



**Government Of Sierra Leone**

# **1985 NATIONAL POPULATION CENSUS**

**HIGHLIGHTS OF 1985 CENSUS REPORT**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### (i) Historical

The 1985 Population Census was the third complete count of the Population to be carried out in Sierra Leone. The first was in 1963 and the second in 1974.

Prior to 1963 and 1974, however, a number of “Censuses” had been held in the country, employing various methods. The earliest of such “Censuses” is believed to have taken place in 1802 in what is now the Western Area. In 1901, the whole country was covered for the first time, although the methods in the provincial areas were different from what had become the standard practice in the Western Area. Similar “Censuses” followed in 1911, 1921, 1931 and in 1948, when the last of these “Censuses” was held.

The “Censuses” of 1901 to 1948 combined complete counts in the Western Area with sample estimates of the provincial population to obtain the population of the country. Because of the sampling and estimation procedures used, the estimates of the population of Sierra Leone obtained from these Censuses were as follows:-

1901	-	1,024,278
1911	-	1,400,149
1921	-	1,540,554
1931	-	1,768,480
1948	-	1,858,275
1963	-	2,180,355
1974	-	2,735,159

The 1985 Census reported the Population as 3,515,812 and adjusted upwards by 5% (for possible under enumeration) to 3,700,000.

Like the 1963 and 1974 Censuses, the 1985 Census was a de facto census based on a house-to-house canvass of the population. The adjusted enumeration return of 3,700,000 persons in the whole of Sierra Leone, implying an annual growth rate of 2.76% during the intercensal period 1974 to 1985.

### (iv) Census Publicity

The importance of publicity in any Census operation, particularly in the African situation cannot be over-emphasized, for without the willing co-operation of the population, no census can succeed. The main objectives of the publicity work for the 1985 Census were:

- (i) to inform the general public about the Census, the reasons for having a Census and the role they have to play and thereby solicit their co-operation;
- (ii) to explain to the public the reasons for asking certain questions such as “where did you sleep last night?”; relationship to the head of household; number of children born etc. and hopefully allay their fears, anxiety and disaffection about such questions;
- (iii) to build up the image of enumerators, who are invariably much younger than the respondents and hence at a disadvantaged position, as responsible persons who can be trusted with intimate personal details;

- (iv) to reassure the public that the information gathered would be treated as confidential and measures would be taken to ensure that such information will not pass to unlawful private or official hands who could use the information to the detriment of the respondents.

The publicity work was carried out in three phases.

The first phase was rather informal. It was started in October 1984 at the same time as the mapping work and both activities went on concurrently. As teams of mappers went about their mapping duties, they were able to talk to Paramount Chiefs, Village Headmen and Local Elders in the towns and villages they passed through and made them aware of the Census being planned.

The second phase was more formal. The campaign was launched early in January, 1985, with a Press Conference given by the Chairman of the National Census Committee.

Plans for the main publicity campaign were drawn up between January and February, 1985 after the Government had decided to hold the Census in December, 1985. Consequently, a National Census Publicity and Education Committee was established by the Census Secretariat, comprising important personalities in the community, to formulate and co-ordinate plans and also prepare materials for a broadcast campaign in the four main national languages. It was intended to ensure that everyone knew that a Census was to be taken and that the government regarded it as an important national undertaking. In particular, it was also intended to answer the questions most often asked and which, in some cases, indicated doubt or fear and, in other cases, arose out of a desire to be better informed. At the provincial level, District Census Officers were appointed for each of the twelve (12) districts in Sierra Leone mainly for the purpose of publicizing the census programme, in collaboration with District Officers, Paramount Chiefs and Chiefdom Elders.

Census officials began to visit primary and secondary schools all over the country to talk to students and teachers about the census and its aims. The students and teachers, apart from becoming rather well informed about the census, became the vehicle for dissemination this information to parents, relations and acquaintances who were not easily accessible by other means. This campaign was combined with a recruitment drive which was intended to obtain some preliminary estimates of the number of teachers and pupils that could be counted upon in each area of the country to serve as enumerators and supervisors. From the start of the mapping work and throughout the entire period of preparation, the Census Office relied heavily on the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) for disseminating information on the Census, both at the start of some field activity and also at frequent intervals during the progress of the activity. Later on it was possible to include talks on the Census, discussions and other feature programmes, which employed mainly the major local vernaculars. However, the effective use of the radio in the publicity campaign was limited to the Western Area due to technical and other problems then prevailing in the broadcasting system.

Consequently, publicity work in the provinces became a major activity of the District Census Officers. Despite the constraints of transportation, fuel, bad roads and so on, they visited all the Paramount Chiefs, other heads of local administrative units and schools in their respective

districts to acquaint them of the Census and solicit their help in the dissemination of information on the Census.

Public meetings were also convened in various parts of each chiefdom in a District, taking particular care to include remote and inaccessible localities. District Census Officers also exploited to maximum advantage special events which attracted large numbers of people such as Agricultural Show, Trade Fairs and Party Conventions.

