



**GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE**

**PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM UNIT**

**(PSRU)**

**MANAGEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL REVIEW  
OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE**

**FINAL REPORT**

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## ACRONYMS

<b>GoSL</b>	Government of Sierra Leone
<b>MoSW</b>	Ministry of Social Welfare
<b>HRMO</b>	Human Resource Management Office
<b>ICT</b>	Information, Communication Technology
<b>PSRU</b>	Public Sector Reform Unit
<b>MFR</b>	Management and Function Review
<b>MoLG</b>	Ministry of Local Government
<b>MDAs</b>	Ministries, Department and Agencies
<b>PSC</b>	Public Service Commission
<b>SSO</b>	Social Services Officer
<b>SSSO</b>	Senior Social Services Officer
<b>HRC</b>	Human Rights Commission
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>FSU</b>	Family Support Unit
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>CBO</b>	Community Based Organization
<b>MBSSE</b>	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
<b>MoHS</b>	Ministry of Health and Sanitation
<b>PS</b>	Permanent Secretary
<b>HR</b>	Human Resource

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW) requested that the Public Sector Reform Unit which is the government agency mandated to spearhead Public Sector reformation and modernization efforts, conduct of a Management and Functional Review. The overarching aim of the review is to assess whether the Ministry has the requisite Management and functional capability and wherewithal to effectively deliver on its mandate or not. More specifically, the MFR process will do a deep-dive analysis of the Ministry's mandate/vision and mission, its human resources and ICT capabilities on the one hand, whilst doing a holistic diagnosis of its operations and functionality since the separation of the erstwhile Ministry of Social Welfare from the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs on the other.

The impetus to separate the two Ministries was derived from a Presidential directive, compelled by the thinking that programmatically, and for speedy service delivery, it is best to have a dedicated Social Welfare Ministry that is focused on addressing social and welfare issues in the Country, rather than focusing all the cross-cutting issues which includes of course Children's affairs. This review intends to: 1. Reveal the structural and intutional gaps and challenges traceable to the separation, and 2. Ensure the Ministry's service delivery is more focused and aligns neatly with the Medium Term National Development plan.

The Review Team is confident that the diagnostic and catalytic effects of this MFR process will be critical to the Ministry's ability to reposition itself and recalibrate its systems/processes to deliver optimally on its revised/new mandate. More importantly, this 'de-merger' gives the Ministry the unique and rare opportunity to fix some crucial policy and regulatory framework issues, especially as it relates to those statutory instruments that required review. Reinforcing this is the fact that amidst the Ministry's best efforts, there is more to be done in the implementation of the policies on vulnerable groups, social services support to the disabled and the aged.

This report was developed consistent with the MFR process which is initiated with an inaugural meeting with senior management and followed by the administration of questionnaires across cadre. A competency survey framework was adopted by the team based on statutory obligations from welfare related policies, MoSW staff capacity were assessed against the framework:

- **Knowledge of legal and policy framework:** Without a thorough understanding of the statutory welfare related policy framework, neither MoSW nor local councils have the necessary knowledge to implement their legal responsibilities.
- **Coordination with social welfare system actors:** There appears to be commitment by MoSW to coordinate with local councils and civil society but the lack of resources hinders mobility and implementation of joint welfare initiatives. At the national level more efforts have to be made to ensure coordination meetings attract high level representatives from other ministries and from CSOs..

- **Building relationships with communities:** Though there were pieces of evidence of strong Ministry-Community relations and are examples of strong functioning coordination with communities but generally it is impeded by lack of resources and mobility. This means that there is low capacity to build relationships with communities.
- **Provision of information and awareness raising among communities, families and children:** The findings revealed the potential for social workers to deliver information and awareness to communities: they feel confident about their skills and are knowledgeable in some areas such as anti-human trafficking, teenage pregnancy and disability issues among others. However, at the present time, the lack of resources means they have low capacity to achieve this.
- **Management, plan, coordinate and budget for services and programmes:** Overall, the level of capacity for planning and budgeting for services and programmes was low among MoSW social workers. Capacity building priorities identified by social workers reflect the need to improve community-based welfare training programmes on: direct work with communities, families, disability and senior citizens groups (knowledge, awareness raising on laws, case management, report writing and mediation).

Feedback from stakeholders suggests that the Ministry needs to improve its external relationship with partners, urgent recruitment by HRMO, development of a Strategic Plan that reflects the mandate of the Ministry. Going further, the Ministry has to make conscious effort to improve on electricity availability and access to internet facility. Also the Ministry's website requires attention as a means to attract interested partners both nationally and internationally.

Currently, records management system of the Ministry of Social Welfare on a whole is very poor. Records and information management are critical issues that cut across the provincial offices. The Review team noticed that the Ministry has no policies on records management. We have recommended the need for the ICT unit of the Ministry to digitalize and centralize the registry and records keeping systems.

