

THE DMSP

District Multi-Stakeholder Platform

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2024



HIGHLIGHTS

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Pujehun DMSP

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Port Loko DMSP

ABOUT THE DMSP

The District Multi-stakeholder Platforms are decentralised-level inclusive land governance structures existing in 8 of Sierra Leone's 14 rural districts. The groups are endeavouring to promote the culture of inclusive local-level people-centred tenure governance.

The structures of the DMSPs are organic. Membership is based on the political governance structure of each district. However, on the check of inclusivity, each DMSP should have, at least, the participation of the relevant decentralised level government MDAs whose mandates relate to natural resource governance and human rights.

ABOUT THE DMSP CONTINUES...

For instance, most of the DMSPs have representatives from the National Lands Commission or the Ministry of Lands, District Agriculture Office, Office of National Security, National Minerals Agency, Environmental Protection Agency, the District Offices of the Local Government, Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Gender and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Legal Aid Board, etc,



Traditional Authorities under the umbrella of the National Council of Paramount Chiefs, local councils, resident CSOs in the districts, media, academia, persons with disability, women's groups, the District Youth Council, other pressure groups, women and men of note are all part of the structure of the DMS



For their effective governance, each DMSP has a five-member steering committee as the overall governing body, a coordinating secretariat organisation(s), sub committees of the general membership. Each DMSP meets monthly and do also organise follow-up actions and can call emergency meetings based on urgent needs.





DMSP GETS NEW NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The idea to organise the various DMSPs under one common leadership was first suggested at the 2022 Annual Shared-learning of the DMSP in Kenema City. There were just 4 DMSPs by then and the leadership structure was limited to a two: a chairperson and a secretary.

Then, at the 2024 shared-learning session in Bo City; which took place on the 13th December, 2024; about 50 DMSP representatives from the eight (8) districts, agreed to strengthen the DMSP national governance structure. A resolution was therefore reached to appoint a few more members who would add to the Chairman to form a national governance structure of a small group of members. It is interesting to note that over 60% of the members appointed in the DMSP's new leadership are women. Mr. Mohamed Albert Tarawally was unanimously appointed to continue as National DMSP Chairman, Madam Fanta Dian Nyokor Tarchequee of Kono District was appointed as Deputy Chairperson, Agnes Feima Kamanda as Secretary General, Abubakar Kanu of Port Loko as Financial Secretary, and Isatu Kamara of Bombali as Assistant Secretary General. The new leadership is tasked with ensuring that the DMSP processes in all eight districts operate efficiently.

The DMSP chairman, Mohamed Albert Tarawally, assured his compatriots that the new leadership will try to ensure that the DMSP operations run well in the areas where they operate. He further stated that they will develop a plan to encourage inclusivity in the DMSP. He advised all DMSPs to continue with the good works in their respective districts.





KONO DMSP, THE NEW BABY ON THE BLOCK

The mission is to have DMSP structures in all 14 districts of Sierra Leone. To achieve this, donor partners are being called upon to step-in and support.

The RESOLVE Program in Sierra Leone operates in Kono District to promote responsible mining, enhance community rights, and protect the environment. When approached by Land for Life –Sierra Leone, RESOLVE agreed to provide financial support to establish a DMSP in the Kono district.

The establishment of a DMSP requires a structured logical process. It starts with exploring the relevant context, identifying the land governance issues, and then, the relevant stakeholders are mapped. To get this done correctly, a partnership must be established with a locally based organisation. Once the scoping report on the context and the relevant stakeholders is available, there is a need to have a technical session with identified representatives of the various institutions and organisations. The climax would be, to officially establish a DMSP in that locality.

Kono District is the home of Sierra Leone's precious gem stones - diamonds and gold. Several large and small-scale diamond and gold mining activities have been going on in the districts since diamonds were first discovered in 1930.

For this reason, the district has experienced a chain of challenging periods - particularly before, during, and following the Civil War.

