



*Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry
and Food Security*

INSIDE DE FARM Newsletter

Volume 1 (2016)



NEWLY APPOINTED MINISTERS TAKE OATH OF OFFICE

**Fiama ABC,
a centre of excellence**



**Women at the Fiama ABC at
work on a busy day at the
centre**

**Jeneba Kallon says:
“I am going to miss my babes”**



**Jeneba Kallon is the caretaker
of the RCPRP Oil Palm
Nursery in Koinadugu**

**Climate Change:
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**consumption of fossil fuels in
the last few decades has con-
tributed much to the degrada-
tion of our environment**

Fiama ABC, a centre of excellence

Considered as the Flagship of the Smallholders Commercialization Programme and created with the aim of improving productivity, value addition, product marketing and competitiveness, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, through its donor partners has succeeded in establishing 193 Agricultural Business Centres countrywide.

Almost five years after their establishment, much is yet to write home about the ABCs, especially in the area of functionality. In view of this, attempt has been made for the selection of 50 best ranked ABCs, whose business plans are to be updated, keeping in view their comparative advantages and reassessment of their equipment needs in the light of their revised business plans.

In line with this, Inside De Farm publication paid courtesy calls on some of these ABCs and now reports.



**Fiama ABC,
Is made up of 5 groups**

Fiama ABC, as its name implies is located in the Fiama chiefdom, Kono district. Established in 2010, this ABC is one of the few that have stood the test of time. The Centre is made up of four Farmer based associations. These, the chairman of the centre, Aiah Braima stated, are Kongomani farmers association, Timdiaya women farmers association, Fiama Development association and Mushaia farmers association with a total membership of 120 (each group having 30 members).

Fiama ABC, The magic behind its Success

Giving a background of the centre, Chairman Braima disclosed that they came together as group upon realization that they could help themselves overcome hunger and poverty through farming. "Upon the call from the government and its partners for people to move from subsistence farming to farming for business, we adhered to it and joined the ABC scheme, after which the centre was constructed, equipped and handed over to us," he explained. Braima went on to narrate some of the gains the centre has made since its establishment. These, he highlighted included making available planting seeds, provision of micro finance facility with minimal interest to members, to name a few.

But what is the magic behind these successes? The chairman said 'commitment'. "It is not a magic to succeed. It all depends on your commitment. The founding members of this ABC and their executives were all committed. They were focused and had a dream. It is this dream and commitment that we have continued to uphold," Braima reiterated.

From State House



Newly appointed Ministers take Oath of office - Prof. Monty Jones speaks out Culled from the State House Communication Unit

The newly appointed Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, Professor Monty Jones, Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Dr. Patrick Conteh, and Ministers of State 1 and 2, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Dr. Mohamed Gibril Sesay and Madam Isata Kabbia (respectively) have taken the oath of office today (Tuesday 19 January, 2016) in the presence of the President, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, dignitaries of Government, family, and well-wishers.

The President congratulated the new appointees on their approval by Parliament noting that the swearing in ceremony was the last stage of the process. "Work start effective today and I have no doubt that you will hit the ground running", he said.

President Koroma went further to encourage the new Ministers to work assiduously in their respective ministries because it is evident that public expectations are high judged by the interest shown both at the swearing in and at Parliament. He reiterated that the people of Sierra Leone are looking forward to the reforms and achievements the new appointees would contribute to the development of Sierra Leone especially during this post-Ebola period.

Addressing the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, the President applauded the progress made so far in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security but noted there is still a lot to be done in the sector especially in the area of food security.

He emphasized that the agriculture sector hold a huge potential for the transformation of the country and "with you coming in, will give new impetus to the ministry".

President Koroma also reminded Professor Monty Jones of the commitment he made to the Parliamentary Committee on Appointment regarding food security and called on him to address the poverty situation of our farmers. The President noted that he has high expectations of the Minister of Agriculture describing him as "a man of high professional standing not only in Sierra Leone but also in Africa".

Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma acknowledged the difficulties in the economy given that the country is just coming out of the Ebola outbreak. "Revenue has dwindled and there are lots of benchmarks to meet in order to move the country from the recovery phase to the Agenda for Prosperity". The President however expressed confidence that with Dr. Patrick Conteh's experience and expertise, there would be a lot of progress in enhancing the country's economic development.

