling environment for economic recovery.

2.3.5 Rice Specific Projects
Between 1981 and 1989 mainly during the ‘New Order’, at a time when the economy
stagnated and registered a 0.7% rate of growth, government embarked on several rice
specific projects to cushion the intermittent food crises that characterised the period.
Some of these projects were simply modifications of the IADPs but with a different
funding agency rather than the traditional Breton Woods Institutions which favoured
SAP. For instance there were the Crash Rice Programme in 1980 funded by the ailing
SLPMB which was expected to cultivate 8, 160 hectares, the Gbondapi Rice
Development Project launched in 1988, a riverain grassland rice programme supported by
the Japanese government which aimed at cultivating 9,000 hectares involving 2,500
farmers, the Torma Bum Rice Development Project and the Rhombe Swamp Agricultural
Development Project. These projects aimed at direct mechanized investment into swamp
and grassland cultivation. The main objectives were: (a) to increase the area of cultivated
land through mechanized farming, (b) to increase rice production, (c) increase the income
and living standards of the rural population, and (d) to introduce new rice variety among
local farmers. Unfortunately, these projects could not survive the harsh economic
conditions of the decade. Most of the projects’ infrastructure, research and development
components could not be accomplished due to financial and logistical problems. All rice
specific projects mentioned were in abeyance even before the war ensued in 1991. It
should be noted however that these projects were implemented in specific rice growing
ecologies which required special attention. Future rice project policies must take into account ecological differences in the country.

2.3.6 The Interregnums
The country has experienced two sets of interregnums. The first interregnum was from 1967 to 1968 and the second from 1991 to 2001. While the first mainly affected the political set-up and the development plan of 1962 which was abandoned, the second interregnum devastated every aspect of the country’s economic, political and social set-up and it had far-reaching effect on the agriculture sector. Mainly as a consequence of the worsened economic and political conditions in the country, in March 1991 a rebel war ensued and a year later, the military took over governance in Sierra Leone. The full implementation of the SAP policies was undertaken not only to gain support from the international community but also to limit the damage left by the EEP and to stabilize the economy. It became clear that fundamental institutional changes were needed to reduce corruption and facilitate a successful adjustment and resumption of development. The government introduced alongside gradual institutional reforms, the Public Investment Programme (PIP) through which various ministries, department and agencies of the state prepared yearly planning or policy instruments that governed their activities. These in themselves were not very successful but at least kept the economy going in the warring years. There was no agriculture specific policy during this period; the bulk of the productive agriculture land was not cultivated as most of the rural population was either on the run or at displaced camps. For areas where farming was still possible the implementation of the SAP saw the removal of subsidies on rice, fuel and other consumer goods which consequently saw an increase transportation cost. All of these negatively affected the agriculture sector as SAP lead to a reduction in the use of fertilizers and increased the cost of conveying commodities to market centres. By 1997, the country was almost a failed state and non-governmental organizations filled the vacuum left by a government that was unable to broadcast its power beyond the peninsular of Freetown. This period was characterised by emergency relief in the form of food aid to support livelihoods of the people.
2.3.7 Impact on the Agriculture Sector and Lessons to Learn

As usual, agricultural policy statements during the ‘New Economic Order never lacked good content, what they lacked was sufficient government financial and logistical input and proper management to translate the blueprints into tangible productive and sustainable agricultural activities. What became clear during this period was that most government policies after independence, like those of the colonial era, constantly emphasized export crop production at the expense of food crop and this produced negative effects on government programmes. What was quite clear about agricultural policies during this period was the level of inconsistency and lack of direction manifested by policy-makers. The rice projects were mainly implemented to salvage the economic situation of the time; and these competed with other sectoral policies for human and financial resources. Direct government intervention in the sale of rice was in many ways harmful to the local farmers. The importation of huge cheap rice undercut the price of the locally produced rice and also made farmers dependent on foreign food stipends. Government’s inability or inconsistency in implementing the SAP had debilitating effects on the agriculture sector.