Staffing is a challenge for the Ministry as majority of staff do not know their placement within the two Ministries and are confused as to which Ministry they should report. This has led to skeletal workforce and most technical staff members are close to retirement. On that note, we recommend that the Change Management team start to plan towards the immediate development of a retirement succession plan; the urgent recruitment of staff and the establishment of critical directorate to enhance service delivering on the Ministry's new mandate.

The principal recommendations emphasize the importance of allocating sufficient resources for citizen's welfare system. In particular, the number of social workers needs to be increased, salaries raised, and funds allocated for the delivery of essential social services. Job descriptions need to be amended to clarify roles and responsibilities and remuneration packages should be reviewed. Capacity building needs strengthening across all areas of the competency framework. The MoSW should introduce a code of conduct that sets minimum professional standards for social workers.

The Implementation of these recommendations urgently calls for a collective effort of all stakeholders of the Ministry and sustained collaboration of its implementing partners, Agencies and Commissions. This is to help review policy and legal framework aimed at clarifying roles and responsibilities to prevent duplication of efforts.

The Ministry has to do more towards implementing Government's decentralization policy with regards the monitoring and supervisory role of devolved functions to the local councils. The reason cited is that budgetary allocations are grossly inadequate and infrequent disbursement of funds to implement critical programmes/activities/initiatives, especially in the regions. Resource constraint is also blamed for slowing down the Ministries output and ability to operationalize policies relating to emerging issues such as social protection, persons with disability/aged, street beggars and vulnerable persons that are under its remit.

## **1.1 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

For ease of reference, the review team presents key findings and recommendations gleaned from the MFR process under the undermentioned specific headings:

i. **Funding** –The review revealed that the Ministry like other Public Sector institutions is grappling with severe budgetary constraints with adverse ramifications on its ability to effectively deliver on its mandate and efficiently perform its policy coordination and oversight functions.

- **Recommendations: The team recommends that** government increases its budgetary allocation to the Ministry to bridge the budgetary gap and narrow the mismatch between the Ministry’s mandate and resources available to execute it.

Though funding constraints ranked high on the Ministry’s constraint matrix, the undermentioned were also noted:

- **Logistics**-The following were highlighted as key logistics-related challenges: grossly insufficient and aging vehicle fleet, lack of funds for to maintainance vehicles to prolong lifespan, lack of supplemental modes of transportation such as motor bikes for transportation to and from hard-to-reach terrains, meager allocations for fuels and lubricants stifling field engagements and effective monitoring.
- **Coordination & Collaboration:** Several respondents noted that critical funds required to effectively coordinate and collaborate with communities and critical stakeholders was not forthcoming. In particular, respondents noted challenges with having their per-diems, topups and modems that will facilitate their coordination and collaboration work as critical impediments.
- **Service delivery:** The review revealed that budgetary allocation for the development, implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of critical services, and especially those having to do with the Aged, PWDs and psychosocial services are very meager. This, the analysis indicated is limiting the Ministry’s ability to

deliver on its mandate and by extension the country's ability to deliver on critical development indices: MDAs/HCD and NMTDF.

## 1.2 Office Space Both at the Headquarter and Regional Levels

The review which is holistic and has a national outlook reveals that the office space challenge issue faced at the Headquarters extends to the regions. This was reaffirmed by the field visits to the regional offices which indicated staff in the regions are working in environments that are not conducive. The review revealed that the separation of the two Ministries has exacerbated the space constraint issue as the Ministry has to fill critical vacancies that have accompanying office space/workstation needs that could not be instantly addressed.

- **Recommendation:** The review team recommends that the existing staff of the Ministry of Social Welfare continues to occupy the current regional offices and that the Ministry of Finance provides required funding for especially the rehabilitation and furnishing of the Ministry's HQ and regional offices because the office space issue spans both HQ and the regions.

## 1.3 Training and Capacity Building

The review revealed that the Ministry has not been providing the requisite training and capacity building opportunities for its staff, thus heightening the institutional and staff capacity gaps. The review team arrived at the concluding that the absence of periodic/predictable training opportunities to enhance the skills and competencies required for the Ministry to deliver its mandate effectively. The team notes the measured progress made in the area of trainings, but concurrently notes they are ad-hoc in nature and tilted to Professional staff in specialized areas.

- **Recommendations:** The review team recommends that the MoSW creates a sector-specific capacity building strategy, aligned with the Ministry's needs and national Civil Service Training Plan under Regulation 8 of the Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules. **The review team also recommends that** the Ministry conducts an annual training needs assessment which will inform their capacity

building or training plan which includes both pre-service and in-service training modules.

#### **1.4 Statutory Framework and Legal Context**

The overarching documents that guides the operation of the Ministry of Social Welfare is Sierra Leone's 2019 – 2023 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) known as the 'Medium Term National Development Plan (MTNDP).

The review revealed that laws, some of the regulations and policies on vulnerable groups/ aged and social services of the Ministry are outdated and require thorough reviews and updates, should they effectively serve their systems strengthening and policy guidance and rules functions.