RESOLVE had to rely on Land for Life to provide technical support. At the two-day technical session which took place, on the days of 28th -29th November 2024, in Koidu City, the stakeholders were first made to acknowledge the sense of urgency about the existing land and human rights-related problems in the district. Once this sense of urgency is realised, initial cooperation is quickly realised. And, indeed, all the stakeholders were highly cooperative.

The two-day session for the establishment of the Kono DMSP was facilitated by Berns Komba Lebbie, the National Coordinator for Land for Life Sierra Leone. In his opening statement, he stated that the goal of establishing a DMSP is to foster an inclusive platform for land governance in Sierra Leone. Berns said that the Kono DMSP is the country's 8th DMSP since 2020 when the DMSP idea was actualised. He emphasised that meaningful discussion is the best method to resolving land conflicts among customary people.

He however encouraged the stakeholders to approach the new trend with an open mind to the global context. He referenced the relevant national laws and other policy documents which he says are meant to be respected. He also referenced the VGGT as the fundamental global guiding document for good land governance, which he said, has its basis to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UN Guiding Principle on Business and Human Rights.

Mr. Augustine Sheku Dukonor is the Chairman of the Kono District Council. He commended RESOLVE for its support in forming a DMSP in Kono. He further noted that the district needs stakeholder collaboration to co-create new ideas that could support Kono's growth and progress. The District Council Chairman stated that land governance challenges in Kono are overwhelming. Foremost, the sector, he said, is male-dominated. He therefore requested stakeholders to ensure that women are represented in the DMSP governance structure and that this should cut across all the evolving processes. He also urged the team to include climate change issues in the conversation, which he believes, is seriously affecting the district.

Paramount Chief Edward Mbawa of Gbane Kandor Chiefdom is the chairman for the Kono District Council of Paramount Chiefs. He stated that the issue of land in Kono is solely the responsibility of the Paramount Chiefs and that due to the sensitive nature of the land, they had taken great care in dealing with land issues. The PC stated that there had been several clashes between landowners and mining companies in the district. He informed the DMSP that the Council of Paramount Chiefs of Kono will provide full support to the processes of the DMSP in the district.

The National Land Commission was represented by the Kenema District Commissioner, Mr. Charlie Tucker and the Administrative Officer from the Freetown secretariat. Both officials made a brief contribution on the relevance of such an inclusive stakeholder group and offered the full support and cooperation of the Commission. Mr. Tucker particularly referenced the relevant contents of the Customary Land Rights Act which has guaranteed customary rights to families and communities. He urged the stakeholders to respect those provisions and to ensure that every Sierra Leonean enjoys their right to customary land.

Following those comments and the completion of the 2 day session, it was agreed that a DMSP structure is established in Kono District.

Women in Development Sierra Leone (WIND-SL) is running the Secretariat in Kono. The entire DMSP in Kono now consists of key government entities such as the Office of National Security (ONS), the National Mineral Agency (NMA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the District Officer's Office, Paramount Chiefs, Civil Society Actors, the Private Sector, women's groups, and so on. The DMSP plans to meet on the first Wednesday of each month to address district initiatives.



TONKOLILI DISTRICT SECURITY COMMITTEE (DSEC) AND OTHER DISTRICT BODIES RECOGNISE THE WORK OF DMSP IN THE DISTRICT

The District Security Committee (DISEC) has formally recognized the work and operations of the Tonkolili District Multi-Stakeholder Platform(DMSP).

The recognition came as a result of some of the roles that the DMSP has been playing in the district, especially in the area of creating an opportunity for alternative grievance redress over land in the district.

In order to handle all security-related matters in each district of Sierra Leone, the District Security Committee was created by an Act of Parliament in 2017. Since 2017, DISEC in Tonkolili has been able to tackle most of the conflicts that are directly coming from people within the district.

According to Mohamed Albert Tarawally the recognition of the DSMP has fully empowered the DMSP to participate in and report on Land governance security issues at the weekly DISEC.

“I believe that the participation of the DMSP will help decrease some of the conflicts over land because more prominent actors are now on board. The DMSP will continue with the Alternative Dispute Redress Process” said Mohamed Albert Tarawally.