Contacts established between field mappers and Census Officials on the one hand and Paramount Chiefs, teachers, pupils and others on the other, had given rise to useful discussions on the Census. Many issues were raised and questions asked, which gave clear indications of the major fears and misconceptions held about the Census. Notes were made of all such questions so they could be studied in the Census Office. This provided a good basis on which the final phase of the publicity programme could be built.

Based on information collected during the publicity work, the Census Office was also to identify problem areas which would need special attention in the main publicity programme. These were the diamond mining areas of Kenema and Kono, where the constant differences between security forces and illicit miners had created among the latter, a deep feeling of fear and mistrust of any government, no matter what its good aims were. Border districts like Pujehun, Kailahun, Kambia and Koinadugu were given special treatment.

Between October and mid-December when the enumeration was completed, over fifty hours of broadcasting time had been exclusively devoted to the Census. Every broadcast was preceded by a special composed census calypso music. Slogans and sketches were featured as well as a large number of discussion programmes conducted in English and the main national languages. School broadcasts and weekly children's programmes also came in for their own share of census information material.

These broadcast programmes formed the bulk of the publicity work, but they were supplemented appropriately by television broadcasts, press coverage, country-wide tours by the Chairman and the use of mobile publicity teams which travelled all over the country, giving talks on the census and distributing posters and leaflets.

A lively publicity programme was mounted in the diamond mining areas of Kenema and Kono and extensive use was made of mobile teams using loud-speakers which combed the areas and blared out their message to all and sundry, in the hope of allaying their fears and enlisting their co-operation. There is no doubt that virtually everyone in Sierra Leone knew that a census was being undertaken and that it was an important element in enhancing the government's plan for economic and social development.

On Census Night, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1985, the Census Commissioner/Chairman made a broadcast soliciting the co-operation of the general public during the actual counting exercise.

### **Public Relations**

Because the Census Commissioner/Chairman attached great importance to relations with the public, a Public Relations Co-coordinator was appointed very early in the Census exercise.

This was an innovation. In his view, the conduct of the various activities connected with the Census would be made easier if the people are made to identify with and have a sense of belonging and commitment to the Census.

It was in furtherance of this view that the Census Commissioner/Chairman and his staff travelled extensively, discussing and explaining the Census and its organization to important and influential personalities and institutions. In the course of these visits, the Census Commissioner/Chairman spoke to Paramount Chiefs, Headmen, Religious Leaders, Heads of Government Departments, Members of the Business Community and Members of the Diplomatic Corps and other Opinion Leaders.

Invariably, a lasting and fruitful relationship was formed which not only facilitated the work of Census Personnel but made it easier for them to ask for and be given assistance in procuring materials and services necessary for Census operation. Examples are many but one is worth mentioning. It was the result of such personal contacts made by the Census Commissioner/Chairman that the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany through its Embassy in Freetown offered to provide printed questionnaire books and other stationery and satchels for the Census.

(v) **Preparations for the Enumeration**

Detailed preparations for the enumeration were commenced in January, 1985 after the government had indicated that the census must be taken in December, 1985. The Census was to be a de facto census conducted by house to house canvassing; this requires that the country be divided into enumeration areas which are census units of manageable size to which one enumerator is assigned. This arrangement makes for economical use of manpower and for easy control. The division of the country into enumeration areas may also serve as a sampling frame for subsequent surveys.

Since the purpose of Census mapping is to provide a geographical framework which is to be used to control Census enumeration both in space and in time, all effort was made to recruit the right type of people and to give them adequate training before work in all three regions of the provinces and in the Western Area started. By the end of August, 1985, report received from the Cartographic Section of the Central Statistics Office indicated that a greater proportion of the work had been completed. The role played by Central Statistics Regional Field Officers in this exercise was very important and crucial to the Census enumeration as they supervised all mapping exercises throughout the country.

During the subsequent weeks, the field manuals and instructions were drafted and orders placed for the supply of essential materials such as questionnaires, books, pens, enumerators' satchels, census vests, census badges and so on.

The questionnaire having been tested in the Pilot Census and the results obtained evaluated by the Technical Advisory Committee was submitted to the National Population Census Committee for consideration. The National Population Census Committee after careful examination and consideration recommended the questionnaire to government for approval and adoption. This was speedily given.

Enumeration materials had to be procured and dispatched nation-wide from National Population Census Secretariat in Freetown. Serviceable road-worthy vehicles and fuel for

their use were in short-supply but careful planning and personal appeals and representations to fuel suppliers and owners of vehicles by the National Population Census Chairman and other Senior Officers saved the day at critical moments during the exercise.

The question of manpower for enumeration was next considered. It was recognized that the enumeration would make heavy demands on manpower and it was important to take steps early to ensure that an adequate number of the right type of people would be available when needed.

Three categories of field staff were required. First were the Enumerators to do the canvassing, then the Field Officers and Supervisors who were to supervise them and finally the District Census and District Field Officers, who were to be in charge of large areas with a number of enumerators and supervisors and field officers working under them. There were also Independent Observers.

