

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR MEETS IMF'S FIRST PRGF(2) REVIEW MISSION TO SIERRA LEONE**

The Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone Dr. J.D. Rogers, has described Sierra Leone reaching completion point of the HIPC programme, as a "critical achievement in the country's development effort that engenders confidence in its development policies".

Governor J.D. Rogers made this remark while addressing a review Mission from the International Monetary Fund, that made a courtesy call on him Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2006.

Dr. J.D. Rogers informed the team that, the country now has a robust poverty reduction programme, in which the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be factored. He said, reaching completion point in the HIPC programme is critical to this programme as well.

He also apprised the Mission of improvement taking place in the macro economy, highlighting inflation, which now stood at about 12 percent, increasing revenue and expenditure discipline, and the growing reserves of about one hundred and eighty million dollars, the highest in the country's recent history.

These positive changes, Dr. Rogers said, do not mean there are no challenges ahead. He called on the team, not to assess Sierra Leone's performance only on what is achieved but also on the strength of its policies and effort in meeting targets. He reiterated that, efforts by the Bank and the Ministry of Finance have instilled discipline in the financial sector. He was confident that, the sector has made strong progress, through prudent policies, at reaching the targets agreed to under the PRGF and HIPC programmes.

Speaking on behalf of the Team, the IMF Coordinator for West Africa, Norbert Toe, said their Mission would assess Sierra Leone's performance, in respect of three objectives.

The first he said is the Fund's regular Article IV consultation on several key issues. Second, is the first review of the PRGF (2) arrangement, agreed to on the 18<sup>th</sup> May this year and the third is to assess Sierra Leone's progress to reach completion point in the HIPC programme, that will make the country eligible for debt relief. These assessments he said, will be based on the performance criteria agreed with the Fund.

Norbert Toe, warned that, Sierra Leone's performance in the first PRGF (2) review would be critical to the HIPC completion point assessment.