Table 5: Status of National Rice Production, Requirement and Self-Sufficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Domestic Production (1000Mt)</th>
<th>Imports Milled 1000Mt</th>
<th>Total Supply 1000Mt</th>
<th>Population million</th>
<th>National Requirement 1000Mt</th>
<th>Self Sufficiency %</th>
<th>National Deficit 1000Mt</th>
<th>Import % of Total supply 1000Mt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paddy Milled Equiv.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981/82</td>
<td>523.50 274.84</td>
<td>53.10</td>
<td>327.94</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>328.64</td>
<td>83.63</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>16.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982/83</td>
<td>523.50 274.84</td>
<td>91.70</td>
<td>366.54</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>342.16</td>
<td>80.63</td>
<td>24.38</td>
<td>25.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983/84</td>
<td>460.20 241.61</td>
<td>36.20</td>
<td>277.81</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>350.48</td>
<td>68.94</td>
<td>72.67</td>
<td>13.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984/85</td>
<td>504.50 264.86</td>
<td>103.90</td>
<td>368.76</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>357.76</td>
<td>74.03</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>28.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985/86</td>
<td>430.00 225.75</td>
<td>100.10</td>
<td>325.85</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>366.08</td>
<td>61.67</td>
<td>40.23</td>
<td>30.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986/87</td>
<td>525.00 275.63</td>
<td>118.30</td>
<td>393.93</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>375.44</td>
<td>73.42</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>30.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987/88</td>
<td>547.80 287.60</td>
<td>67.70</td>
<td>355.30</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>384.80</td>
<td>74.74</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>19.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988/89</td>
<td>493.10 258.88</td>
<td>75.60</td>
<td>334.48</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>395.20</td>
<td>65.51</td>
<td>60.72</td>
<td>22.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989/90</td>
<td>517.90 271.90</td>
<td>120.70</td>
<td>392.00</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>405.60</td>
<td>67.04</td>
<td>13.60</td>
<td>30.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990/91</td>
<td>543.60 285.39</td>
<td>123.70</td>
<td>409.09</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>414.96</td>
<td>68.78</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>30.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991/92</td>
<td>411.00 215.78</td>
<td>119.40</td>
<td>335.18</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>426.40</td>
<td>50.61</td>
<td>91.22</td>
<td>35.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992/93</td>
<td>420.00 220.50</td>
<td>82.50</td>
<td>303.00</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>436.80</td>
<td>50.48</td>
<td>133.80</td>
<td>27.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993/94</td>
<td>486.30 255.31</td>
<td>113.03</td>
<td>368.34</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>450.32</td>
<td>56.70</td>
<td>81.98</td>
<td>30.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/95</td>
<td>445.30 233.78</td>
<td>123.80</td>
<td>357.58</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>461.76</td>
<td>50.63</td>
<td>104.18</td>
<td>34.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995/96</td>
<td>335.50 176.14</td>
<td>185.70</td>
<td>361.84</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>474.24</td>
<td>37.14</td>
<td>112.40</td>
<td>51.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/97</td>
<td>391.70 205.60</td>
<td>171.02</td>
<td>376.66</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>485.68</td>
<td>42.34</td>
<td>109.02</td>
<td>45.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Production Trends of Major Food Crops: 1987-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paddy Rice</td>
<td>549.9</td>
<td>493.1</td>
<td>517.8</td>
<td>543.7</td>
<td>411.1</td>
<td>420.0</td>
<td>486.3</td>
<td>445.3</td>
<td>310.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millet</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorghum</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassava</td>
<td>133.0</td>
<td>147.7</td>
<td>174.2</td>
<td>182.4</td>
<td>163.4</td>
<td>203.4</td>
<td>240.5</td>
<td>243.5</td>
<td>314.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Potato</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundnuts</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MAFFS; Special Programme for Food Security (2001) and Crop Survey (2001)

Table 7: Production Trends of Major Food Crops: 2002 - 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main PRS indicator</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice (Paddy) Production (Mt)</td>
<td>422,065</td>
<td>445,633</td>
<td>526,619</td>
<td>526,617</td>
<td>875,000</td>
<td>637,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassava Production (Mt)</td>
<td>895,817</td>
<td>1,091,178</td>
<td>1,759,292</td>
<td>2,287,060</td>
<td>2,973,100</td>
<td>1,236,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Potato Production (Mt)</td>
<td>45,450</td>
<td>74,446</td>
<td>153,198</td>
<td>15,3196</td>
<td>168,129</td>
<td>158,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundnut Production (Mt)</td>
<td>98,400</td>
<td>117,000</td>
<td>152,000</td>
<td>56,557</td>
<td>115,203</td>
<td>118,849</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security: PRSP Progress Report

2.4 The Development Policies/Strategies in Post War Sierra Leone: 2001 to 2007.

Although all hostilities ceased in 2001, the war was officially declared over in January 2002. Speedy recovery was experienced in stabilizing the economy and removing many of the structural impediments to growth, despite continuously higher than programmed
security-related spending. However, overall, implementation of macroeconomic and structural adjustment programmes since the 1990s did not bring the expected benefits in terms of sustained growth and human development. This brought the realization that there was need for a fresh approach to the post-conflict development agenda. Policy liberalization was the vogue of the new millennium and therefore the country’s development drive followed this pattern through the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP), National Recovery Strategy (NRS), Vision 2025, and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) first and second phases. These have been integrated into international development agendas like the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

2.4.1 The Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (IPRSP)

Government formulated a poverty reduction strategy in the form of an Interim PRSP (IPRSP), which was finalised in June 2001. The IPRSP aimed at rebuilding the country while addressing the causes of the war, through a responsive poverty reduction programme and pro-poor economic growth. The IPRSP’s objectives were to be implemented in two phases. The first, transitional phase (2001-2002) placed emphasis on:
(a) restoring national security and good governance; (b) re-launching the economy; and (c) providing basic social services to the most vulnerable groups. The IPRSP had no agriculture specific programmes but the transition from war to peace and the re-launching of the economy provided the basics for sectoral growth. The programme increased donor confidence and support. In 2001 the International Development Association of the World Bank approved the Economic Rehabilitation and Recovery Credit (ERRC) in support of the IPRSP objective. In 2002 the country reached ‘Decision Point’ under the enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiatives and consequently, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a three-year funding programme under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). Many other bilateral and multilateral institutions provided budget and other project support to the government. Although the agriculture sector was not the primary focus of the IPRSP, the increased external support accelerated the resettlement and the rehabilitation process and these had a trickle-down effect to kick-

21 PRSP: Ibid.
start the sector. The new agenda also provided for the implementation of a national recovery strategy to improve the provision of social and economic services in the immediate post-conflict period, and the preparation of a full PRSP that would consolidate and build on the gains made in implementing the IPRSP.