### **District Census Officers and District Field Officers**

Before the end of the second quarter of 1985, twelve District Census Officers, one representing each District, twelve Field Officers, a Census Officer and an Assistant for the Western Area had been appointed. The appointment of these officers was published in the Sierra Leone Gazette of the 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1985 (Government Notice No. 448).

The District Census Officer is empowered to delegate some of the responsibilities to the Field Officer serving under him.

Besides their academic attainments, District Census Officers and Field Officers were recruited on the basis of their knowledge of the language of the area and how familiar they were with the terrain of the areas where they were going to work.

By and large those recruited to fill these vacancies were those who knew their areas and their people very well. They were experienced and mature people with a high sense of responsibility.

District Census Officers were responsible to the Census Secretariat through the Chief Census Officer for all matters connected with the Census. They were responsible for the efficient conduct of the enumeration within their Districts. In addition to their general responsibilities they had particular responsibility for carrying out certain of the checks in the control. They were required to submit reports on the enumeration when handing over census documents of their Districts. On completion of enumeration it was the responsibility of the District Census Officers to make sure that all Field Staff engaged for the Census were duly paid, provided all Census documents were handed over through their Supervisors and Field Officers respectively.

### **Supervisors and Field Officers**

Reports from previous Censuses and experience from the Pilot Census held in May, 1985, suggested that the quality of the candidates selected for training as Field Officers and Supervisors could be enhanced by a prior interview of the candidates.

As a result, small teams of interviewers, consisting of Census Secretariat Representatives, District Census Officers, Provincial Field Officers, District Officers and persons appointed by the Secretariat, were set up to conduct interviews in all the Districts and in the Western Area.

District Census Officers were asked to invite twice their required number of Field Officers and Supervisors for interviews.

The suggested sources of Supervisors were as follows:- Head teachers of Primary Schools, Teachers in Secondary Schools and Supervisory Staff in Extension Services of the rank of Agricultural Officers or equivalent, persons within the age range of 25-50 years were to be given preference. Particular efforts were made to include females among the candidates.

Sources of Field Officers were: Principals of Secondary Schools and Teacher Training Colleges, Senior Personnel in Extension Services, serving or retired Public Officers of the rank of at least Assistant Secretary or equivalent.

Interviews took place between August 1 – 15 at District Headquarter Towns for each District and in Freetown for the Western Area.

### **Enumerators**

Recruitment of Enumerators was done by District Census Officers, who advertised the posts in their respective Districts. Applicants were asked to personally take their applications to the District Census Officers who would have an informal interview with each candidate and issue application forms to be completed by selected candidates.

The application forms among other things required information on age, sex, qualification, occupation, work experience, language spoken, and chiefdom that candidate would prefer to work.

Sources of Enumerators were: Teachers of Secondary Schools, Senior Teachers in Primary Schools, and Clerical Staff in Government Ministries not below the rank of First Grade Clerk.

Following the completion of application forms, Senior Technical Staff from Central Statistics Office were sent to each district and together with the District Census Officer scrutinized each application and made a final selection of applicants who would go into training. The required number of Enumerators plus 10% for each district was selected for training. This number varied from District to District, depending on the size and population of the District. Mainly teachers were selected since schools had already closed down for the Census. Again efforts were made to include females among the candidates.

### **Role Played by Independent Observers, Paramount Chiefs, Section Chiefs and Community Groups**

It was considered necessary to appoint independent observers from within and outside Sierra Leone. These observers were to assess both the performance of Census Field Staff and the coverage of enumeration. Observers were drawn from ECA staff in Addis Ababa, the United Nations, Senior Lecturers of Fourah Bay College, Njala University College and Teachers' Colleges, Central Statistics Office Senior Staff, members of the United Nations Technical

Team attached to the Central Statistics Office, all of whom freely submitted their reports on their assessment of the coverage of enumeration and the quality of data collected.

The role played by Paramount Chiefs, Section Chiefs, Tribal Heads, Religious Leaders and various community groups cannot be over-emphasized. Prior to Census Enumeration, the Census Commissioner/Chairman and members of his Senior Staff made several visits to all Districts in the Provinces and to various settlements in the Western Area during which occasions they educated people about Census and enlisted their maximum co-operation and support for the Census.

In most area, Paramount Chiefs, Section Chiefs, and Tribal Heads volunteered to serve as Supernumerary Enumerators and some indeed assisted by moving from house to house helping enumerators.

Periodically the Census Commissioner/Chairman would summon meetings of the National Census Committee comprising representatives from the following organizations and bodies: Sierra Leone Labour Congress, Sierra Leone Teachers' Union, Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces, Supreme Islamic Council, Freetown City Council, United Christian Council, Conference of Catholic Bishops, the All People's Congress Party and one Chief representing each Province.

Another source of co-operation received by our Census Field Staff was from Police Officers all over the country who were very prompt to come to the aid of members of our Field Staff whenever they needed their support. This was the result of discussions at the Chief Police Officers' meeting held at the Census Secretariat on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1985. This meeting was chaired by the Census Commissioner, Mr. Peter L. Tucker. The agenda for the meeting included general briefing on:-

- i. Logistics for the Census
- ii. Security needed
- iii. The Legal Provisions of the 1985 National Population Census

On return to their base, the Chief Police Officers in turn held meetings with their subordinates throughout the country and solicited their support and co-operation for the Census.

