

Sierra Leone Road Transport Authority Validates National Road Safety Strategy



Dr Bendu, Director of SLRTA delivering a statement



Dr Kobusingye, WHO consultant providing technical support



A participant making contribution at the plenary session



Group discussions by road safety stakeholder

The World Health Organization (WHO) supported the Sierra Leone Roads Transport Authority (SLRTA) to validate the National Road Safety Strategic Plan (2013-2015) in a 2 day multi stakeholders' workshop held from 13-14 March 2013 in Freetown. Some of the partners at the meeting included the Sierra Leone Police, insurance companies, motor drivers' union and vehicle owners, health officials and line ministries, the local councils, civil society and partners including WHO among others. The methods of the validation included plenary sessions and group discussions on the strategic thematic pillars of the document.

Dr Sarah Bendu, Executive Director of SLRTA urged the stakeholders at the validation meeting to give their commitments and full support to road safety issues and act appropriately to achieve the desired outcomes of the workshop.

This is the first National Road Safety Strategy prepared to provide broad framework for road safety management in Sierra Leone. SLRTA spearheaded the development of the document with the support of WHO and participation of road safety stakeholders.

Development of the National Road Safety Strategy took into consideration the Global Road Safety norms and standards as applicable to the situation in Sierra Leone, the National Road Safety Policy and the UN Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020. The strategy has been translated into action plans based on the five pillars of the Decade of Action for Road Safety. Each pillar is focused on coordinating the delivery of enforcement, education, and engineering activities to manage key local road safety risks.

The first phase of the National Road Safety strategy that runs from 2013-2015, will be the blue print for all road safety interventions and road safety related statutory initiatives in the country. The second phase that covers the period 2016 -2021 will be developed in 2015 after taking stock of the strengths, limitations, challenges and lessons learned in the implementation of the first phase. The second phase will also be aligned to the UN Global Plan for the Decade of Action 2011-2020.

Development of the Strategy has been described by partners as a laudable initiative. WHO has assured its commitment to support implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy which is expected to lead to reduction in the road traffic crashes and fatalities in Sierra Leone. WHO is collaborating with the national authorities and stakeholders by providing strategic support technically and financially to ensure that the sector takes the agenda forward as it is one of the health determinants that contribute to the high morbidity, disability and mortality in the country.