2.4.2 The National Recovery Strategy

The National Recovery Strategy (NRS) was prepared and launched in 2002; more or less as the medium term phase of the IPRSP. The NRS focused on: (a) the consolidation of state authority and peace-building; (b) promotion of reconciliation and enforcement of human rights; (c) facilitating resettlement and reintegration and rebuilding communities; (d) facilitating access to previously inaccessible areas and expediting service delivery; and (e) stimulating economic recovery. With the full support of the international community, considerable progress was made in restoring security and consolidating peace throughout the country. A National Social Action Programme, implemented by the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), was launched with the intention to rebuild the social and economic capital at community level. Again like the IPRSP, although the NRS was not agriculture specific, it provided strong links for the future development of the sector. The IPRSP and NRS resulted in the sustained recovery of the economy from 2001 to 2004. Real GDP expanded by 3.8 percent in 2000, 5.4 percent in 2001, 6.3 percent in 2002 and 6.5 percent in 2003, and was projected to grow by 7.4 percent in 2004.

2.4.3 The Vision 2025 Planning Programme

Government’s poverty strategy is also set within the overall vision of Sierra Leone’s longer-term development agenda articulated in Vision 2025 which was propounded in 2003. This document identifies the key objectives that need to be attained for Sierra Leone to create a future of peace, stability, and wealth creation to replace the vicious circle of poverty and underdevelopment. The overall thrust of these challenges is the imperative of embarking on an extensive economic recovery programme for sustained growth and human development, in a peaceful and stable environment. Sierra Leone Vision 2025 recognises that in spite of this appalling state of human development, Sierra

---

Leone has tremendous potential for raising the quality of life of its people. Vision 2025 aptly summarizes the development principles, which Sierra Leoneans agreed must guide their development efforts for the foreseeable future. The strategic areas of focus chosen which must become the basis for plans and policies for Sierra Leone are to:

- Attain a competitive private sector-led economic development with effective indigenous participation;
- Create a high quality of life for all Sierra Leoneans;
- Build a well-educated and enlightened society;
- Create a tolerant, stable, secure and well-managed society based on democratic values;
- Ensure sustainable exploitation and effective utilisation of our natural resources while maintaining a healthy environment; and
- Become a science and technology driven nation.

Two of the countries vision articles: “attaining a competitive private sector-led economic development with effective indigenous participation” and “ensuring sustainable exploitation and effective utilization of our natural resources while maintaining a healthy environment” could not be realized without effective policy implementation and support to the agriculture sector. If properly implemented, the Vision is to generate a ‘United People’, ‘Progressive Nation’ and an ‘Attractive Country’. Vision 2025 represents the core strategic issues that must provide the objectives for all development agendas, plans, policies and programmes that aim to contribute to the development of Sierra Leone.

2.4.4 The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)

Although noticeable achievements were made in implementing the IPRSP and NRS over the immediate post-conflict years, poverty reduction still remains a major challenge for the Government. The full PRSP was completed in 2005 which described Sierra Leone’s macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programmes that the country was going to pursue until 2007, to promote broad-based growth, as well as securing external financial assistance to reduce poverty. It aimed at providing the link between national

---

public policy actions, donor support, and the development outcomes needed to achieve the MDGs which centred on halving poverty by 2015. The PRSP therefore provided the basis for concessional lending and debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative\textsuperscript{24}. In addition to supporting the long-term aims of Vision 2025, the Government is aware of the need to prepare a more comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that will builds on the gains from the IPRSP and the NRS. The PRSP therefore represented a comprehensive development framework that is country-owned, result-oriented, based on long term perspective and domestic and international partnership for poverty reduction\textsuperscript{25}.

Unlike the IPRSP and the NRS, the PRSP had agriculture specific objectives. The major challenges are promoting food security and job creation through (a) achieving high and sustained broad-based economic growth, particularly in rural areas where agricultural development and increased food production are central; (b) providing essential social and economic services and infrastructure to the poor; and (c) improving governance consolidation of peace and security is essential if the country is to attract the investment necessary to break the cycle of poverty\textsuperscript{26}. As in the case of the IPRSP and the NRS, considerable donor assistance was received for the implementation of various sectoral programmes. The World Bank approved the country’s HIPC ‘Completion Point’ in 2006 which qualified Sierra Leone for an irrevocable debt relief from its external creditors. The PRSP was a new beginning for the country’s future development. The second phase of the PRSP started in 2007 but much of its content is not yet in the public domain.

2.4.5 Impact on the Agriculture Sector and Lessons Learnt

At the end of war, considerable donor resources were mobilised by government for various sectoral projects through the implementation of the IPRSP, NRS, and Vision

\textsuperscript{24} The PRSP though designed and implemented by Sierra Leoneans, the idea was conceived by the World Bank and IMF, as a new approach to the development of low income countries with a view to addressing simultaneously the twin challenges of sustained economic growth and poverty eradication. It constitutes the basis of the assistance provided by International Financial Institutions and the development assistance framework for most bilateral and other multinational development partners.

