Global Call To Action Against Poverty
Sierra Leone (GCAP-SL)

2007 Annual Report

Global Call to Action Against Poverty – Sierra Leone.
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Freetown. Sierra Leone
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report is the product of the combined efforts of various individuals, coalition members and donor partners who, in diverse ways, supported the work of the coalition throughout the year. Without their support it could have been very difficult for the coalition to make the significant gains it achieved during the past 12 months. We register our indebtedness and appreciation for their invaluable support.

We are also thankful to our donor partners: Oxfam Novib, Oxfam GB, United Nations Millennium Campaign, Action Aid International Sierra Leone and Christian Aid Sierra Leone. We owe all of them a lot of gratitude.

We want to thank the management and staff of the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD), for providing supportive leadership to the coalition. Their patience and steadfastness in steering the operations of the coalition in thick and thin throughout the period contributed immensely to the success of the coalition.

Our deepest appreciation goes to all civil society and faith-based organizations throughout the country that aligned their work with that of the coalition. Their involvement with the work of GCAP-SL was not only a source of inspiration, but also helped to broaden the frontiers of advocacy for a poverty-free Sierra Leone.

Whenever names are named, people run the risk of leaving out names of people and institutions that have made tremendous contributions. We are no exemption. We therefore thank all those who supported the work of the coalition, but whose names are not mentioned here in this report. We equally appreciate their support and we always look forward to it.
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1.0 COUNTRY CONTEXT

Sierra Leone is rich in mineral deposits. It is endowed with rich mineral resources like iron ore, diamonds, rutile and bauxite; rich marine resources like fish and lobsters; fertile agricultural lands and good climate conducive for agricultural activities. But majority of its five million people are living in abject poverty. The country has been ranked by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as the least developed country in the world. It occupies the bottom rung of the human development index ladder.

The human development and social indicators, including illiteracy, primary school enrolments, life expectancy, maternal and infant mortality and malnutrition are among the worst in the world. The infant mortality rate (IMR) stands at 182/1000, whilst life expectancy at birth is about 38 years compared to 45 years for Sub-Saharan Africa. The adult literacy rate is estimated at 30%, whilst the population with access to safe drinking water is only 34%. Endemic diseases, especially malaria and HIV/AIDS, loom as a national menace and a threat to human development. About four-fifths of the population is in absolute poverty, with expenditures below US$ 1 a day.

The problem of poverty is further compounded by the apparent absence of political will to not only put into place policies and mechanisms that can promote inclusiveness, transparency and public accountability, but to also ensure that these policies are implemented effectively. The capacity of state institutions and other governance and monitoring structures at national and local levels are too weak to minimize corruption and mismanagement of public resources.

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty Sierra Leone (GCAP-SL) was formed in March 2005 to provide the platform for civil society to effectively engage the discourse on poverty and other economic and social justice issues within the country. Since its formation, it has been working with other like-minded organizations in and outside the country to:

- Promote public debates and discussions on economic and social issues to raise awareness about them, and to generate information about the fundamental causes of poverty and its impact on majority of the people;
- Campaign for pro-poor national policies that can accelerate economic growth, poverty reduction and public accountability;
- Call for immediate action to reduce the debt burden of poor countries and institute fair trade policies and practices; and
Strengthen the capacity of civil society through training and sharing of information to effectively engage key stakeholders in the poverty eradication process.

The outgone year (2007) is a watershed. Several key activities took place that have the potential to re-shape the economic and political direction of the country. It was a very challenging one also. Presidential and parliamentary elections were successfully held throughout the country. The then ruling Sierra Leone Peoples Party lost both the presidency and the parliamentary majority to the then opposition All Peoples Congress. The outcome of these elections heralds a fresh ray of hope to the people of Sierra Leone. It also provides an opportunity to GCAP-SL to reinforce its engagement with state institutions.