### **Training and Recruitment of Census Field Personnel**

#### **a. Training**

Training of Field Personnel was done at different stages and at different levels. There was a special training session for all Central Statistics Office Staff and all National Population Census Secretariat Staff.

Similarly, briefing sessions were held for all the Independent Observers and Lecturers from the University who were involved in the Census exercise. This was to ensure uniformity in the training of Census Field Staff.



**b. Supervisors and Field Officers**

Training in all the Districts and the Western Area was done in the District Headquarter Towns for five days, between the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> of August, 1985. Training was conducted by Personnel appointed by the National Population Census Secretariat; the Central Statistics Office; the University of Sierra Leone and others from the various Ministries. There were at least two trainers at each centre.

The main objective for training was to ensure that no mistakes were made during enumeration, that coverage was complete, and that data collected were accurate.

The secondary objective was that if mistakes were made, they would be put right on the spot.

Training therefore followed a pattern of classroom teaching, where trainees were taught the techniques of filling the questionnaire and how to canvass their enumeration areas. Trainees were given an opportunity of actually doing enumeration practice around the training centre.

At the end of training candidates were tested. There were two parts to the test for Supervisors and Field Officers: a comprehension test with twenty short questions, and a question based on filling out the questionnaire from a profile written by the Secretariat/Trainer.

Based on the results of the tests, recommendations were made to the Secretariat for the selection of Field Officers and Supervisors for the Census exercise. Out of this group also, those who performed very well were selected to serve as Trainers of the Enumerators. The final selection was made strictly on the merit of candidates' performance.

**c. Training of Enumerators**

Every effort was made to ensure that training was uniform throughout the country. Trainers consisted of some Field Officers and Supervisors, Census and Statistics Office Personnel who had previously been trained in August. All the trainees were trained at the District Headquarter Towns sometime in October. Training packages were also prepared. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, 1985, a day's briefing was again given to all trainers.

Basically, training of Enumerators followed a similar pattern as for the training of Supervisors and Field Officers. Training in all Districts and the Western Area lasted for five days, from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1985; the test was administered on the sixth day.

In order to make training more effective and easy, it was decided to use a trainer/trainee ratio of 1:25, that is, one trainer to twenty-five trainees.

Profiles used for the training of Supervisors were also used as Practice Profiles for the training of Enumerators. Trainers were asked to write other profiles for practice as found necessary. A different profile was however used for the test. After having gone through several practice profiles in the classroom, Enumerators went out to interview households living around the training centres.

The results of the tests administered to Supervisors and Field Officers showed that there was a positive correlation between marks obtained in the comprehension paper and those obtained in the profile tests; that is, candidates who scored high marks in the comprehension tests, also scored high marks in the profile test. As a result of this correlation, it was decided that a single test paper be given to Enumerators. Their test covered filling out a questionnaire from a profile prepared by the Census Secretariat. Based on the result of the test, successful candidates were employed as Enumerators.

**d. Training Materials**

The materials for training of all Census Field Personnel were provided by the Census Secretariat. These included manuals for District Census Officers, Supervisors, and Enumerators, schedule of training, profiles, questionnaires, event calendars, control lists, enumeration areas maps, stickers and writing materials.

Training facilities were arranged for by the District Census Officers. Principals and Headquarters were of great help in providing training facilities in the form of classrooms and, in a few cases, sleeping accommodation for nominal fees.

**e. Training Centres**

The selection of training centres was done by the District Census Officers. The number of centres required for the training of Enumerators was determined by the availability of facilities, such as cooking, sleeping, nearness to the District Headquarter Towns where banking facilities were available, and also easy and ready transport facilities.

The number of training centres varied from District to District. There were twenty-eight (28) training centres in the Southern Region, twenty (20) in the Eastern Region, twenty-five (25) in the Northern Region, and twenty-five (25) in the Western Area. Efforts were made to have at least two trainers at each centre.

**f. Other Activities**

The actual number of field staff required at each level was determined after the delimitation of enumeration areas had been completed and the details of field organization had been worked out.

A ten-day enumeration period was planned for as the most efficient in the circumstances. A shorter time was considered as a means of reducing the effect of population movement on the census and so improving the coverage. It was also felt that the general quality of the reporting would benefit from an arrangement which would enable the enumerators to complete their tasks quickly, while their morale was still high and boredom had not yet set in. However, this would require proportionately more manpower, and the indications were that this would pose a very serious problem. In the rural areas particularly, suitable people would be hard to find in sufficient numbers.

By mid-October, the exact details of field staff requirements had been worked out. The country was divided into enumeration areas, which were aggregated into Supervisor areas

and Field Officers areas. The field organisation was based on a ratio of about five Enumerators to one Supervisor and about twelve (12) Supervisors to one (1) Field Officer.