Regarding the foreign ministry, President Koroma reaffirmed his commitment to transform Sierra Leone's foreign relations through the training of career diplomats to enhance their capabilities in projecting the image of the country abroad. "We have agreed to transform career diplomats through training" adding that there would be a shift from the "diplomacy of wining and dining to economic diplomacy that would maximize the benefits of our foreign relations". The President acknowledged the challenges to this transformation but "that is why we have two deputies" he stressed.

Speaking on behalf of his fellow Ministers, Professor Monty Jones thanked His Excellency the President for the confidence reposed in them to serve as Ministers. He expressed their determination to serve President Koroma, his Government and the people of Sierra Leone with loyalty and dedication.

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Newly appointed Ministers take Oath of office ~Prof. Monty Jones speaks

Monty Jones also assured President Koroma that he and his colleagues are ready to serve to the best of their abilities and we will work closely with other arms of government, development and donor communities in order to ensure quick gains in the shortest possible time. He also promised to work closely with all shades of farmers, academia, and technical experts in pursuit of 'quick wins' in his ministry. Prof. Monty Jones acknowledged the enormity of the task ahead but expressed optimism that with God being their helper they would be able to deliver on their new jobs. "We are aware of the expectations and we will hit the ground running and run very very fast". Monty Jones concluded with a little prayer: "May God give us the strength, steadfastness, dedication, finesse to meet your vision and aspiration which is to achieve enhance development".



Prof. Monty Jones is a Sierra Leonean Crop/Rice breeder/Scientist.

Voice from the Farm



Money brings Unity among farmers

"Money, the root to all evil", my old grandmother could say. "But money rules the world", my Rasta friend always says. However, for the farmers at Bambukoro village in the Koinadugu district, 'money' means unity, love and obedience from our women.

"Before, we were disunited but this money has helped us unite. When we got the money, we shared it among ourselves. Some of us bought sheep and goats and gave the balance to our wives to do petty trading. The women are now happy and show great respect to us the husbands. Because of this, we are living a very peaceful and happy life", Khalil Jalloh explained. Khalil is member of the Munafa Farmers based organization at Bambukoro village in the Koinadugu district. This group is part of the Inland Valley Swamp Farmers based organizations getting support from Rehabilitation and Community based Poverty Reduction Project –RCPRP in that district.

The money here, being referred to by Khalil Jalloh is an agricultural loan from the Kabala Community Bank. It could be noted that, with its goal to eradicate rural poverty, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in the second phase of its Rural Finance project, has put access to agricultural loan to farmers at its heart. The three sets of loans which a farmer could get are:

The three sets of loans

- ◆ Agricultural Production Loan
- ◆ Agricultural Rehabilitation Loan and the
- ◆ Agricultural Equipment Loan



“I am going to miss my babes”

~ Jeneba Kallon cries

It is always a tear-shedding moment for a mother seeing her siblings taken away from her to a new/strange environment. This was the feeling expressed by Twenty years old Jeneba Kallon in Kabala.

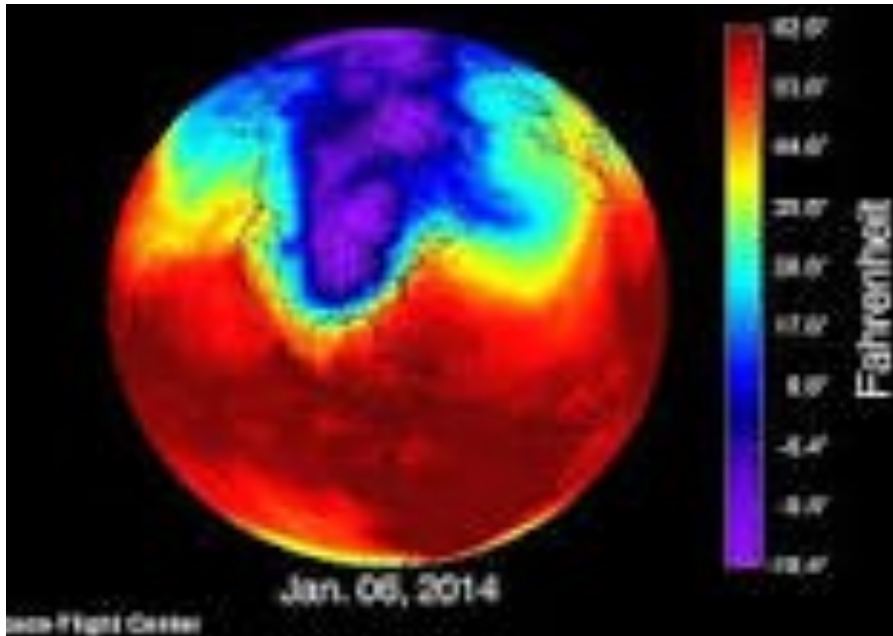
Jeneba Kallon is the caretaker of one of the oil palm nurseries in Koinadugu under the Rehabilitation and Community based Poverty Reduction Project (RCPRP) and at the time of this interview, was waiting her WASSCE result. Her works at the nursery include watering and weeding the grass on the oil palm seedlings. She has worked at the nursery for over six months, taking care of the babe plants (seedlings) and saving her earnings for college.