2.0 ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

<table>
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<th>Activities</th>
<th>Output Achieved</th>
<th>Outcomes Achieved</th>
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<td>Development of GCAP strategic plan</td>
<td>• A five-year strategic working document developed.</td>
<td>• A well-focused GCAP-SL</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge of coalition members on poverty-related issues improved</td>
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<td>Training on the operations of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and their impact on poor countries</td>
<td>• Increased knowledge of coalition members and some journalists on IFIs enhanced</td>
<td>• Coalition members become more effective in engaging authorities on economic and social justice issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Plan of activities for the Global Month of Mobilization harmonized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) training for civil society activists and</td>
<td>• Enhanced understanding of the complexities of EPAs</td>
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<td>GCAP members and how to engage the process</td>
<td>affecting the nation, and in demanding their rights</td>
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<td>Civil society working committee on EPAs established</td>
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### 2. SENSITISATION

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<td>Public awareness on issues around the EPAs raised</td>
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| Civil society working committee on EPAs established |

| Civil society position on EPAs communicated to key stakeholders through a Communiqué |
| More public discussions on the EPAs |
| Government of Sierra Leone refused to sign the EPAs against the deadline of 31 December 2007 |

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<th>Commemoration of the Mid-Way of the Millennium Development Goals (Mid Term Whistle)</th>
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| Civil society perception on progress towards achieving the MDGs communicated to key stakeholders through a communiqué. (a reminder kind of) |
| Government of Sierra Leone renewed its commitment to achieving the MDGs through a policy statement. |

### 3. GLOBAL MONTH OF MOBILISTATION
| Media campaigns through radio discussions | • Citizens and CSOs have increased understanding of the complexities of poverty issues | • CSOs and citizens mainstream issues of poverty in their work  
• More actors (national and international) identified themselves with the activities of GCAP coalition |
| Press Conferences | • Journalists increased their understanding of poverty issues  
• Journalists’ interest in reporting issues of poverty increased | • More space for CSOs and duty bearers to dialogue in a constructive manner  
• More articles and commentaries on poverty issues appearing in local newspapers and aired on radio stations |
| Public Rallies | • Citizens’ understanding of poverty issues local and national levels have increased understanding on poverty issues  
• Communiqué submitted to the government of | • CSOs and citizen engage local and national governments on poverty reduction issues. |
3.0 KEY RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

3.1 Capacity Building

Capacity building is critical to the effectiveness of the coalition and its members. For the coalition to engage key stakeholders constructively its members need to have the prerequisite knowledge and skills to enable them do so. The issues involved in economic justice advocacy or in the fight to eradicate poverty are as complex as they are technical. It was against this background that the coalition organized capacity building events for its members during the course of the year:

3.1.1 Development of Strategic Plan

In order to give it a strategic direction, the coalition organized a three-day strategic planning session in Kenema, eastern Sierra Leone. This session brought together 35 coalition members drawn from all regions/districts of the country. The planning
session started with contextual analysis of the poverty situation in Sierra Leone, followed by a force field analysis, SWOT analysis of the coalition and an identification of strategic issues for future engagement. The planning session was led by an external consultant. The immediate outcome of this session was the development of a five-year (2008-2012) strategic plan.

The Kenema session was followed by another session held in Freetown to reshape, fine-tune and finalize the strategic plan. Participants were also drawn from all the regions in the country. This session was also led by an external consultant. The final draft of the strategic plan was produced and shared with coalition members and other stakeholders. The 2008-2010 strategic plan aims at providing realistic targets for the coalition for the next five years on critical national issues in response to GCAP’s global objectives.

3.1.2 The International Financial Institutions (IFIs) Training Workshop
The coalition organized a four-day training workshop in Makeni, northern Sierra Leone, on the impact of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) on poor countries like Sierra Leone.

The workshop brought together over forty civil society activists, including journalists. These included youth and women’s groups as well as students, professional and human rights organizations and the local council. The training covered basic information about IFIs, governance structures, global poverty context, power relations, operations and impact, including the different types of conditionalities. Participants were also introduced to debt and debt audit and
advocacy skills to enable them engage stakeholders in the process more effectively. Specifically, the following topics were covered:

- Basics of the IFIs, which include background to their formation, their various arms, their functions, governance, types of loans and conditionalities.
- Highlights of some of the conditionalities of the IFIs.
- Origin of debt and debt relief.
- The HIPC Initiatives and how to qualify for it.
- Human rights-based approach to development, as well as policy advocacy.
- Citizens’ debt audit and national action plan for citizens’ debt audit.
3.1.3 Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) Training: The coalition, in collaboration with Christian Aid Sierra Leone Programme, organized a two days national training workshop on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). The workshop was held in the lead to the 31 December deadline for the signing of the agreements. The training was not only designed to broaden the knowledge of civil society actors on the complex structure/arrangement of EPAs, but also aimed generating public debate that would restraint the Sierra Leone government from signing.
The coalition succeeded in getting two government ministers (deputy ministers of Finance and Trade and Industry) and the permanent secretary in the ministry of Presidential Affairs to participate in the deliberations of the workshop. This created the environment for creative dialogue among the key stakeholders on issues around the EPAs. In their presentations, both ministries assured the participants that government was not going to sign the agreements in their present form. And indeed they did not sign.

The workshop, which brought together 70 participants from all the districts in the country, was facilitated by Third World Network Africa (TWN-Africa) in Ghana. The presentations were followed by lively plenary discussions in which the social implications of implementing the EPAs were thoroughly articulated. Presentations were made by government officials, donor partners and the academia. What came out clearly was that the disadvantages of the EPAs far outweighed the advantages. Civil society used the outcome of this engagement to further reinforce its engagement with government on the EPAs.
3.2 SENSITIZATION

3.2.1 Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) Symposium

In collaboration with the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) and the Integrated Social Development Center (ISODEC) in Ghana, the coalition organized a one-day symposium in Freetown on EPAs. The symposium was organized as part of events to mark this year’s International Day Against the Economic Partnership Agreements on 27 September 2007. The event attracted over one hundred and fifty participants from different backgrounds including government, private and public sectors. The key objectives of the symposium were to: 1) raise public awareness on the EPAs, 2) mobilize civil society organizations against the EPAs, and 3) develop a position paper for onward presentation to government.

The symposium was a huge success, as participants, who represented various civil society organizations, learned a lot about the EPAs from the various presentations and plenary discussions that followed each presentation. The immediate outcome of the symposium was the development of a civil society position paper on the EPAs, which they later presented to the government of Sierra Leone. The symposium was accompanied with several radio discussion programmes in Freetown and other regional/district headquarters towns. All of this was geared towards sensitizing the general public on the implications of EPAs.

3.2.2 Commemoration of the Mid-Way of the MDGs (Mid Term Whistle)

The Mid-Term Whistle (mid-way of the MDGs) was marked with a symposium and a football match in Freetown on 7 July 2007 (7.7.7). These events were organized in collaboration with Micah Challenge, a core member of the coalition. These events were aimed at further raising awareness about the MDGs and the progress the country has
made (is making) towards attaining them. The symposium was attended by over 100 people with different backgrounds and orientations. Presentations were made by people with versed knowledge and experiences on issues around the MDGS, followed by lively discussions.

The symposium was followed by a football match at the National Stadium practicing field in Freetown. Whistles were blown in unison by the spectators during the half time break to draw attention to the end of the first half of the MDG target period.

4.0 GLOBAL MONTH OF MOBILIZATION
The month of mobilization has become an annual event on the calendar of GCAP-SL. This is the month when people the world over stand up and call on world leaders to live up to their promises of eradicating poverty. GCAP-SL has been commemorating this month with series of advocacy, lobbying and awareness raising events since its inception in 2005. This year’s (2007) events coincided with the parliamentary and presidential elections. Even though it was difficult to bring large numbers of people together on events not connected with the elections, it was easier to get politicians to commit themselves and their parties to work with GCAP-SL. The coalition took advantage of this situation. Several events were organized across the country in which key political actors actively participated. Key among them were:

4.1 Media Campaigns
Throughout the year, the coalition was able to work with the media more effectively and productively. From the outset, the coalition made it clear to journalists that they are an integral part of civil society and should be at the centre of the struggle for improved livelihoods of the people. Journalists are represented on all the working committees of the coalition, in addition to the fact that there is a media committee that takes the lead in all media-related events organized by the coalition. This forms the basis of the cordial working relationship between the coalition and local journalists. The coalition’s media campaigns include holding press conferences, press briefings, radio discussions, interviews, press releases and publication of newspaper articles targeting
specific issues and specific audiences at any given time. The citizens were encouraged to participate in the radio discussions and make their own input through phone-ins. Community radio stations were used extensively for these discussions. The common language of the people in these communities was used to create a better understanding of the issues at stake and to broaden the frontiers of the discussions. This approach received high commendation from many listeners across the country.