All Census materials were ready in the Census Secretariat for packing by the end of October, and packing started in mid-November. The work was completed and all materials distributed to the respective Field Officers by late November. Census Office Staff packed one satchel for each enumeration area with all materials, including the map for the area and an appropriate number of questionnaire books to cater for the estimated population. Questionnaire books were strictly accountable and their serial numbers were listed on a control form which also served as a receipt during checks and hand-overs en route to the field and back again to the office. Satchels were packed for Supervisors and Field Officers and a few for reserve use. All satchels were then arranged area by area for easy distribution before being placed in crates for carting to their respective destinations.

Much thought was given to the system of payment for the staff and its administration. The rates should be seen to be fair and realistic in order to attract good people and stimulate them to work well. The operation of the system should be efficient but simple so as to avoid delays which could seriously disrupt the extremely tight schedule of activities that was planned for the enumeration. It was decided that each category of staff was to receive a bulk sum payment as honorarium after satisfactory completion of the assignment. In addition, a training bonus and a small amount for travelling expenses would be paid before the enumeration. Field Officers were to make payments and should be issued with imprests for the purpose.

In the last few days before the enumeration, transport was acquired and provision made for fuel supplies to enable Field Officers and Census officials to travel quickly and regularly in their respective areas. Every Field Officer was provided with a vehicle for the duration of the enumeration. Where necessary, suitable arrangements were also made for the hire of launches and canoes.

In order to keep the Census Secretariat in constant touch with the progress of the enumeration, arrangements were made to enable Census Field Staff to communicate directly with the National Population Census Secretariat in Freetown. In this way the Census Secretariat would become aware of any difficulty arising during the enumeration and would then be able to take prompt remedial action. For this purpose the entire communications network in the country was put at the disposal of the Census Secretariat and every Field Officer had access to the wireless facilities located nearest to his base.

By the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 1985, reports from all over the country indicated that everything was ready for the enumeration and that Enumerators and Supervisors were already on the move to take up their positions in their respective enumeration areas. By midnight on December 1<sup>st</sup>, Enumerators had reached the starting point in their assigned enumeration areas.

#### **i. The Enumeration**

The Census Enumeration was scheduled to take place from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December to the 11<sup>th</sup> December, 1985, inclusive. The 1<sup>st</sup> of December was the Census reference date. The ten day period was exceeded, because of the unforeseen circumstances inevitable in an exercise of such magnitude. The count-down to the Census commenced on Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1985, when all schools went on vacation in order to have the services of the tutorial staff of

these schools as Field Officers, Supervisors and Enumerators. In this connection, all those who had been invited for training had ample time to travel to their respective centres as from the 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

The deployment of field personnel for enumeration was as follows: two Enumerators were assigned to each enumeration area and one Supervisor was in charge of either four or five Enumerators. A Field Officer was assigned to supervise enumeration in two chiefdoms, while in the Western Area each ward had one Field Officer with a few exceptions that were combined under the supervision of one Field Officer. Freetown West III had two Field Officers. Vehicles were provided for the Field Officers and launches where necessary. Although this enhanced their performances in the field, yet they encountered some problems with regard to fuel supply and the unwillingness of some of the drivers of the hired vehicles to work after certain hours in the evening. Each Field Officer had an initial supply of forty gallons of fuel and arrangements were made for replenishment as necessary. With the then prevailing circumstances it was not quite possible to receive immediate supply when they were short of fuel. Some of the vehicles were not suitable to ply some of the roads that were badly damaged; however, with understanding and goodwill they managed to perform their allotted task with assiduity.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 1985, Census Night, at 12 mid-night sirens were sounded by ships at anchor, church bells were rung, vehicles hooted, mosques sounded tabules (drums) and even from the Chiefs' compounds the traditional drumming announcing important occasions filled the air to usher in Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1985, as the commencement day for Census enumeration. Prior to this, there were other activities during the day. In Freetown, there was a 'Float' parade through the streets with 'Miss Census' seated majestically on the float accompanied by an array of musicians, dancers, masquaraders and a host of other entertainers. At the fore noon, Divine Services that day, special prayers were offered and worshippers were reminded about the Census and its importance to our national development. On the preceding Friday there were similar prayers in mosques.

The Census enumeration duly commenced on the morning of Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1985. In most areas throughout the country, counting started at dawn, while in a few others it started between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning. Persons in hospitals, hotels, prisons, lock-ups, secret societies and other institutions were enumerated by Enumerators or Supervisors by kind permission of the respective authorities concerned.

The Census Secretariat was inundated by several calls late on the first day of enumeration by people very eager to be enumerated. They were given full assurance that during the course of the week, the Enumerators would call on them. In the rural areas, some chiefs did not allow their subjects to go out until they had been enumerated – especially in the mining areas.

The 'Floating Population', that is people who have no fixed abode but find shelter wherever they could for the night, were also enumerated in special operation mounted at mid-night of December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1985, throughout the country. This was carried out with the assistance of police personnel and some stalwarts from the 'invisible community'. In the Western Area, particularly in Freetown where a large number of this category of people are, as compared with other areas in the country, the usual hunts were identified and listed and strategy worked out. The Enumerators, both male and female, were all personnel of the Central Statistics Office. On the whole, the response from these people was very good and the leaders in each of the hide-outs visited were most co-operative.

