

## **Statement from the Government of Sierra Leone**

### **Delivered by Dr. Minkailu Bah, Minister of Education**

---

Sierra Leone supports the aims of the replenishment campaign of the Global Partnership for Education. In support of these aims, it intends over the next 3 years to increase funding for basic education to a higher level than ever even though the competing demands for the limited financial resources available are many in number. The exact level of increase is being negotiated with the Ministry of Finance.

The planned increase in funding will go primarily towards reducing geographical and gender disparities in education, improving education quality with a special focus on learning and learning outcomes at school level particularly at the basic education level and reducing the number of out-of-school children.

Specifically, Sierra Leone will:

- i. Provide scholarships for girls who sit and pass the national Grade 9 (lower secondary) examination signalling the end of formal basic education. This is intended to encourage female retention and completion of basic education and will help to bring about gender parity especially in Grades 7 to 9 (lower secondary).
- ii. Ensure that all schools have and are able to maintain a source of potable water, safe, hygienic and separate toilet facilities for male and female students and teachers as well as access to community health care and de-worming facilities. By keeping students healthy, attendance and concentration should improve which in turn should result in improvement in learning outcomes at all levels of schooling.

- iii. Increase teacher: student contact hours by commencing on the phasing out of double-shift schooling and increasing the length of the school day. This will contribute to improving student learning outcomes.
- iv. Carry out national early grade reading and mathematics assessments with a view to confirming findings from small scale studies and taking necessary actions to address identified learning deficiencies and making changes necessary to improve learning at all levels of schooling. The findings from the national assessments will lead to changes in:  
(i) structure and content of the curriculum; (ii) methodology of instruction in schools;  
(iii) teaching/learning materials content and availability; (iv) methods, content and intervals of national assessment; (v) structure, content, duration/frequency of pre-service and in-service training programs. The foregoing will help to improve not only early learning outcomes but also those at the upper levels which have become a source of national concern.
- v. Fully commence the functioning of a Teaching Service Commission which should amongst other things ensure the availability of qualified and competent teachers in areas that have lacked such individuals previously. This should result in improved learning outcomes in areas that have previously lagged behind others and decrease learning disparities.
- vi. Establish, equip and staff schools in areas which lack such facilities and which are unattractive to private providers and missions. This should help to improve access and decrease the number of out of school children.
- vii. Embark on innovative practices designed to attract out of school children
- viii. Conduct studies that will allow us to take informed and worthwhile decisions

Through implementation of the aforementioned, we intend to transform teaching and learning in our schools and to accelerate our progress in social and economic development and enhance the well-being of all Sierra Leoneans.

We look forward to the support of all represented at this conference in our endeavour. Thank you.