Apart from broadening the knowledge base of the citizens, the coalition and government functionaries were also able to capture the perceptions of the populace on issues around poverty, and how these issues were impacting on their lives and livelihoods.

These media campaign events were also meant to educate journalists on issues around poverty so that their interest can be sustained, as well as to help them report technical issues simply and correctly.

4.2 Public Rallies
Like all other years, the coalition marked the end of this year’s Global Month of Mobilization (October 17 – International Poverty Day) with mass rallies in all the major cities across the country. In all, a total of about four thousand (4,000) people participated in the rallies, whilst hundreds of others stood up against poverty unconsciously.

The rally participants came from different backgrounds, political shades of opinion and religious denominations.
In Freetown, the rally attracted faith-based groups, youth and women’s groups, students from primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, civil society organizations, community-based organizations, state institutions and the media. All of these groups were encouraged to stand up individually and collectively and speak out against poverty.

The procession in Freetown kicked off from two fronts: participants from the east started at Up-Gun round-about, whilst those from the west end of the city started from the National Stadium. Both processions/groups converged at the historic cotton tree at the centre of Freetown.

The processions were led by brass bands whilst hand megaphones were used to communicate this year’s theme message to participants and by-standers. The determined rallying public wore t-shirts with the **STAND UP AND SPEAK OUT AGAINST POVERTY** boldly written on them.
They sang anti-poverty songs and slogans as they marched along the main streets of the city. Banners, flyers and placards bearing different messages were also conspicuously displayed.

All of this was geared towards creating public awareness, as well as to draw the attention of government and its partners to the effect of poverty to the people. The rally was climaxed with the reading of the coalition’s position statement to the waiting crowd. The position paper was submitted to the Ministry of Finance immediately after. This year’s position statement focused on the IFIs, EPAs and trade justice. It also reminded the government of Sierra Leone of its commitment to eradicate poverty.

The other rallies upcountry – in the provinces of Sierra Leone (Makeni, Kenema and Bo) took the same format.
5.0 COORDINATION, NETWORKING AND COALITION BUILDING
The coalition organized series of meetings and interactive sessions during the year aimed at bringing its members together to reflect on their work, share lessons and to further plan. These events have created a better understanding and cohesiveness within the coalition, which is critical for the effectiveness and sustainability of the coalition.

The national coordinating team and other members in the western area held monthly general meetings. These meetings helped to keep coalition members abreast with critical issues affecting the well-being of the citizens. Emergency meetings were held, albeit, irregularly to discuss and take decisions on emerging (unplanned) events. Working committees also met to work on tasks assigned to them.

5.1 International Conferences and Learning Events
The coalition was represented in several conferences and learning events at home and abroad during the course of the year. Specifically, they include:
5.1.1 Global GCAP Constituency and National Coalitions’ Meeting

Mrs. Aminata Kelly-Lamin represented the coalition in this meeting. The meeting was held in Montevideo, Uruguay, in May 2007. Participants for this meeting were drawn from different national coalitions the world over, and from civil society groups whose work is geared towards the eradication of poverty. The meeting focused, among other things, on how best to move GCAP forward. The discussion on the future nomenclature of GCAP was inconclusive, so a task force comprising two representatives from each region was set up to further look into this issue. Sierra Leone was unanimously appointed to serve as one of the two representatives of the African region.

The Montevideo Declaration was developed and adopted at the meeting and later shared with coalition members here in Sierra Leone on the return of Mrs. Lamin.