\textsuperscript{25} These formed the five core principles underlying the PRSP approach

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid: PRSP (2005)
2025 and PRSP objectives. Although some of these projects were not directly agriculture related at the inception, they created a strong foundation for the sector and the economy to progress as the agriculture, mining and service sectors recovered.

Table 7: Percentage Economic Growth, 2000-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage Economic Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009*</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This percentage is based on projections and is expected to be stable in 2010.

Source: Agricultural Sector Policy for Sierra Leone (2007) and the Sierra Leone Country strategy Paper (2005).

Sierra Leone seems to have received huge donor and international moral and financial support for policy implementation during this period as compared to the 1980s and 1990s. However, despite the steady economic growth and cubing of the inflation rate to a single digit, much of the development resources were believed to have been mismanaged and much improvement was expected than actually achieved. This is a warning that the problem of corruption and mismanagement that plagued most agricultural policy projects of the past is still with us. The establishment of Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) was therefore has a good policy march and synergy with agricultural and development policies of the new millennium. The major agriculture sector policy at this period was the Food Security Policy.
REVIEW OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

3.1 The Food Security Policy: 2007 to Date.

The FAO perceives food security to exist when all people at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for active and healthy life\(^\text{27}\). Ambitious as this aspirations might be for a country emerging from war, the Sierra Leone’s Food Security Policy (FSP) came through a presidential proclamation in 2002, asserting that “no Sierra Leonean should go to bed hungry by 2007”\(^\text{28}\). At the official end of resettlement, there was an urgent need for increased food production both for domestic consumption and export. The FSP is therefore based on the following pillars: (a) Agricultural Intensification which underscores the need of cultivating improved varieties through appropriate agronomic practices, including the use of fertilizers and pesticides to ensure increased yields; (b) Crop Diversification which promotes the cultivation of improved varieties of other crops other than rice through sensitization and awareness raising of their nutrient value to reduce the dependence and demand for rice; (c) Natural Resource Conservation which encourages the prudent use of water and watershed resources in an effort to increase agricultural land resources; and (d) Food Safety Nets which provides food aid support to farmer and their dependants during hunger seasons to prevent them from eating seed rice and vulnerability to sicknesses. The specific objectives are to: increase diversified agricultural production and food availability, raise rural incomes and employment while ensuring adequate protection of the environment, maximize foreign exchange earnings from agriculture and ensure balance regional growth and equitable distribution of income.

These objectives are to be achieved through coordinated short and medium term strategies and measures in the key sectors that influence the various dimensions of the country’s food problems. Interventions will include addressing availability and sustainability of food supply and accessibility at the household and national levels in the


\(^{28}\) The Inaugural Speech of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah on May 19, 2002 as quoted from ‘The Agriculture Sector of Sierra Leone’ (2007): p.2
short to medium term. The short and medium term strategies will be combined with other sectoral interventions, including incentives and facilities to attract private sector investment in agricultural production, to ensure sustainability in increased food production, create rural jobs and income for growth in agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors. Further short term government interventions are diversification of the crop mix in the uplands, and intensification of production from the small hectares cultivated in the lowlands. This will be achieved through the introduction of new technology, input provision through credible farmers’ associations at the local level, and targeted extension support, especially to the unemployed youth and the small-scale farmers. Government will also continue to encourage private sector investment in agriculture, especially for the production of food for the market, in the short term. Provision of inputs and appropriate farm machinery on a cost recovery basis or favourable credit terms as appropriate and extension support will be central to this strategy. Also, government will work through local authorities to facilitate access by private sector operators to land for commercial cultivation and markets and storage facilities.

In the medium term, support to small-scale farmers will aim at increasing their capacity to produce enough to meet their own input needs directly or through established input and output markets. Emphasis will also be placed on increasing the stability and reliability of food supplies through a comprehensive feeder (farm-to-market) roads programme and the provision of market, storage and drying floor infrastructure in all chiefdoms in the country. Operations research and development, land development and use, and extensive training of extension staff and farmers will also be pursued.

3.2 Linkages between the Food Security Policy and External Development Agendas.
The FSP has strong synergy with other national development programmes like the NRS, PRSP and Vision 2025. For instance Pillar 2 of the PRSP creates the bases for the FSP by providing a roadmap for the attainment of a viable agriculture sector. More importantly, the FSP has donor support partly due to its synergy and entry point into other international and regional development agendas. For instance the government’s overall objective as exemplified by the FSP is to reduce hunger and malnutrition and accelerate
the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially MDG 1: the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and the halving of poverty by 2015. Also, Pillar 2 of the PRSP: pro-poor sustainable growth for food security and job creation is aligned to MDG 1. Similarly, all of the Pillars of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) as contained in the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) are indicated in the sectoral policy briefs of the FSP. For instance the National Resource Conservation policy under the FSP is given priority because of its direct link with NEPAD’s advocacy for the increase of agricultural land through proper water management processes. The linkage between the FSP and the other development agendas has increased support for the food policy programmes and possibly government and donor commitment to the development of the agriculture sector.

