

Training Session of Youth Monitors in the Sierra Leone Population and Housing Census 2015, organized by Center for Coordination of Youth Activities (CCYA) on Thursday, 04th December, 2015 at the SLAJ Hall, Campbell Street, Freetown

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Courtesies

The history of Sierra Leone's population census dates as far back as 1802 when the country conducted its first population census in a region that is today known as the Western area. This was followed by other censuses that were conducted in 1963, 1974 and 2004 respectively. Since 2004, the country relied solely on population and housing data produced by the 2004 census. The 2012 Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Council elections were all conducted on the basis of the 2004 population data.

As prescribed by international standards, Sierra Leone is due to conduct its population and housing census within every ten (10) years. The government of Sierra Leone slated this event to take place in December 2014 however this was interrupted by the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease.

Following progress in the fight against the EVD, the GoSL through its responsible institution, Statistics Sierra Leone is taking the process forward well ahead of the 2017/18 Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Council elections. In line with this, December 2015 has being scheduled for the census to be conducted across the length and breadth of the country.

Mindful of the integrity of the process, we are gathered here today to witness a training session of youth monitors to monitor the process in order to ensure that all heads are counted and its credibility is sustained. This training is a move to support young people's participation in inclusive national processes and democratic practices. It is a move to further enable you (young people) to understand the relevance of such engagement.

It is imperative therefore to note that this event, the population census, is the complete process of collecting, compiling, evaluating, analyzing and publishing or

otherwise disseminating demographic, economic and social data pertaining, at a specified time, to all persons in Sierra Leone.

Your task therefore is to ensure that the essential features of this census are captured and documented. This implies that you are **Monitors**, and not necessarily **Observers**. Your role is to ensure that the demographic process is accurately undertaken, ensure that each individual and each set of living quarters is enumerated separately and that their characteristics are separately recorded, and where there are gaps, those gaps are recorded and reported.

This event is the most comprehensive source of information on population and housing that should meet a variety of needs and serve as the benchmark data for all population and related social statistics, e.g Constituency and boundary delimitations. You must therefore consider this census to be an exercise of national importance and not just a routine government activity.

The United Nations recommends that a national census be taken at least once every 10 years (In the USA, they call it decennial census). As the value of census data is increased to be compared internationally, the United Nations further recommends that countries may wish to undertake a census in years ending in '0' or as near years as possible.

Generally, a census is based on the following Objectives:

- The study of gender composition, marital status, and occupation of the population at different administrative divisions.
- The study of population growth and awareness of the periodic variation in their numbers and characteristics.
- The study of population movements between different regions of the state.
- To provide the necessary data as a basis for economic, social and demographic policies.
- To provide sampling frames for households and establishments to be used for the purposes of conducting household and economic surveys

These objectives explain that a census usually tells a country what it looks like and how it has changed or rekindled its effort over its constructive social and national identity.

In conclusion, I want to resound the truth that you owe CCYA, your communities, the youths of this nation and the nation as a whole the responsibility of ensuring that you commit yourself to effectively;

- Monitor and observe the census execution operations at all stages and levels
- Ensure compliance with census established criteria and standards.
- Ensure fair and comprehensive coverage
- Ensure transparency of all census procedures and operations
- Provide regular reports including recommendations as necessary to CCYA who will in turn engage with Statistics Sierra Leone for a suitable solution
- Provide report on the final census results to CCYA and
- Provide technical advice to CCYA as and when necessary

I therefore entreat you as Monitors to help Sierra Leone to achieve an accurate count in this auspicious national engagement. The youths depend on you, your communities depend on you, the society relies on you, Sierra Leone believes in you. You are bound and required by conscience to ensure that you pledge your love and loyalty to your country by committing yourselves to the process to the fullest avoiding and exposing every bit of malpractice(s) and 'un-census' practice(s).

I thank you all.