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## **VICE PRESIDENT LAUNCHES US\$ 20 MILLION WORLD BANK PROJECT TO BOOST MINING IN SIERRA LEONE**

The Vice President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Hon. Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018, on behalf of His Excellency Rtd. Brigadier, Julius Maada Bio launched the second phase of the Extractive Industries Technical Assistance Project (EITAP 2) at the Miatta Conference Center in Freetown. This is a US \$20 million project supported by the World Bank to improve the minerals sector in Sierra Leone.

Delivering the keynote address at the ceremony, Hon. Vice President Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh expressed government's profound gratitude to the World Bank for their tremendous support to the government and people of Sierra Leone over the years, noting that the transformation of extractive resource wealth to tangible development outcomes can only be achieved through effective governance of the mining sector, while taking into cognizance the need to mitigate the adverse environmental and social impact. He explained that the fourth generation Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP IV) will lay out Government's broad strategy for optimizing benefits from the extractive sector to go beyond royalties and taxes, and will include sustainable livelihoods for the mining communities. Vice President Dr. Juldeh Jalloh reaffirmed Government's commitment to good governance of the mining sector and transparent management of the extractive industries, in line with EITI principles, to ensure that it contributes to the country's economic growth.

Speaking on the expectations of the EITAP phase II, the Vice President said that, the phase II project of EITAP is expected to build on the successes of the first phase which was geared essentially to improving mineral sector governance and management regimes, enhance geological knowledge through nationwide Airborne Geophysical Survey using aeromagnetic technology, and optimizing benefits from the artisanal mining sector among others.

The Government is excited about the nationwide Airborne Geophysical Survey because, it will help the Country/ Government to have a comprehensive geological survey that will provide information on the types of minerals that exist in the country and their quantity, grade, indicative value and location. This will put the Government in a strong position when negotiating mining concessions with prospective investors and other interested parties in the mineral sector. Such information will also be an incentive to attracting credible investors into the minerals sector.

According to the Country Manager of World Bank, Dr. Gayle Martin, the US\$20M project aimed to improve on government framework and support the implementation of the mineral policy that is currently under review in Cabinet. The Mineral Policy she added will pave the way for the review Mines and Mineral Resources Act 2009. She further stated that the rationale for the phase II project is to support the artisanal mining sector in the country, increase geological knowledge and help to strengthen the governance system of the mineral sector.

In his statement, the Hon Minister of Mines and Mineral Resources, Dr. Morie Manyeh said that Sierra Leone is blessed with an abundance of mineral wealth ranging from precious minerals such as diamonds and gold to sand based and other types of minerals including rutile, iron ore, zircon, coltan, etc.

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According to the Hon Dr. Manyeh, the availability of minerals does not in itself guarantee automatic benefits for the people of Sierra Leone. Good governance of the sector and prudent management of revenue is required to achieve this.

He further stated that, it was for this reason that the World Bank decided to support the Government of Sierra Leone to address challenges related to what was then an underdeveloped mining industry, which was poorly regulated by weak Government institutions. Thus, the EITAP (1) focused on policy, legal, regulatory and institutional reforms.

Hon. Minister Manyeh said that the aim of EITAP 2 is to build on the successes of the first project, with the objectives of improving overall mineral sector governance, enhancing geological knowledge and supporting the artisanal mining sector.

He thanked the World Bank and other development Partners for their contributions toward the Mineral Sector in Sierra Leone.

In his statement, the Director General National Minerals Agency (NMA), Sahr Wonday said that the World Bank has tremendously supported the minerals sector in Sierra Leone over the years, from which the Agency has benefitted significantly. The launch of the EITAP 2, he said was a manifestation of that continuing commitment to supporting the development of the minerals sector, and for that NMA is extremely grateful.

According to Sahr Wonday the EITAP1 project was designed to support Sierra Leone to address the challenges faced by the extractive industries in the country. A major outcome of that project was the establishment of the National Minerals Agency by an Act of Parliament in 2012; among other things, promote the development of the minerals sector by effectively and efficiently managing the administration of mineral rights and minerals trading, enforce mining Acts and regulations, and promote the rights of communities. “As an Agency, our vision is to ensure that the people of Sierra Leone derive maximum benefits from our mineral wealth, and we believe that the successful implementation of the EITAP 2 will help realize this vision”, he stated.

Sahr Wonday noted that the World Bank’s support to improving the regulation and efficiency of Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners also offered exciting prospects for Sierra Leone. He explained that artisanal mining takes place in over 80 chiefdoms in Sierra Leone, and it partially or completely supports 200,000 miners and their families directly and many more individuals who either work in other aspects of the industry or who benefit from standard multiplier effects. From a livelihood perspective, artisanal mining often provides the only source of income and is consequently very important. He said that over the years the NMA has grappled with the challenge of regulating such an important but controversial and complex sub-sector, and maintained that with the support of EITAP 2, the Agency will overcome this challenge.

Mr. Sahr Wonday assured all stakeholders that the NMA will remain fully committed to the successful implementation of the EITAP 2, and will work assiduously with the Project Implementation Unit, the MMR, and all stakeholders to achieve the objectives of the project. He stated that the NMA will make good use of the opportunities provided by the project to build upon the success achieved so far, and ensure that the minerals sector makes maximum contribution to national development and benefit our people.

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The Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Dr. Priscillia Schwartz, the Deputy Minister of Finance, Dr. Patricia Lavaley, the Petroleum Director, Mr. Timothy Kabba and the National Chairman of the Council of Paramount Chiefs, PC Sheku A. Fasuluku Sonsiama III in their statements thanked the World Bank for the tremendous support geared towards improving governance in the mining sector in Sierra Leone and pledged their support and cooperation.

The Hon. Minister of Information and communication, Hon. Mohamed R. Swaray chaired the programme.