



# Campaign for Good Governance

8 King Street  
Freetown, Sierra Leone  
West Africa

## PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Freetown, 3rd April, 2019*

### **Reflecting on President Bio's One Year in Office-A call to action: Do not repeat the mistakes of the past**

As 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 marks one year in office of the new government, Campaign for Good Governance (CGG) takes the opportunity to reflect on key governance trends, with a purpose to make governance better in Sierra Leone.

We commend the launch of the free quality education programme, the allocation of 21% of government's budget to education and the commitment to ensure that over 1.5 million school children benefit from this initiative. CGG however notes the concerns of inadequate text books to some schools and outstanding payment of school and examination fees as stipulated in the policy. CGG therefore calls on government to ensure the availability of requisite data to support the realisation of this programme.

We also acknowledge government's scaling up of service delivery and poverty reduction investments in social protection and health services.

We commend the bold steps in the fight against corruption. We note the on-going Commission of Inquiry (COI) with an objective of examining the assets of senior government officials who were in office from 2007 to 2018 in order to ascertain whether their standard of living were commensurate to their official emolument. We implore government to continue to make every effort to utilize the findings of the COI to institute governance and accountability reforms in public administration and service delivery.

We note the increased number of prosecutions of public officials and the recovery of corruptly acquired money to the tune of approximately twelve billion Leones (Le 12,000,000,000) as high markers of accountability in governance. We however, call on the government to go beyond the recovery of state funds and institute mandatory custodian and other punitive measures to end impunity.

CGG reminds the government of its commitments to utilize recovered government money to construct an ultra-modern diagnostic center as promised.

We applaud the release of the Government Green paper for peace and social cohesion but we call for de-politicisation of the process and for partisan sentiments to be avoided in peace engagements.

While we commend the President's bold policy pronouncement to ensure safer communities for women and girls; executive directives to the judiciary on punitive measures against perpetrators without substantive parliamentary amendment of the law poses serious challenges and needs urgent review. We call for a more comprehensive approach that includes immediate review of the Sexual Offences Act, protection of victims of sexual violence and an amendment of the rules and processes relating to how victims give evidence and cross-examined in court.

CGG is concerned about the over reliance on Executive Orders to make policy. Sierra Leoneans can hardly quarrel with the problems these Executive Orders try to solve. What is worrisome is that Executive Orders do not build consensus, they diminish the power of the legislature, and are open to abuse.



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Over the past year, we note several disagreements over parliamentary processes and these undermine parliamentary legitimacy and performance of its statutory function as the country's supreme law making organ. We call on government to ensure the restoration of parliamentary due processes and sanity in parliamentary operations.

We also call on the law enforcement agencies and the judiciary to scale up their independence from the political executive.

CGG is worried that for the past one year, government has not reopened public discussions on the constitutional review process. We want to remind the government that constitutional review is an imperative recommendation emanating from the Lomé Peace Accord and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). We urge government to recommence discussions around the constitutional review process to further strengthen the peace and to consolidate democracy in order to create an open and transparent society.

We note citizens' concerns over the depreciation of the Leones, rising cost of basic goods and their implications on the quality of life of Sierra Leoneans. We call on government to take remedial steps to reverse this situation.

Finally, we are concerned about the inequitable distribution of state resources. We note a negative trend that seems to be concentrating resources in certain areas; while insidiously incapacitating local government across the country to actualize their own development plans. In a multi-party environment concentrating resources in specific areas invariably disadvantages opposition party strongholds, building synergy with local councils for better service delivery is therefore of essence. We call on government to ensure a fairer distribution of state resources.

*CGG is one of the lead national non-governmental organization advocating for good governance in Sierra Leone. CGG exists to increase citizens' participation in governance through advocacy, capacity building and civic education in order to build a more informed civil populace and a democratic state.*

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