3.3 The Impact on the Agriculture Sector and Lessons Learnt

The FSP document is one of the few development instruments in the country that seems to have been formulated based on the political, social and economic contexts of the country. It is exhaustive in scope and content and its participatory methodology and synergy with other development programmes provides the credibility for donor assistance. However, like most other agricultural policies of the past, its over-reliance on possible external funding again has the potential of affecting the future implementation strategies as the global political and economy environment becomes more volatile. Similarly, most of the sectors on which the FSP rely for the implementation of its objectives require reforms or building the capacity of government agencies responsible for the implementation of such a policy to enable them perform better and the political will to sustain and assiduously implement the programmes of the FSP must be harnessed. The notion that no Sierra Leonean will go to bed hungry in 2007 under the Right to Food policy was rather idealistic at the time of the declaration. The FSP was launched in the middle of the planting season against the backdrop of serious infrastructural damage, displacement of over 70% of the country’s farm families and a heavy reliance on relief food stipends and donor support. Whilst food production continued to increase from 2002 to 2006 (at the time when the donor financial stream was still running), there was a sharp fall in 2007 at the very time when no Sierra Leonean was expected to go to bed hungry.
In the same vein, the target set by the first phase of the PRSP for the production of the major food crops (rice, cassava, groundnuts and sweet potato), only that for groundnuts was met in 2007 (See figure 1 and table 8).

**Figure 1: Trend in crop production**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rice</th>
<th>Cassava</th>
<th>Sweet Potato</th>
<th>Groundnut</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>540,000</td>
<td>1,935,221</td>
<td>160,856</td>
<td>95,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>552,000</td>
<td>2,287,060</td>
<td>191,498</td>
<td>167,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>875,000</td>
<td>2,100,000</td>
<td>185,368</td>
<td>110,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>875,000</td>
<td>2,973,100</td>
<td>168,129</td>
<td>115,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>875,000</td>
<td>2,100,000</td>
<td>168,129</td>
<td>115,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>637,983</td>
<td>1,236,852</td>
<td>158,219</td>
<td>118,849</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 8: Performance Indicators against PRS Targets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main PRS Indicator</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crop</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice (Paddy) Production (Mt)</td>
<td>540,000</td>
<td>552,000</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassava Production (Mt)</td>
<td>1,935,221</td>
<td>2,287,060</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Potato Production (Mt)</td>
<td>160,856</td>
<td>191,498</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundnut Production (Mt)</td>
<td>95,684</td>
<td>167,200</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the development potentials inherent in Sierra Leone’s agriculture sector and the comprehensive road map provided by FSP towards self-reliance in food and agriculture, there should be no illusion of a quick translation of these potentials into tangible achievements. The government should take into consideration the advice given by Heidhues et al that the following challenges must be met in the implementation of a food policy:

1. **Physical access to food at the local level**: That is, making sure that food is available in the local markets.
2. **Economic access**: That is, addressing the question of whether households can afford to purchase the food items they need for food and nutrition security.
3. **Social access**: That is, promoting adequate access to food for all household members.
4. **Food quality and safety**: that is, ensuring food of sufficient diversity and safety to promote good health.
5. **Proper psychological access**: That is, providing high quality care and good health and sanitation environments so as nutritious food results in healthy growth and development, especially for children.
6. **Low risk of loss of access**: That is, providing institutional set-ups that enable households to absorb and manage shocks and reduce their vulnerability, and
7. **Access to food as a human right**: that is, promoting the capacity of the food system to deliver needed food and to enhance the capacity of individuals to present their claim to food as a form of empowerment.

What should be taken into account in following the above pattern of formulating and implementing a food security policy is that it is comprehensive, systematic and inter-related and provides a better platform for proper resource allocation to programmes and a clear-cut benchmark for measuring achievable outcomes.

---

Policy Evaluation and Analysis

Sierra Leone’s potential for poverty reduction and economic development mainly rest on improvement in the agriculture sector. The sector provides greater employment opportunity to a greater proportion of the population; it is still the largest contributor to the country’s GDP, the biggest source of foreign exchange and a leading generator of savings and tax revenues. Thus, more than any other sector, agriculture is capable of uplifting Sierra Leone from its development quagmire. However, by all standards the sector remains highly under productive and mismanaged for decades and is still food insufficient due to direct government policy actions or sometimes inactions. To develop a better policy strategy for the promotion of agriculture, past policy constraints must be identified, solved or avoided for future development.

To achieve this goal, the review took the format of an evaluative examination of the major past agricultural policies and agriculture-related development documents implemented from colonial period (1900s) to date. The review traced the generation of each and every policy, its objectives, implementation and outcomes in terms of successes and failures and possible impact on the agriculture sector within the period of implementation. Successes and failures of agricultural policies have been basically measured from the perspective of real benefit or loss accrued to farmers or the agriculture sector and ultimately the economy. The government has not been used as a yardstick of measurement in that where a policy is implemented as a political tool; its success for instance might not accrue any real benefit to the farmers or the agriculture sector. For example the swamp rice irrigation in the 1920s and the PL 480 rice stipends were more of political instruments used by politicians to consolidate their hold on power and to mitigate the effects of an economic crisis rather than been a direct intervention to solve problems faced by farmers or to enhance the productivity of the agricultural sector. Throughout this review, the emphasis has been on the farmers and the agriculture sector in relation to the production of cash and food crops (especially the staple rice). Except for the IADPs, the GRP and the FSP, most policy instruments placed more emphasis on rice and export crops production (like cocoa and coffee) and gave little attention to livestock and fishery. And as rightly presented by the food security aspirations, development of the
agriculture sector can be better achieved through proper resource interaction of the various sub-sectors.