As a first fruit of the collaboration, recently, together with some district security apparatus, the DMSP resolved a dispute between the Ministry of Agriculture Tonkolili and some people occupation reservation land. The District Livestock Officer who brought the issue to the notice of the DMSP said that the land was given to the Ministry of AGRICULTURE for the setting up of the Agric-Business Centre (ABC) and that the occupation has created a threat to the continuation of the construction of the Agric-Business Centre. The matter was professionally handled by the authorities.



WHERE THE DMSPs ARE?



**Pujehun
District**



**Kenema
District**



**Port Loko
District**



**Tonkolili
District**



PORT LOKO DMSP HOSTS WORLD BANK VISITORS ACCOMPANIED BY THE SLLAP TEAM IN PORT LOKO

On the 19th of September 2024, a high-profile delegation comprising of the Task Team Lead for the Sierra Leone Land Administration Project (SLLAP) and members of the project team were in the Port-Loko district on a monitoring mission.

Such a visit required high commitment of local stakeholders, and coordination of the community actors was key. But with a structure like the DMSP, everything went on smoothly.

The Port Loko District Multi-Stakeholder Platform (DMSP), led the local planning of the visit. The visitors were welcomed with fanfare and a high sense of gratitude for the SLLAP. A fruitful district-level stakeholder meeting was held with the DMSP in Port Loko city. The meeting was held to help the World Bank team and SLLAP members understand how the DMSP operates in the district, its challenges, and how the group has been mediating land conflict in the district.

Dr. Charm, the Project Lead for the Sierra Leone Land Administrative Project, said that the visit of the World Bank Team in Port Loko was brief, but important. He gave a rundown of the itinerary of the visit which included a visit to the new office of the District Land Commission and to see the proposed site identified for the construction of the Port-Loko District Lands Commission secretariat. He said the team would also see the Registrar General's Office, and to later visit a community where an earlier land mapping was conducted.

Camille Bourguignon is the SLLAP Task Team Leader from the World Bank. He commended the DMSP members for their efforts to contribute to preserving peace and tranquillity in Port Loko. Camille further stated that the World Bank has supported the government of Sierra Leone to undertake several actions on behalf of Sierra Leoneans, one of which he said, is the SLLAP. He said that through the SLLAP, the Bank aim to support the Government, in reforming Sierra Leone's land governance structure. This, he said, requires the establishment of a more effective institution – the National Land Commission – and the formulation of new laws. He indicated that the project will establish a more effective land information system with real-time data, which will help Sierra Leoneans to enjoy a more transparent and accountable land governance system. On that note, he said that the Bank and the SLLAP Team were in Port Loko to learn from the DMSP about their views on the project and to provide further insights on how to make the plans for the project work. He indicated that they would later visit one of the communities to learn from them as well.

Abdul Kareem Bangura is the Chairman of Port Loko DMSP. He applauded the visitors for choosing Port Loko for such a learning. He informed them about the structure of the Port-Loko DMSP which he said, includes representatives from the government, civil society organisations, academics, and others. He also stated that the team has been able to resolve several land conflicts including the ones between cattle rearers and crop farmers in Port Loko. The chairman further stated that the skills they use to mediate land disputes were acquired from the various trainings and backstopping support they have been receiving from Land for Life and Green Scenery.

Mr. Joseph Rahall of Green Scenery spoke on behalf of CSOs, expressing their desire to support the project's successful execution. Mr Rahall commended the efforts of the World Bank Team and SLLAP members for their decision to visit the Port Loko District Multi-Stakeholder Platform's efforts.

The team later visited the proposed site for the construction of the Port-Loko District Land Commission and further to Matiti Village where Green Scenery and some partners had conducted some mapping exercises together with the traditional authorities and land owners.