Throughout the enumeration exercise, the Census Secretariat in Freetown was in constant touch with the field through the Field Officers and Census Personnel. The general public manifested interest which no doubt was indicative of the excellent publicity embarked on and the wide coverage the enumeration continued to receive through the mass media, throughout the enumeration period. However, although there were no major or insurmountable problems, there were a few instances of local difficulties, which were amicably resolved.

There was abundant evidence of a nation-wide awareness of the Census exercise and so it was whole-heartedly accepted as patriotic to 'Stand Up And Be Counted', in order to reap the full benefits derivable from a Census. Since the Census was scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> December, some two to three days to the scheduled date, a few concerned citizens who had not been enumerated became worried and a volley of reports were received at the Secretariat either by telephone or personal calls. All complainants received full assurance that they would be enumerated. In order to allay all fears, there was a radio announcement that all those who had not been enumerated would be enumerated before the close of the enumeration exercise.

The enumeration, as already mentioned was scheduled for ten days and in most areas this deadline was attained quite easily while in a few others, mostly urban areas due to some unforeseen circumstances enumeration was not completed until the 18<sup>th</sup> of December.

Enumerators were provided with blue and yellow stickers. The blue stickers were affixed to mark buildings which had been visited and whose occupants had all been enumerated while the yellow stickers were used to mark any building which had either not been enumerated or enumeration of all the households in the dwelling had not been completed. The use of these stickers helped to check on coverage. During the campaign and through the mass media, the populace was made aware of the implications of the blue and yellow stickers that would be affixed to their buildings by Enumerators. They knew the stickers should not be removed by them for any cause whatever and each Enumerator before leaving a building would remind the occupants not to remove the stickers. This was strictly adhered to by Enumerators. The first checking of enumeration was done by the Supervisors, then the Field Officers did some checking on random sample basis. This was closely followed by the Independent Observers who were deployed to observe the process of enumeration, the demeanour of enumeration personnel, the reactions of respondents and to check on the correct use of the stickers.

Thus from the judgement of the Census Secretariat and the reports of the Independent Observers deployed throughout the country, it is estimated that total enumeration covered was more than ninety-five per cent achieved.

In some areas, both in the Western Area, Freetown in particular and the provinces a few Enumerators encountered difficulties with a minority group of Non-Sierra Leoneans who did not want to be enumerated. Some entertained the opinion that the Census exercise was a prelude to deportation drive aimed at foreigners. Others regarded it as a waste of time, because the results would neither be published nor would the government embark on any development programme in order to meet the dire needs of the people. In the case of foreigners the whole exercise had to be thoroughly explained to them in order to convince them, while tribal heads were contacted to persuade their groups to receive Enumerators and make themselves available for enumeration. Some measures of success was achieved.

In the mining areas or international market centres where much problem was anticipated, the enumeration in most of these areas went on extremely well. The Chiefs, Tribal Authorities and the Census Personnel should be commended for work well done, because most of the Enumerators did not encounter much difficulty in penetrating even the exclusive domain of illicit miners. Once again, the easy access could be attributed to the marvellous work of the publicity team and the mass media. However, the possibility of some people who through sheer ignorance thought it prudent to hide themselves and to avoid coming into contact with Enumerators could not be ruled out. The percentage of such category of people was no doubt infinitesimal.

There was a consensus of opinion that this Census was unique in that indigenous persons were appointed to serve as Census Personnel within their own areas or localities they knew best. Most of them were quite familiar with the terrain of their assigned enumeration areas.

## **5. PRESENTATION AND ACCEPTANCE**

The 1985 National Population Census Provisional Figures were readily and speedily accepted by government. The Provisional Figures were presented to His Excellency the President, Dr. Joseph S. Momoh on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> January, 1986 at State House by the Census Commissioner/Chairman in the presence of the Honourable Vice Presidents, Honourable Ministers, Representatives of International Organisations, the World Press, Senior Officials of the National Population Census Secretariat and the Central Statistics Office and a galaxy of Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen. The Census Commissioner/Chairman in his presentation said:-

“I was appointed Commissioner/Chairman of the National Population Census Secretariat in December, 1984. There was no Secretariat at the time and one of my first actions was to set about establishing the administrative structure of the Census as well as repairing and re-decorating the building that was allocated to me. This exercise was completed in February, 1985 when we moved into our present building. One of the most difficult technical problems that had to be overcome related to the cartography necessary for an efficient Census. There were no up-to-date maps of Sierra Leone and the enumeration maps of 1974 had never been up-dated. The first task therefore of the Secretariat and the Central Statistics Office was to send Mappers into the field to obtain up-to-date information with which to either re-define or amend the enumeration areas. This meant that the Mappers had to travel all over the country, count dwelling units in every town and village and bring these figures back to the Central Statistics Office where they were to be translated into maps and enumeration areas. This proved extremely difficult. We were assisted in the exercise by the Statistics Department of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) who sent out experts on short-term missions to review and advise on the work done up to the time of their visit. In this way, errors or areas of possible delay were brought to my attention in time for action to be taken. We received assistance also from the University of Sierra Leone and from the Ministry of Lands. As a result of this co-operative effort, the cartographic problems were largely overcome. Even so, it posed some difficulty for our Enumerators when the Census was in progress. These difficulties were overcome because of the fact that the Enumerators and Supervisors were recruited to work in the areas where they lived and which they knew very well. They were able, together with their Supervisors and Field Officers, to correct on-the-spot any errors in the enumeration area maps.