4.1 General Observations from Past Agricultural Policy Instruments

Very few countries have attained sustained economic development without first or simultaneously, developing their agriculture sector (Bond, 1979) and Sierra Leone is certainly no exception. However, contrary to the general development expectations after attaining independence, in the 1970s the rate of growth of agricultural production in the country declined from even the minimal rate in the 1960s, and was worse in the 1980s and thereafter; with poor agricultural and development policy implementation being one of the leading factors responsible for this decline.

Table 9: Average Percentage Growth Rates of Agricultural Production: 1962-1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth Rates (%)</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>-1.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Food and agriculture Organization, FAO Production Year Book (Rome Various Issues) and Marian E.Bond: Agricultural Responses to Prices in Sub-Sahara African Countries.

As mentioned earlier, Sierra Leone has never lacked good policy contents neither has there been a dearth of policy; for diverse reasons the problems that have plagued past agricultural policies mainly stemmed from two broad angles: (a) policies lacked the necessary stakeholder support (both financial and moral) or commitment and ended up been poorly and inconsistently implemented; and (b) the inadequate and poor capacity of the agriculture sector to absorb and sustain policy implementation activities and control exogenous factors. Policy problems that emanated from the first instance relate to policy parody, inconsistency, limited financial and material support and administrative mismanagement. Problems from the second instance come from issues relating to inadequate administrative capacity, limited research, inputs, and pest and crop failures etc:

Inconsistency and parody of policy initiatives and directives

Except in recent times, past agricultural policies were mostly prescribed based on external influence without taking into account local internal factors. The lack of
sustainability and future negative consequences generated by policy instruments like the ISI, the GRP, IADPs and the PL 480 came as a result of their outward looking nature, mainly for financial assistance and the inability to adequately maximize the positive aspects (though minimal) of these projects to off-set the negative consequences due to policy inconsistency.

Agriculture sector passivity
Past policies projected the agriculture sector and the local farmers as a source of revenue generation without paying much attention to solving the problems affecting the sector. What has come out emphatically from this review is that successive governments’ agricultural policies constantly projected the growing of export crops, notably cocoa and coffee at the expense of other crops with the aim of maximizing foreign exchange and economic growth. It is a policy miscalculation for the largest sector of the country’s economy to be relegated to the bottom of the priority list with the illusive aims of securing the development of that economy. This had had negative effects on the farmers in the country and they have lost more than they have gained in their participation in several agricultural policy programmes. Policy attempts made to increase the cultivation of rice mostly did not take into consideration the socio-economic interest of farmers.

Political influence, mismanagement and corruption
One major factor which most past policies suffered from and which still remains a gangrene is the issue of outrageous political interference into sector activities and consequent mismanagement and corruption. It is sometimes difficult to actually draw a line between the government and the policies it implement. However, using agricultural policy to promote a secluded political interest often distort the progress of the sector. The PL 480 rice programme for instance, though it was implemented to salvage hunger at the time was perceived as mainly serving political interest. The price distortion and its negative effects on the farmers, the agriculture sector and the economy were destructive but little considered because of the benefits it accrue to politicians. Most of the projects implemented through past agricultural policies (SLPMB, Corporative, GRP, IADPs and
the all of the specific rice projects) met their ultimate demise because of mismanagement and corruption.

**Donor dependency and conditionality**

Government always draws its development programmes with strong dependency on donor support. Whereas as it is normal that no country in the world currently manages its development programmes in autarky, the over-reliance on donors for policy support have in the past proven detrimental. In this regard, the government’s agricultural policies have suffered mostly from donor neglect and consequently limited funding by government. Bilateral donors and multilateral institutions have paid too little attention to the agricultural sector and rural development, where more than 70% of the poor people in Sierra Leone reside\(^{30}\). Agricultural support projects of the past, like the IADPs and Rice Projects were location specific and short term programmes which were abandoned even before they could hold grounds. The entire donor community must reverse such negative trends and in similar vain, the government must align its policies with the external development environment. The conditions put forward by the SAP in order to get the economy on the “right path” in the 1980s and 1990s had a wider implication for income distribution than for the agriculture sector of the economy and it failed to tackle the structural constraints which impeded productive growth in the agriculture sector.

**Influence of exogenous factors and crop production constraints**

Productivity improvement in agriculture rests on the removal of a number of structural constraints affecting the sector. The key constraints are the adherence to the subsistence method of farming, rudimentary use of tools, climatic uncertainty and high rate of illiteracy, which increases the risk factor facing intensive agriculture activities. There is lack of significant and committed inflow of private investment into the sector. Where attempt was made to promote private investment in the late 1980s, it was merely done to fill the gap after the collapse of the SLPMB. Although the FSP has made wider provisions for private sector investment, there is current little response. Consequently, government has to support the provision of improved variety, mechanized equipment and

\(^{30}\) PRSP: Ibid.
develop arable lands when private agents are unwilling to do so. The improvement of other rural infrastructure (stores, mills and roads in particular, etc.) and social amenities to discourage rural urban migration are also essential. The urgent need to achieve food security in Africa countries requires that the problem of inadequate agricultural systems be addressed, so that food production can be increased and nutritional standards raised.