Cross section of participants in Port Loko District who attending the meeting



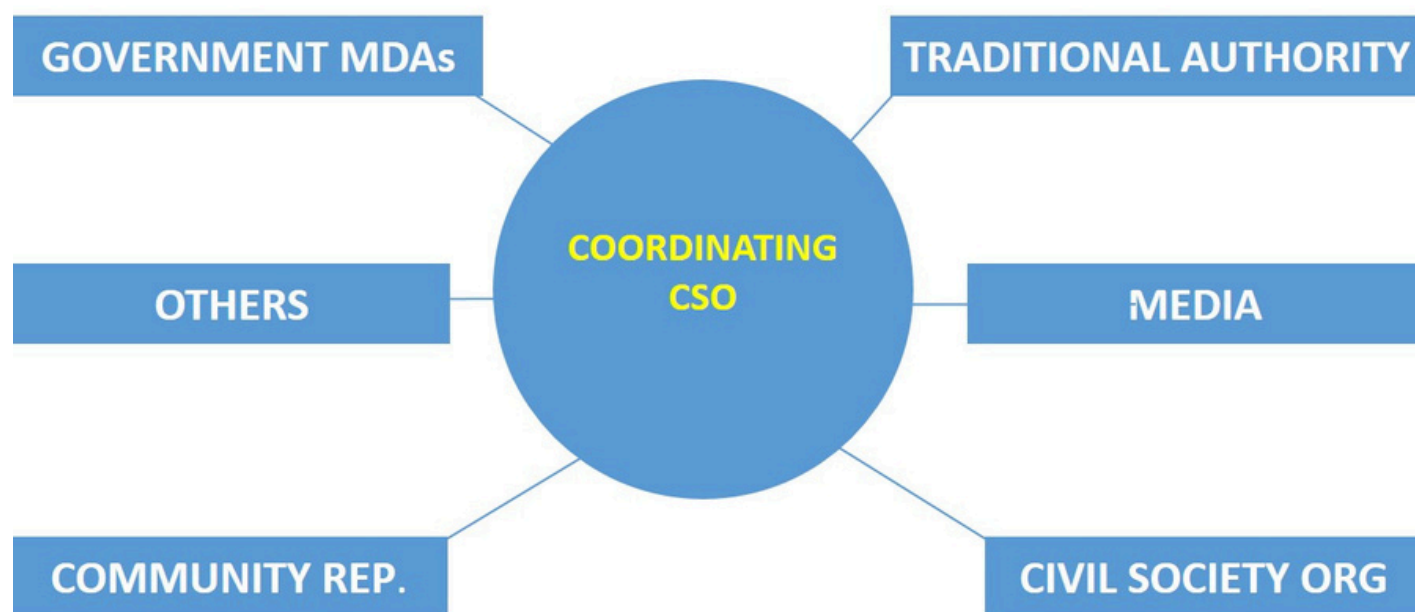
**Mr. Joseph Rahall
Executive Director- Green Scenery
making a statement**