Earlier in the year we had established in each District and the Western Area, offices manned by a District Census Officer and a Field Officer in each case. These also were selected to serve in the districts in which they lived and work. In many cases I consulted Ministers from the Districts and took their comments into consideration in appointing the District Census Officers. The criteria applied in each case was that the person should be well educated, in the case of teachers they should be head of schools or senior teachers of primary schools. They should belong to the area in which they wanted to serve, either by birth or long association and should be able to speak, at least, one of the local languages of the District or Chiefdom in which they were to be posted. These personnel were then given a week's training and tested. Those who passed the test were finally selected. In all, we deployed 6,000 Enumerators, 1,000 Supervisors and 100 Field Officers. In most cases five (5) Enumerators were supervised by one (1) Supervisor and ten (10) Supervisors were under the general supervision of a Field Officer, so that a Field Officer, team generally consisted of ten (10) Supervisors and fifty (50) Enumerators and they covered fifty (50) enumeration areas estimated to contain about 50,000 people. Each Field Officer was supplied with a vehicle in order to facilitate his movement and that of his Supervisors.

Although we hired approximately eighty (80) vehicles from private owners and obtained five (5) vehicles on loan from the Sierra Leone Police Force and five (5) on loan from UNFPA (United Nations Fund For Population Activities). In addition to these we had sixteen (16) of our vehicles, ten (10) of which had been supplied to us by the United Nations Agencies. We also hired eight (8) outboard motor launches and six (6) canoes for the riverain area of the Port Loko District, five (5) launches for the Bonthe area, four (4) for the Moyamba area and two (2) for the Pujehun area. These launches and canoes enabled our Enumerators and Supervisors to visit every riverain town and village as well as to carry out enumeration on all the surrounding islands. In this, our biggest problem was petrol. We had taken the precaution of storing tanks at Makeni, Kenema, Bo and Freetown. We lost a lot of these however, through alleged leakages and theft. The result was that we had to spend a lot of money buying petrol in the field to keep our teams mobile.

Mr. President, I want to assure you that these difficulties did not adversely affect enumeration. We had conducted an intensive country-wide campaign of public education to sensitise our people to the importance of a National Population Census and to win their co-operation. You yourself, Mr. President, during your Presidential Campaign and your predecessor both appealed to the people to co-operate with the National Population Census Secretariat during enumeration. I am pleased to say that we had massive co-operation from the people. Tribal Headmen in the Western Area, Paramount Chiefs in the Provinces provided every form of assistance that was required of them. In the Provinces, the Paramount Chiefs mobilized their Section Chiefs and Town Chiefs so that they accompanied our Enumerators from village to village, and from town to town and not only made their work comparatively easy but also provided in some cases, hospitality and entertainment. The Enumerators themselves had been thoroughly trained and were wholly committed to the exercise. In cases where petrol or transport difficulties threatened to cause any delay, Enumerators and Supervisors walked many miles in order to cover their enumeration areas. I visited a number of Districts during this period and on a number of occasions I came across Enumerators who had just completed a journey of ten (10) miles on foot or had just started a journey of eighteen (18) miles to get to their training centres or reporting centres. Many of them worked far into the night and started again early next morning. In the Western Area, our Enumerators who went to enumerate the Floating Population in places like Saw Pit, Government Wharf and so on, set out at 11.00 in the night and came back at about 5 o'clock

in the morning. This continued until enumeration of that group of our population was completed.

Moreover, I appointed Independent Observers from the University of Sierra Leone, the Milton Margai Teachers College and some Government Departments whose function was to travel around the various enumeration areas in the Western Area and in the Provinces and observe and report to me the progress of enumeration in the country. The United Nations Expert personnel working with the Central Statistics Office also travelled extensively on the same mission. Other members of the Central Statistics Office were also posted out to the various Districts to give on-the-spot assistance to Enumerators and Field Officers. I myself paid flying visits to parts of Port Loko, Moyamba and Bonthe Districts to observe enumeration in progress. I went to some of the remotest riverain areas of Bonthe and found out that enumeration had either taken place or was in progress.