**Sectoral capacity inadequacies**

The institutional environment for agriculture also significantly affects the sector’s productivity and performance. Institutional support in the form of research centres and institutes, the provision of extension and support services, and agricultural trade fairs will further boost the production of marketable surpluses. The regulatory framework for agriculture must also be taken into account, including the encouragement of local community leadership in rural areas, and the involvement of these communities in policy and the provision of services. For most of the failed policy projects of the past, there evidences of undefined sectoral mandate and inadequate sectoral service delivery to promote local participation, involvement and commitment. There were limited monitoring, evaluation and follow-ups on projects.

**Poor producer pricing**

With the intension of earning more foreign exchange, producer pricing have greatly affected the agriculture sector in the past and needs closer attention. Agricultural produce pricing was actively used by government to generate income especially in the 1970s and 1980s. The economy was largely dependent on the agriculture sector for food supplies and foreign exchange from cash crop exports. Coupled with the adjustment process, this hampered the declining agriculture sector that was unable to provide surplus and highly needed subsidy support. The farmers have been selling their produce to the SLPMB (mostly through corporative societies) which was responsible for the purchase and marketing of exports. Under this condition, producer prices were set at the beginning of the crop season with a positive revenue margin for SLPMB per unit of export. The surplus earnings were used to mostly finance general government expenditures rather reinvesting into the farmers. Although the SLPMB sometimes invested into oil palm and
rice production, growing inefficiency of the entity led to management and operating loses. Consequently, the farmers bore the brunt. They were sometimes not paid for their produce and producer prices were kept low so that the organization and government’s expenditures can be maintained.

4.2 Recommendations and Conclusion

Sierra Leone’s post-conflict economic, social and political rebuilding needs stem primarily from decades of economic mismanagement, wide-spread corruption, inefficient state control over economic and political activity, lack of investment in critical economic and social areas, and a decade-long devastating civil war, which also severely constrained the Government’s ability to sustain any development. The majority of Sierra Leoneans live in the rural areas where the agrarian system on which they depend is mostly under-productive; meaning a greater portion of the country’s population are likely to go within their daily sustenance or dwell in poverty. As generally observed from the past agricultural policies reviewed above, inconsistent policy instruments, administrative mismanagement, lack of research into the productive capacity of the country’s different ecologies, poor producer pricing and the volatile international economy are among the leading problems that hindered past policies and production in the agriculture sector rendering majority of the people poor. The government of Sierra Leone and those responsible for formulating agriculture sector policies must bear in mind the following recommendations as an urgent need to increase agricultural productivity and to achieve food security in the country:

5. Policy Formulation:

e) Agricultural programs and policies that are formulated should reflect the real cultural, political and economic conditions at hand. Policies must seek stakeholder support (both moral and financial support for instance through consultative meetings) for sustainability. There is no point in implementing a policy which is bound to be undermined for political reasons, inadequacy of resources and cultural incompatibility. Policy proposals must have the support of prominent politicians and interest groups, must take into account the views
and concerns of the people (farmers) as the ultimate beneficiaries and the resources for implementation should not be tied to donor conditionality.

f) For agricultural policies to be effective, it is important to recognize at the onset that with the limited resources and institutional capacity too many policy objectives and sector programs cannot be tackled simultaneously. For instance policies can hardly be effective if implemented with economic growth objectives in view and at the same time trying to create sector equity or pursuing conservation objectives. It is essential that the most important issues be tackled first and that priorities are firmly established. The danger is that governments will utilize scarce resources on issues which are relatively unimportant at the point in time. Past policies appear to be overloaded with objectives and events.

g) Agricultural Policy in Sierra Leone should be directed towards exploiting the country’s comparative advantage in those food crops that we consume most and the cash crops that we have the ability to export with relative ease. For instance the Ministry should formulate policies specific to rice and cocoa production focusing on yield increase, pest control, labour saving technologies and increase investment into research and extension service especially for these crops. Following from the point above, policies with many objectives breeds the temptation of targeting many agriculture production sub sectors which brings the danger of jack of all trade master of none syndrome.

h) Most importantly, policy “lesson drawing” should not come as a quick-fix solution to agriculture sector problems. The government should have home-grown policies befitting our own conditions and lessons or programs borrowed from other countries should be streamlined to fit into the home-grown policy vision. The Ministry of Agriculture should therefore utilize the services of trained policy analysts whose responsibility will be:

- To identify and prioritize policy issues
To clarify government policy objectives relevant to the agriculture sector and to identify potential conflicts in terms of objectives and interests

To identify current policies and their consequences

To identify alternative viable policy instruments, their probable direct and indirect consequences and the risk if they fail

To develop criteria and indicators to assess progress towards objectives

To design viable policy packages, with associated strategies to obtain political support and to ensure organizational effectiveness

To advocate these viable policy packages in a clear, brief and persuasive way to the farmers and the general public.