Jeneba hopes to go to college when her result comes out; as she is so hopeful to pass. “I am grateful to those who gave me this job. Now I could boast that, with the little that I have saved, I can pay my college fees, which has always been my greatest challenge,” she said.

It is not only the love of money (though we cannot rule it out) that held Jeneba to this job. She showed passion over her work. She has grown personal relationship with the seedlings that she now refers to them as her ‘babes’. “I am going to miss my babes,” she cries. She was referring to the next stage of the plants’ life – the transplanting of the trees at their permanent locations/plantations. Indeed, the plants are due for transplanting and all is now set to have them transported to their final destination. But for Jeneba, whom these plants have lived with all of their lives, it seems very hard to accept the reality. “I will surely miss them. I will miss those moments when I have woken very early to ensure that my plants have been watered. I miss the tender touches that I have to take with the utmost care, when removing grass on them,” she says.

Like Jeneba, so are staff of the Project (Rehabilitation and Community based Poverty Reduction Project –RCPRP) who are now awakened to the reality that the once booming project, which has created so much impact in the lives of the rural poor in its four operational districts is coming to an end. While looking forward of having it extended, the truth remains that all good must come to an end and that nothing last forever.

Climate Change Education



35 facts about Global Warming

The consumption of fossil fuels in last few decades has contributed much to the degradation of our environment. Global warming, climate change, extinction of wildlife species, depletion of ozone layer, and increase in air pollution are few of the problems from which our environment is suffering. It may be quite a task for anyone to find some solid global warming facts to alarm for some action. Here are plenty of them, right on your platter.

What is Global Warning

Global warming is the increase of earth's average surface temperature due to the effect of greenhouse gases. These greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane absorb heat that would otherwise escape from earth. Global warming has emerged as one of the most biggest environmental issue in the two decades.

According to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports, the earth's temperature has increased by 0.8 degrees Celsius over the past century. More than half of this increase has happened in the last 25 years. It seems that the temperature is rising at a rate faster than ever before. Human activities like burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, industrialization and pollution are considered as few of the factors responsible for global warming.

Fact 1: Global warming is the result of increase in the earth's average surface temperature due to greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane. These gases are required for the presence of human life on earth. However, global warming is happening due to over-emittance of these gases.

Fact 2: Emissions like carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and other greenhouses gases will remain in the atmosphere for many years making impossible to eliminate global warming for several decades.

Fact 3: According to IPCC 2007 report, sea levels will rise by 7-23 inches by the end of this century due to global warming.

Fact 4: Since 1880, the average temperature has risen by 1.4 -Fahrenheit degrees

Fact 5: The last two decades of the 20th century have been hottest in the last 400 years, according to climate studies.

Fact 6: The Arctic is one of the worst places to be effected by global warming.

Fact 7: According to the multinational Arctic Climate Impact Assessment report compiled between 2000 and 2004, the average temperature in Alaska, Western Canada and Russia have risen at twice the global average.

Fact 8: The Arctic ice is melting rapidly. By 2040 the region is expected to have a completely ice free summer, or even earlier.

Fact 9: The Montana Glacier National Park has only 25 glaciers instead of 150 that were there in the year 1910.