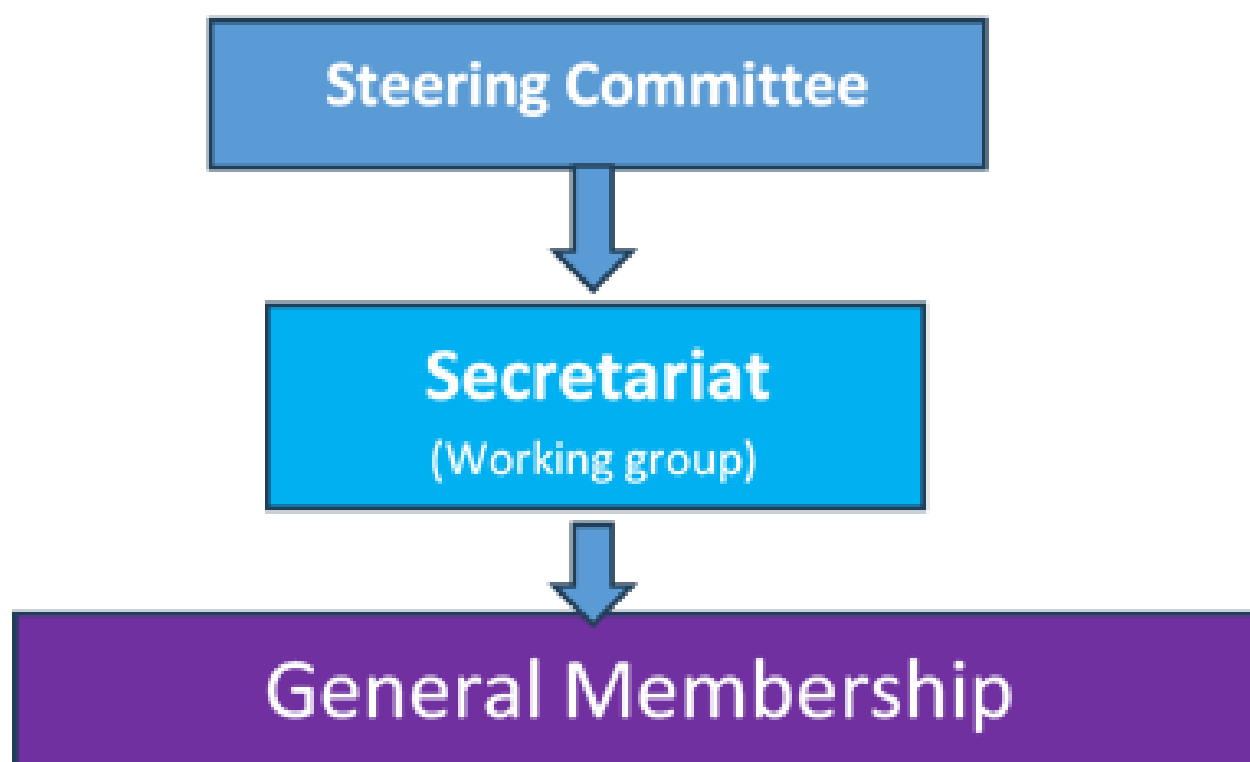
**Mr. Abdul K Bangura
Chairman P/LOko DMSP speaking on
behalf of the DMSP members**



INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN THE DMSP



DMSP GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE





PUJEHUN DMSP IS FOSTERING PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN THE ZOKA AND KEMOKAI FAMILIES OF SORO-GBEIMA CHIEFDOM

To foster peace and strengthen cohesion between individuals, families and communities, is one of the core functions of the DMSP. This is what the Pujehun DMSP wants to showcase in their success stories in the 4th quarter of 2024.

According to their report, on the 22nd of October, 2024, members of the Pujehun DMSP made a frenzied drive to Sorogbema Chiefdom, where the Zokas and Kemokais families were at odds over land. The long-running land issue has impacted the two families' relationships. Because of the dispute, both families cannot work together or engage in the same community activities.

To ensure a thorough understanding of the issue, the DMSP convened a meeting of both families and key community stakeholders, including the Paramount Chief. Both families were allowed to express their discontent with the overall land situation in the chiefdom. As they mediated between the two families, the DMSP members and community stakeholders, including the Chief attentively listened to the parties as they provided the historical background of the land.

Speaking on behalf of the community, PC Massaquoi emphasized his displeasure with the ongoing land conflicts, emphasizing that such strife had the potential to slow down development efforts in the Chiefdom. He stated that his administration had taken proactive actions to settle the disagreement, including forming a credible committee of community members to examine and resolve all outstanding disputes. The Chief also commended the DMSP's involvement in encouraging dialogue on land issues in the district, expressing optimism for a mutually beneficial conclusion.

During the resolution, both families had reservations about mapping their lands. Their concern was that the trees that used to divide the two family lands had been cut down and the swamp land dried up. This, according to the community stakeholders is the major reason for the conflict over land not only between the Zokers and Kemokais but also other families in the district.

Ibrahim B. Swaray, the DMSP's Secretary General and District Facilitator, informed the parties and community stakeholders that the DMSP is independent and unbiased. He informed the audience about the makeup of the DMSP and how the DMSP has a solid track record of settling problems in the area. He reaffirmed his commitment to openness and justice in resolving the land issue, emphasising the need to establish clear borders between the opposing parties.