2. Donor Relationship:

d) Government must endeavour to maintain a healthy relationship with donor partners over the implementation of agriculture sector policies. Donor projects have failed in the past because government could not meet its obligation to such projects. Any possible conflict between the Ministry’s policies and donor programs and financial support must be resolved before the implementation of such programs.

e) The efforts of most donor projects to integrate the agriculture sector into the global economy must be planned and strategized. The process should be gradual. The proper integration of the country’s agriculture sector into regional and global economic policy actions and markets will better help harness and maintain new market opportunities accessed which will be more advantageous for home farmers and consumers.

f) Government must ensure that donor projects and financial support to the agriculture sector have identified entry points into sector programs, specified time frame and exit strategy taking into consideration the resource and institutional capacity for continuity, rolling out or disposal. This presupposes
point 1d above that the government has to put in place its own home-grown policies and resources.

6. **Economic Considerations:**
   
d) Government should attempt to increase its revenue from other sources rather than being over-dependent on the agriculture sector for its foreign exchange. Any policy that attempts to increase revenue from the agriculture sub sector (e.g. cocoa export) should be followed by a policy to subsidize or increase government expenditure to that sub sector.

   e) Heavy dependence on a few commodities for the generation of foreign exchange poses a higher risk to economic growth and stability. Sierra Leone has experienced a decline in price for several of its export commodities and a resulting deterioration in its balance of payments. One conceivable policy reaction would be to provide support for producers of those commodities in an attempt to raise the volume of exports to its previous level. Instead of creating a buffer for farmers like the SLPMB program did, government should subsidize farmers and enable them directly compete in the international market.

   f) Market price and trade policies directly affect the prices and amounts of commodities produced or inputs required. Such policies normally have both domestic and international trade effects. Having the importance of the agriculture sector to the country’s development in mind, government needs to establish appropriate policies that stimulate price stability.

7. **Support to Farmers:**
   
d) Farmer education is very important in the future development of the agriculture sector. Adult education programs should be put in place for the rural farmers. Some farmers are already cultivating the new rice variety
(NERICA) developed by Dr. Monty Jones. Government must promote its cultivation by providing enhanced mechanized production methods.

e) Farmers should be encouraged to see farming as a business rather than an activity for family sustenance. The recently established Agricultural Business Units (ABU) has the potential of enhancing extension services and mobilizing financial resources for the sector. However, such should be reorganized to accrue direct financial benefit to the farmers rather than using the project mainly for seed multiplication.

f) In addition to the subsidy provision mentioned in 3a above for the agriculture sector, government should provide direct subsidy for farmers engaged in the production of the staples and important export crops. This may be done through the provision of farm inputs (tools, fertilizers and pesticides), transportation, extension services, access to rural finance and community infrastructure relevant to production.

8. Sector Capacity and Management:

f) Government allocation to the agriculture sector should be increased.

Government allocated Le 16.7 billion to agriculture sector in 2008, of which Le 7.1 billion was to support the Food security Programme, Le 2.5 billion to support agricultural institutions and Le 4.3 billion as transfers to local councils for the delivery of agricultural services at the local levels. In addition, Le 3.2 billion was provided to complement donor support to agricultural projects. This allocation is however still inadequate and so there is the need for the current allocation to be improved upon or reviewed in the future.

g) The agriculture sector should be capacitated both in human and logistical resources especially at regional and district levels. The local offices of the Ministry of Agriculture should be strengthened to provide extension and input support to farmers at very minimal cost. There should be frequent training for
staff and remuneration for field staff should be enhanced as an incentive for them to stay at their duty posts.

h) Government should strengthen its anti corruption mechanism in the sector to monitor the effective implementation of projects especially those meant to be direct support to the farmers and rural communities.

i) The Ministry should organize and encourage the involvement of the non-formal sector into agriculture programs and activities. The creation of an enabling environment (e.g. for NGO operation) and farmer organization might have important role to play in the dissemination, market development, storage facility, micro financing, health promotion and other ancillary services.

j) The problems posed by exogenous factors like infrastructure, the country’s land tenure system and environmental degradation to the agriculture sector are well known. While these were not identified as the direct reasons for the failure of the agricultural policies and programs reviewed they are bound to increase the cost of production for any project.
References


Government of Sierra Leone; 2004: *Statistics Sierra Leone Census Reports.*


Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS); 2004: *Agricultural Sector Review and Development Strategy.*

Childs, Hubert; 1949: *A Plan of Economic Development for Sierra Leone.*

SLPMB Annual Report: 1949-1963

JICA; 2007: *Development Policy and Strategy in Sierra Leone.*

Sierra Leone’s Vision 2025 (2003).


President J.S. Momoh; Inaugural Speech on November 28, 1985.

President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah; Inaugural Speech May 19, 2002.

MAFFS; Special Programme for Food Security 2001

MAFFS; Policies and Strategies for Promoting Food Security in Sierra Leone with Special Reference to Rice (2002).

Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO Production Year Book (Rome Various Issues) and Marian E. Bond: *Agricultural Responses to Prices in Sub-Sahara African Countries,* Bank of Sierra Leone Annual Reports.

Agricultural Sector Policy for Sierra Leone (2007) and the Sierra Leone Country strategy Paper (2005).