Fact 10: Due to global warming and pollution, coral reefs are suffering the worst bleaching with the highest dying record since 1980.

Fact 11: Global warming that is causing extreme weather changes has shown it implications in the way of forest fires, heat waves and severe tropical storms throughout the world.

Fact 12: There has been a tremendous increase of water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane nitrous oxide and especially greenhouse gases due to polluting substances emitted as a result of industrialization, pollution, deforestation.

Fact 13: : Humans are emitting more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, faster than the absorbing rates of plants and the oceans.

Fact 14: Sea levels have risen about 7 inches in the last 100 years, which is more than the previous 2000 years combined. The rising sea levels due to global warming could threaten the lives of people living along the coastal areas.

Fact 15: Around 100 million people live with 3 feet of sea level and many cities of the world are located near such vulnerable coastal areas.

Fact 16: Melting of glaciers will cause sea levels to rise on one hand and water shortages in areas that depend on natural sources of water.

Fact 17: More than 1 million species have become extinct due to disappearing habitats, ecosystems acidic oceans all caused due to global warming.

Fact 18: The global warming will completely alter the ocean's conveyer belt which will cause a mini ice age in the Europe

Fact 19: Increasing temperatures will release more greenhouse gases, unlock methane, and cause more evaporation of water.

Fact 20: 2000-2009 has been the hottest decade periods of the earth.

Fact 21: The rate at which carbon dioxide is being dumped in to the environment is 1000 tons per second until the 2011 records.

Fact 22: The carbon dioxide levels in the 20th century have been highest in 650,000 years. Till 1950, the levels rose by 11% and recently the levels have risen by 40%.

35 facts on Global Warming



Fact 23: Due to industrial revolution, the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas started on a massive scale. This not only increased greenhouse gases but was also responsible for large scale deaths due to asthma and other respiratory diseases.

Fact 24: Human activities release around 37 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide per year.

Fact 25: Since the industrial revolution in 1700, the level of carbon dioxide on earth has increased by 34%.

Fact 26: By year 2100, the average temperature will rise by 5.8 degrees as a result of global warming.

Fact 27: Each year of the 21st century ranks amongst 14 hottest years since 1880.

Fact 28: In the last 30 years, the average consumption of fossil fuel by United States has been 80%. Fossil fuels are the most dangerous contributors to global warming.

Fact 29: Between 2000-2100, the heat related deaths will rise by 150,000

Fact 30: Global warming is causing the colder areas of the world to become more hot, thereby becoming more vulnerable to diseases.

Fact 31: A failure in preventing global warming can cause a major economic collapse causing 20% of global domestic output to fix.

Fact 32: Droughts, hurricanes, wildfires, extinction on endangered species, melting of polar ice caps, storms are few of the effects of global warming.

Fact 33: The NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) proposed the Clean Air Act to cut power plant emissions by 26 percent in the next 7 years.

Fact 34: The heat trapping gases have been increasing in the atmosphere at an alarming rate. The presence of large number of these gases has resulted in enhanced greenhouse effect. Heat waves caused by global warming is responsible for many heat related illness and deaths.

Fact 35: Global warming can lead to massive food and water shortages and has a life threatening impact on the wildlife.

Where is the World heading to ?

If these figures do not startle, then it will be extremely difficult to prevent the world from collapsing from global warming. Many schools, organizations, government bodies etc are making efforts to encourage people to take steps that would prevent them from taking any action that would lead to global warming. The most important consideration however is to feel for the problem and to be fully awakened to the situation.

Unless the critical issue of global warming does not hit every person on earth, it will be very difficult to prevent the world from burning due to global warming in the near future.

Disability does not mean inability



With a staff on his left and cutlass in his right hand, Chief Samuel Queirwa pushed his way in the milling room. “Welcome Massa,” the chairman greeted. “He is our chief and key member of the ABC,” the chairman introduced him to the team.

In his late fifties to early sixties, though blind, Chief Samuel Queirwa is a respectful farmer and section chief of one of the sections in the Fiamra chiefdom and a member of one of the farmer based organizations attached to the Fiamra Agricultural Business Centre (ABC).

It took a while for me to make a decision on whether to have the chief interviewed on his ability to do farming as physically challenged person. As if he had read my mind or that he was waiting for such opportunity, he just answered ‘yes’ when I requested his consent to interview him. I now take you through what came out of the interview.