5.1.2 Training on Debt and Debt Audit

This training was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 2007. It was organized by Jubilee South and Action Aid International. Participants were drawn from West Africa, East and Southern Africa, with some of the facilitators and resource persons coming from Asia. The Sierra Leonean participants included Morlai Kamara, Thomas Johnny, Ms Sadiatu Kemokai and Sallieu Kamara. Even though they were not invited under the umbrella of GCAP-SL, they were able to share the knowledge acquired during the training with their coalition partners here in Sierra Leone. They also developed a draft national plan of activity for undertaking a citizens’ debt audit. The draft plan was discussed with other participants at plenary where they made some significant input and comments that helped to reshape and fine-tune the final product. The final draft has also been shared with other GCAP-SL members.
5.1.3 GCAP West Africa Planning Meeting

This was a meeting of the GCAP West African block. It was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in January 2008. The planning process for this meeting was done in 2007. This meeting was a kind of follow-up to the Montevideo meeting to work on unfinished assignments. Mrs. Aminata Kelly-Lamin, from the Network Movement for Justice and Development and Musa Ansumana Soko from the Youth Partnership for Peace and Development represented GCAP national coalitions in West Africa presented reports on their activities to the meeting, as well as plans on future engagements. The main objective was to put in place a strategic regional activity framework that will map out the way forward for GCAP. The meeting also endorsed the proposal for extending the mandate of GCAP as a loose coalition to 2015. This suggestion was made in the Montevideo Declaration in May 2007.

In this meeting, a position paper was developed and submitted to the Chairman of ECOWAS.
6.0 KEY LESSONS LEARNED
The commitment of coalition members to the activities of GCAP varies depending on the importance an organization attaches to an issue(s) engaged by the coalition. When an issue is considered to be at the centre of their organization’s mandate, those coalition members will demonstrate maximum commitment to GCAP’s activities around those issues. This could not be unconnected to the fact that some organizations come to the coalition with hidden agendas, which they always try to force on the coalition.

The leaderships of member organizations of the coalition have a huge role to play to further enhance the effectiveness of the coalition. Each member organization has a GCAP focal person that represents their organizations in all coalition-organized events. It is mandatory in some of these organizations for the focal persons to give regular updates of GCAP activities and to submit reports for every activity they attend. But for others, they care very little about the effective of their focal persons in the coalition’s work. It is in this latter category that we get members that perform very poorly in the coalition.

Government functionaries and other duty bearers are not as antagonistic as the coalition thought them to be, and that there is added value in working with them. The assumption that state actors are not willing to work with civil society on critical issues is not totally correct. Indeed, there are those who will never accommodate civil society, but there are equally many others in positions of authority who have demonstrated unwavering interest in not only working with civil society, but in creating lasting partnerships with them as well. Even though they are viewed as betrayals, their numbers keep on increasing. This has improved civil society access to information that is critical to their work. However, there is still room for improvement.

The absence of a detailed annual work plan for GCAP-SL is having some serious impact on the work schedule of coalition members. Most of the GCAP activities coincide with individual organization’s work plans. This sometimes makes it difficult to get the right people to attend certain events since those who are most fit are not available. This
minimizes the quality of knowledge acquired from these events and how it is shared with the general membership.

People built confidence over time and it is animated by knowledge. Because of the several learning events, which members of the coalition have participated in over the years, they are now bold enough to engage other people in meaningful dialogue or make quality contributions in public events.

The coalition can be more effective if there is a coordinating officer who has exclusive responsibility to coordinate and drive the work of the coalition here in Sierra Leone, and with outside partners. Because there is no specifically designated person to do this work, correspondences are responded to very late, sometimes they are not responded to at all, coordinating the different governance/coordinating layers is a bit problematic, new areas of funding are not adequately tapped and going on a robust membership drive across the country is slow in coming.

7.0 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
1. A Memorandum of Understanding/Cooperation spelling out clearly roles and responsibilities, as well as basic rules of operations and procedures, be developed and signed by all heads of coalition member organizations.

2. The coordinating team should share reports and other vital information directly with all heads of member organizations of the coalition to keep them abreast of what is happening. This could fill the void that might have arisen from the failure of their staff to properly brief them.

3. GCAP-SL should continue to involve state actors in their activities from the planning right through to the execution stage. Involving them in the planning of activities will further enhance their confidence towards civil society and strengthen the partnerships.
4. The coalition should undertake reflective planning that will see it coming up with a detailed work plan that will cover the whole year. This activity plan should be reviewed quarterly or six monthly.

5. GCAP-SL partners should continue to support learning and developments events within and outside the country for coalition members. These learning events could take the form of training workshops, learning/exchange visits, sharing of information and seminars.