- **Recommendation: The review team recommends** that a systematic and extensive review of the Ministry's laws and regulations be undertaken and the necessary modifications update and done to ensure the Ministry's policy guidance and implementation functions are effectively carried out.

As part of the review, the team analyzed the Ministry's Strategic Plan and noted that there is need to review the document following the de-merger.

- **Recommendation: The team recommends that** the Ministry sources funding for the development of a cutting-edge and fit-for-purpose Strategic Plan.

#### **1.5 Structure and Functions**

The review revealed that the lack of Family and Psycho-social Support Service Directorate has weakened the Ministry's ability to effectively intervene in this area and has stifled the Ministry's ability to effectively carryout its function and successfully implement government's policies around family support, social welfare and assorted psycho-social services across the country.

- **Recommendation: The team recommends that** the Ministry puts in place modalities to establish and operationalized the Family Welfare and Psycho-

social support service Directorates proposed organogram for the Ministry derived from the MFR process. The team makes this recommendation in view of the potential of the proposed Directorate to enhance the implementation of psycho-social services on the one hand, and strengthen coordination for social welfare support to vulnerable families and strengthen family environment to support their vulnerable women, children, persons with disabilities and the aged.

## 1.6 Human Resource

### Staffing

The review revealed that the regional-level human resource management function of the Ministry is to a certain extent undervalued and sub-optimally utilized. Reinforcing this is the fact that the HR functions are centralized at HQ level, whilst staff in the regions struggle to access critical HR services including processing of leaves, leave allowances retirements and severance packages.

- **Recommendations:** The team recommends that as a matter of urgency, the Ministry prioritizes the recruitment of Human Resources Officers in their manpower planning process. **The team further recommends** the Development of a functional organogram that reflects the existing organizational and staffing realities of the Ministry as shown in figure 1. **The team therefore recommends that the ministry** collaborates with PSC and HRMO to develop fit-for-purpose job descriptions for all divisions and positions within the Ministry. **The team further recommends that the** Ministry collaborates with HRMO in the development of a comprehensive Training Plan to ensure improvement in the technical capacity of the Ministry.

## 1.7 Recruitment and Selection

The review revealed that the de-merger caused addition human resource constraints on the Ministry. The team noted that the Ministry's already lean staff, had additional workloads assigned to make up for the weakened staff strength, causing the remaining staff to feel overworked and overstretched; both at the HQ and regional offices. The team also realized that this separation has

not only distorted the Ministry's structure, but immensely stifled its operations, functionality and ability to effectively deliver on its mandate.

- **Recommendation: The review team recommends that** the Ministry activates the necessary manpower planning, restructuring and recruitment processes that will mitigate the impact of this de-merger on its staff strength and workloads. This recommendation is critical as it determines institutional output and productivity.

### **1.8 Training and Development**

The review revealed that staff development was not ranked high on the Ministry's agenda, evident by the fact that there was no trail of an institutional Training Needs Assessment report or training plan to inform structured training efforts. The Review Team however acknowledges the ad-hoc measures used such as induction trainings and pairing of new hires with experienced staff that have longevity and institutional memory for skills transfer and the cascading of past trainings and experiences.

- **Recommendation: We recommend** that the Ministry prepares a Training Plan on the development of human resources of the Ministry. The document should have stakeholders' inputs to serve as a tool for future planning of the budgetary resources related to staff trainings.

## 1.9 Records Management

The review revealed the Ministry's poor Records' Management systems evident by the fact that the Agency's data storage, transfer, synchronization and retrieval systems are weak. The review further revealed that Ministry's unsynchronized records management system, is causing glitches and impeding effective and timely service delivery.

- **Recommendations**

We **recommend** that the Ministry recruits a qualified **Records Management Officer** to spearhead reforms and upgrades relating to records management. We also **recommend** that the Ministry creates a **Centralized Information Management System (CIMS)** and develops an internal records management policy that will facilitate its transition from paper-based records management to digital. **We further recommend that** the Agency strengthens its staff's capacity across cadre in records management.

## 1.10 Communications

The review revealed that the Ministry's communications function was not optimized evident by the fact that it neither had a Communications Strategy that guides its internal and external communications, nor a communications unit or focal person with requisite skills/expertise in communications.

- **Recommendations:** The Ministry should strengthen its communications functions and enhance the capacity of the Outreach Unit to effectively manage both internal and external communication flow. The Review team further recommends that the Ministry develops a cutting-edge and robust communications strategy that serves as the communications blueprint for the Ministry.

## 1.11 Assets Management

The review revealed that because the Ministry lacked a comprehensive assets register, it did not have the mechanism to inventory all its assets before and after the de-merger. Consequently, the team could not identify the movement of assets through the assets register submitted.

- **Recommendation**

The team recommends that the Ministry invests in an electronic database –that tracks the following: assets type, time of acquisition, user, location, major servicing schedules, maintenance cost, depreciation and disposal methods etc.