“I am proud to let you know that, though blind I can still do my farm work. These include, brushing, clearing and you name it, because I don’t want to beg in the street,” he explained. “I hate begging,” he emphasized. “Begging belittles one’s dignity. There is dignity in labour, that is why I do farming,” the chief said.

Despite his condition, Chief Queirwa is entrusted with big responsibilities in the ABC. He is chairman of one FBO, adviser to the ABC management to name few. “I am very happy with my people. They respect me and I work in the interest of them. They have empowered me to show to the world that being physically challenged does not mean, inability,” he said.

For those of his counterparts practising street begging, chief queirwa lamented that, laziness is the key reason behind their acts. “It sad that many of our colleagues are lazy, not ready to work, instead clinging to street begging as a trade. You need to work, as long as you have the strength and health,” the chief said.

Chief Queirwa’s story is a challenge not only to his colleagues physically challenged, but all those who go with the view that it is the government or those ‘up there’ that should create the magic to feed them. So, the blind could work to feed himself and his people, why not the able? For he who does not work must not eat; “No food for the lazy”.

The Farm History



Agriculture in Sierra Leone

Culled from Vellag

For over half of the nation's GDP, agriculture in Sierra Leone is a major industry that is growing by a steady rate while two out of three people in the nation rely on their own subsistence agriculture for food. This West African nation has a small area, just outside the ten smallest nations on the continent, with a population of only five and a half million persons. While the nation is more prominently known for its mining operations, notably diamonds, its agriculture is the backbone of its economic productivity.

Human activity in Sierra Leone stretches back thousands of years. Its surrounding rain forests kept populations from expanding but provided a large quantity of food for its populace. The favorable weather allows for crops to be grown year round while the abundance of rain permits water-intensive foods like rice; the amount of large animals living in the region gave hunters easy access to meat. Advanced farming cultivation began about two thousand years ago with basic stone tools while iron tools reached the coasts around 900 AD. By the introduction of Islamic and European influence around 1500, some farmers began growing cash crops like tobacco, rubber, and cotton, though most strictly grew food.

Civil war during the 1990s disrupted production of food as rebels supported by neighboring Liberia attempted to overthrow the elected President Kabbah. Around fifty thousand people were estimated to be killed. UN intervention ceased the fighting and by 2007, the country held peaceful elections, with Ernest Bai Komora, leader of opposition party All People's Congress. Two other main parties, the Sierra Leone People's Party and the People's Movement for Democratic Change, filled the nation's parliament. No other parties have gained significant support.

No crop is more vital to Sierra Leone's agriculture than rice, with eighty-five percent of farmers growing rice during the nation's rainy season. The nation consumes nearly 80 kilograms of rice per person each year. The second most productive crop is cassava, a root crop with high-calorie density. Palm trees are grown in the region for palm oil and sap; the sap is fermented into a palm wine. The largest number of livestock raised are chickens with around five million raised, more than all other animals combined. Cattle, sheep, goats, and ducks are also raised in significant quantities. The civil war had a significant impact in the number of livestock grown, through numbers have rebounded in the decade since.

While there is very little temperature difference between the months due to the nation's close location to the equator, the country has significant changes in rainfall from summer to winter. The wet season of May to December allows for most of the water-intensive crops to be grown; drought-resilient crops are grown in the dry season of January to April.

Money flows into Sierra Leone from companies and non-profit interests, including fifty million dollars from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program. Corporate agricultural interests in the nation include the Socfin Agricultural Company, which recently purchased six and a half thousand hectares of land for rubber and palm oil crops.



Our Photo Gallery

Ward Counsellor and Ward Committee members of 'Ward 74' Kono District pose with Head of DPCU , Kono.



Kailahun DPCU Project Engineer on supervision at one of the Project constructed bridges in Kailahun District



Women at the Fiamo ABC at work on a busy day at the centre



INSIDE DE FARM

Ministry of Agriculture Forestry, and Food Security



Editorial Team

Director of Publication
Mohamed Tejan-Kella

Editor in Chief
George N. Williams

Graphic Design
Edward Jaward

Contributors

Jeremiah Nyamba
State House Communication Unit

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