We are a Platform of Civil Society Organisation Orgnised to Promote People-Centred Land Governance towards National Food Security



POLICY INFLUENCING

We are a member of the Technical Working Group (TWG) setup for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Governance of Tenure (VGGT). In Partnership with other CSOs, we ensure that engagement processes, actions, and decisions of the Government on land are transparent, inclusive and forward looking.

SUPPORT DISTRICT MAP MEETINGS

On a monthly basis, members of the District Multi-Stakehold Platform do meet to get update on land related issues from community stakeholders. Some of the issues raised are resolved, referred or recommended for further steps. District MAP structure comprises Chiefs, Para-Legals, Investors, Lecturers, Teachers, Office of National Security etc

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

We mobilise and organise communities to understand existing policies/laws and their implications. We encourage community stakeholders to take responsibility for climate change mitigation and responsible use of natural resources. We also encourage community people to embark on sustainable agricultural practices that will lead to food security.

SUPPORT CHIEFDOM MAP MEETINGS

On a monthly basis, members of the Chiefdom Multi-Stakehold Platform do meet to get update on land related issues from community stakeholders. Some of the issues are resolved, referred or recommended for further steps. Chiefdom MAP structure comprises Chiefs, Landowners and User, Youth Rep, Teachers etc. Complex issues are referred to the District Multi-Stakeholders for advice and mitigation.

WHAT WE DO

SUPPORT TO ADVOCACY ON WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS

We are aware of existing strong structural injustices that limit women from accessing land and participating in decision making. Towards breaking these barriers, we support women to participate in and undertake organised activities that will strengthen their rights and benefits to land

LAND CONFLICT MEDIATION

Through our decentralised Multi-Actor Partnership (MAP) structure, we facilitate inclusive right-based conflict mediation sessions using the Alternative Grievance Redress Mechanism towards strengthening land right and tenure security.

COMMUNITY VISIT BY DISTRICT FACILITATORS

We are currently operating in **40 communities** across 12 chiefdoms in Sierra Leone. Every month, our District Facilitators do visit these communities and engage them on issues partinent to the development of their communities.

ARWARENESS RASING ON LAND TITLING AND DOCUMENTATION

The implementation of the Sierra Leone Land Administration Project and the new Land Laws require every land to be titled. We are moving ahead to educate communities for their willingness to participate in the anticipated land title and documentation process.



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THE KENEMA DMSP IS USING THE MEDIA TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE CUSTOMARY LAND RIGHTS ACT OF 2022 AND OTHER ELATED LAWS.

The Sierra Leone Parliament passed the Customary Land Rights and National Land Commission Acts in 2022. These new legislations represented a watershed moment in Sierra Leone's land administration. The new laws repealed the previous laws, which placed land in the hands of traditional authorities as custodians and prohibited certain groups of people from owning, utilising, or inheriting customary land. It is a source of national pride that a new land law has been passed by parliament, but what comes next with the legislation is something the Kenema DMSP is taking seriously. To ensure that the communities for whom the land laws were passed understand their contents, the DMSP has held

numerous radio talk shows in the district. This, of course, is in addition to the DMSP's regular community face-to-face meetings.

Tailored messages were utilised to clarify essential aspects of the legislation to the people, and they were delivered in Mende, the district's substantial language. When the phone lines were unlocked, the community proved their understanding of the message by requesting that the team host such a radio discussion programme at least once a week.

During the radio programme, Mr. Christopher Brima, Executive Director of Humanist Watch Sierra Leone, told listeners that the new legislation grants women the right to retain, use, inherit, and transfer land. He stated that the days of women not being permitted to inherit or utilise land are over. Mr. Brima pushed traditional leaders to help people understand and use the rules to improve their land rights.

During the radio talk show, Aiah Charles Jabba, Land for Life District Facilitator also told the public about the plans that the government has to enact three new laws that would support the implementation of the customary land rights act in across communities. These new laws according to Jabba are the Surveys Act, Land Adjudication Act and Land Registration. The Kenema DMSP hopes to continue it regular media engagement with the public on land governance and food security issues in the district

