



## COUNTRY PROFILE



L. LARTIGUE, USAID/SIERRA LEONE

*Ex-combatants in Koindu are now carpentry apprentices through a USAID program—learning skills that will help them make a living, and allow them to contribute to rebuilding their community.*

### OVERVIEW

An 11-year civil war that ended in 2002 left the country devastated. Burnt-out buildings and limbless children and adults are frequent reminders of the devastation. But Sierra Leone has made remarkable strides toward growth and stability and continues its steady transition from war to peace. An important part of Sierra Leone’s recovery is helping the country address what fueled the war—primarily the unfair and inequitable distribution of proceeds from diamond mining—and its effects. To help rebuild communities and promote stability, the USAID program provides social, economic, and physical support to encourage resettlement and reintegration in war-torn communities.



### PROGRAMS

#### STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY AND LOCAL ECONOMIES

A legacy of bad governance, mismanagement and systemic corruption, and the lack of citizens’ confidence in their government’s ability to deliver basic services continue to undermine the well-being of the country. Mineral resources are the country’s leading foreign exchange earner and the sector employs approximately 120,000 Sierra Leoneans—mainly youth—working in sub-standard conditions for less than a dollar a day. The government’s inability to harness the country’s diamond resources to benefit citizens has been cited by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee as the main contributing factor to the decade-long war. USAID’s democracy program in Sierra Leone equips local people, including women and youth, with the information and skills they need to participate in decision-making, tackle corruption, and contain human rights abuses with a view to end the cycle of violence and ensure security and stability. As reintegration advances and communities become more economically and socially viable, they will become stronger and better able to participate in transparent and inclusive political decision-making, which will foster a climate of peace, security, and stability. With a new democracy strengthening initiative, USAID will help to empower communities at the local level, in part by helping them build effective links among local councils, traditional, and national leaders, to broaden and strengthen the voice of the people.

By helping local committees and cooperatives to oversee mining activities within their communities, USAID promotes effective government control of

#### SIERRA LEONE SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 1961  
Population: 5.4 million (2004)  
Income per person: \$200 (yr)

Source: World Bank Development Indicators

#### USAID IN SIERRA LEONE

[www.usaid.gov/sl](http://www.usaid.gov/sl)

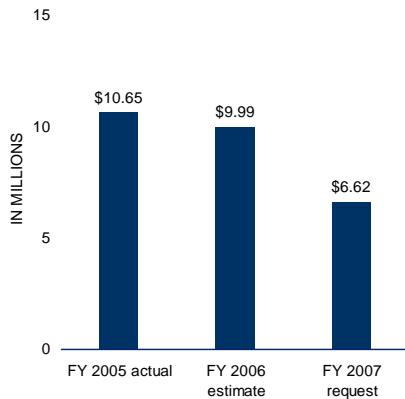


**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

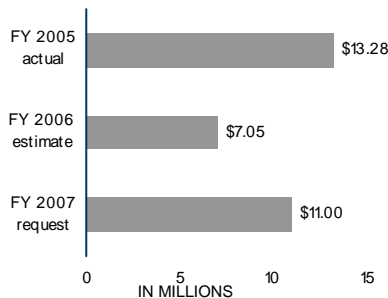
# SIERRA LEONE

## COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

### USAID ASSISTANCE TO SIERRA LEONE



### USAID FOOD AID TO SIERRA LEONE



For more information, see the  
*FY2007 Congressional Budget Justification*  
<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/>

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Mission Director  
Jack Winn  
USAID Sierra Leone  
c/o USAID Guinea  
B.P. 603  
Conakry, Guinea

Sarah Swift  
Sierra Leone Desk Officer  
202-712-4777  
Email: [sswift@usaid.gov](mailto:sswift@usaid.gov)

the country's diamond resources and increases benefits from diamonds to diamond mining communities. The value of legally-traded diamonds increased by 11.2 percent, from \$120 million in FY 2004 to \$135 million in 2005.

USAID's conflict resolution radio shows are very successful, with 70 percent listenership in the target districts. For example, in Kailahun District a simmering civil disobedience campaign to dissuade citizens from paying their local taxes to their District Councils was diffused through an innovative weekly 45-minute USAID-sponsored radio program called "Council Hour."

USAID's post-war reintegration program has facilitated the resettlement of war-torn populations (women, youth, ex-combatants, internally displaced persons, and returnees) into their communities and enabled them to work together to rebuild their shattered lives and communities, encourage reconciliation, and build mutual respect between ex-combatants and communities. USAID supports social, economic and physical resettlement and reintegration activities by providing ex-combatants and war-affected youth with job skills and income-earning opportunities. In addition, USAID provides support for rebuilding vital public infrastructure in devastated communities.

In order to expand educational access for girls, the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program run by President Bush's Africa Education Initiative gave 3000 girls educational support in 2005.