And now, Mr. President, I can say with confidence that enumeration in the country as a whole was 95% complete and in some places 100%. The enumerated population is 3,517,530. This figure is adjusted by 5% to make up for under enumeration. This makes the population of Sierra Leone approximately 3.7 million. The adjustment of the enumerated figures in 1963 and 1974 was 9% but enumeration has been so comprehensive and extensive this time that our best calculations and observation reveal not more than 5% under enumeration. Therefore, Your Excellency, the figure of 3.7 million is as accurate as can be in an exercise of this nature. I shall present to Your Excellency three (3) tables this morning and the first will show the population by Districts including the Western Area and the Sherbro Urban District. The second table will give the same information but including in it the ranking order by population sizes of each area. On top of the League Table are the Freetown Municipality followed by Kono District, Kenema and Port Loko Districts. Freetown: 469,776; Kono: 389,657; Kenema: 337,055; Port Loko: 329,914. The largest increase in any area was shown in the Western Rural Area where the population increased between 1974 and 1985 by 111%. Freetown also experienced a rapid growth in population, recording an increase of 70% since the last Census. But the largest increases of all were recorded in Freetown West II with 169% increase, and Freetown East III with 126% increase. In the rest of the country the growth of the population was fairly even except in the Pujehun District where the growth rate was the lowest at 1.1% per annum. The third Table I shall present to you shows the distribution of the population by Provinces and Districts for the Census years 1985, 1974 and 1963. This will show that the proportion of the population living in each of the three Provinces declined over the years whilst the proportion living in the Western Area increased. The average annual growth rate for the entire country is 2.3% per annum. This is within the growth rate forecast for West African region by various International Organisations but it is lower than the growth rate of Nigeria and Ghana and some other countries in that group. There are various factors which have to be taken into account in considering the increase in our population. The first and most important is the infant mortality rate. Sierra Leone is on record as having one of the highest mortality rate in the whole of West Africa, both English-speaking and French-speaking. I am sure many people in this country will testify from their own experience that our infant mortality rate is disturbingly high. This of course affects our total population growth. In the second place, we have seen in the last two or three years an exodus of Guinean nationals from this country back into Guinea. Most people would have noticed the disappearance of a large number of Guinean taxi drivers, tailors and middle technician even from the city of Freetown. In addition to this, alluvial diamond mining which attracted a large number of foreigners particularly into the Kono and Kenema Districts is now on the decline. These foreigners have



therefore left Sierra Leone to seek their fortune elsewhere. This also could affect our population. There is also the fact that in the last few years Sierra Leone has experienced fairly acute economic depression. Marampa Mines have closed, the diamond companies have either reduced their staff or closed down some of their operations, certain supermarkets in the provinces have closed and unemployment is rather high. In such circumstances, it is natural for the work-force to drift from those places, first into the capital and then into other countries in search of jobs. It is my view that this has happened in this country over the last few years. The rapid increase of the Freetown population is due largely to this.

A point that might be of comfort to some people in all this is that in Sierra Leone as a whole there are more females than males; but in the Western Area, Kono and Kenema Districts, there are more males than females. This is because the population that are drifting from other parts of the country are moving into the Western Area for employment or the mining areas for speculation.

Finally, Mr. President, I want to thank you and the government for the support given to us throughout this exercise. I also want to thank His Excellency the Ambassador for the Federal Republic of Germany because through his good offices the German government supplied us, free of cost, all our questionnaires, satchels and pens which were used in the exercise. Her Excellency the Guinean Ambassador was also very helpful to us and it is due to her effort that we had the full co-operation of the Guinean Community in this country and avoided any unpleasant incidents in the border towns in Kambia and Koinadugu Districts.

Your Excellency the President, I have the honour and pleasure to present to you the Provisional Figures of the 1985 National Population Census”.

The President, His Excellency Dr. Joseph S. Momoh, in accepting the Provisional Figures from the Census Commissioner/Chairman, made the following statement:-

“On behalf of the government and people of Sierra Leone, it is my pleasure to receive from you this morning, Mr. Chairman, the provisional figures of the National Population Census just held. From the background information you have so ably presented indicating the copious preparatory work carried out prior to the enumeration exercise conducted country-wide, I have no doubt that a thorough job has been done, and I wish on behalf of my government and people to thank you and your able team most sincerely for the enormous effort put into this task, and express the hope that this Preliminary Report would form the basis of reliable data for more realistic planning in all sectors of our economy in the future.

National Population Census is undoubtedly not an easy task. It also involved the collection of material resources within a short period of time. From your account of this great undertaking, Mr. Commissioner and Chairman, and from the experience we have gained, it would now appear that there is need for some permanent arrangement to be made for the collection and up-dating of population statistics as well as the co-ordination of other activities related to population data, so that we can no longer leave matters relating to population data to be taken up only at ten yearly intervals. My government will give serious consideration to this while the National Population Census Secretariat continues its work on the 1985 Census.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all international organizations, in particular, the UNDP and UNFPA as well as the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for their invaluable assistance without which this Census exercise would not have been realized. The

moral support given by Her Excellency the Guinean Ambassador in Sierra Leone to the Census arrangements is also acknowledged with appreciation.

Finally, I wish to thank you personally, Mr. Chairman, for your resourcefulness and dedication and for the great sense of direction which you gave to the Census exercise that has led to the presentation of this Preliminary Report. My government looks forward to the completion and submission of the report with its full details in the near future. I thank you”.