



Agenda for the FoSL Annual Meeting at the

Sierra Leone Embassy:

Friday, September 23rd at Sierra Leone Embassy

12-4 P. M. Meet and Greet at the Sierra Leone Embassy

- Light refreshments were provided
- Terry Leary's documentary "**Journey from War to Peace**" (We will be able to send a link out for this later)
- We had a few guests come to our meet and greet and speak about their connections to Sierra Leone

✓ **Lydia Mayer, Founder and CEO of Change Through Focus**

www.changethroughfocus.org

Change through Focus' programs are very basic and are predominantly focused on supporting access to justice practitioners in rural West Africa. Specifically, we do this by providing the practitioners with relatively inexpensive tools that empower them in their work. CTF is currently concentrating on getting camera packs to paralegals in Sierra Leone to use in the production of photographic evidence in domestic violence matters. This area is the focal point at this time in an effort to assist legal advocates to bring the attention back to the countries' campaign against domestic violence in the aftermath of Ebola.

She ships materials to the paralegals in SL so they are able to photograph domestic violence.

✓ **John Lyon, President of World Hope International.**

www.worldhope.org

We work in 15 of the poorest countries in the world, helping all people, regardless of ethnicity, gender, race or religion. We serve the poorest of the poor, those crippled by a lack of opportunity. We put children first, because we believe that when you empower the youngest generation, you invest in future leaders. Leaders who will ensure their children grow up in a world with opportunity, dignity and hope

6:30 P. M. Meet at Sumah's for Dinner

- We had a wonderful African dinner with many people attending!
- Address:
1727 7th St NW
Washington, DC 20001
- Shaw/Howard University Metro Stop on Green Line

Saturday, September 24th at Sierra Leone Embassy

9:00 A.M. FoSL Business Meeting with Minutes Committee Reports

- **Introductions**
- **Treasurer's Report** (report attached to the minutes)
 - ✓ Does not include the money for the health clinic being built in Kenema Blango
 - ✓ We also received a \$500 check for the Loret Miller Ruppe Award just yesterday
 - ✓ We have changed the bank for FoSL to one closer to Mark Hager, Treasurer, in Arizona.
- **Projects Report** (report attached to the minutes)
 - ✓ We talked about various projects that FoSL has been involved in this past year.
 - ✓ Next deadline for applying for projects is October 31, 2016. April 30th is Spring deadline.
- **Membership Report**
 - ✓ 147 paid members. People interact in a very different way these days. Younger people usually do not fill out membership forms and send in money. They will be more likely to fund specific projects.
 - ✓ Database has not been accessible because of changes in the website. There are a few more.
 - ✓ We have Facebook 685 likes on the Facebook page
 - ✓ We have a Twitter account and 221 followers.
 - ✓ Meghan will look into an alternative service for membership.
 - ✓ Listserve is different from Database.
- **Advocacy Report** (report attached to the minutes)
 - ✓ PCSL is hoping to expand into health
 - ✓ Members should always keep in touch with local state representatives to encourage continued support of Peace Corps.
 - ✓ Judy asked who is making the decisions about USAID in SL. Ambassador Owen recommended that we contact State Dept. assistant secretary for Africa and desk officer for SL. If Feingold gets reelected, we need to get him involved.
- **Time for questions and answers**
 - ✓ Gary asked about Lonny Born...he will be going back to being Associate Director and is excited for the Health Sector
 - ✓ A new country director will be there soon. We do not have specifics yet. (Found out from Ambassador Hoover that her name is Penny Alexander.)
- **Presentation to Carl and Mary Onken**
 - ✓ Carl and Mary have been the creators of the newsletter for MANY years and also handled the sale of the calendars.
 - ✓ We are recognizing them for the dedication to FoSL for all of these years.
- **Tom Johnson presentation** (powerpoint included)
 - ✓ In 2003, Tom founded Africa Surgery, a non-profit organization providing health care and surgical services to needy people in Sierra Leone.

- ✓ For about 5 months a year Tom lives there working with international and local medical programs and facilities that provide diagnoses and treatment on a wide range of issues.
- ✓ When not there, he coordinates activities from Morristown, NJ, with help from some in-country assistants, including Mohamed Mansuray in Freetown and Foday Tarawalie in Makeni.
- ✓ www.africasurgery.org
- **Aiah Fanday and Saa Emerson Lamina**
 - ✓ They spoke of concerns about the situation in Kono District and the effects of diamond mining
 - ✓ There were lots of good questions and discussion on the topic.
- **Wendy Diliberti** (handout attached to the minutes)
 - ✓ Wendy told the group about the project with the Sherbro Foundation in Sierra Leone that is in memory of her husband, Mike Diliberti.
 - ✓ Website: www.sherbrofoundation.org

Noon: Lunch Provided –Sandwiches and drinks... Thanks Aiah and Anthony!

1:15 P. M. Speakers

- **Ambassador Hoover via Skype**
 - ✓ First of all, he gave a special thanks to Ambassador Stevens for allowing FoSL to host our meetings at the SL Embassy
 - ✓ Ambassador Hoover started out giving our group a county update:
 - ✓ The past year has been one of progress, with SL being declared Ebola Free. Some normalcy is being restored (lots of traffic!) after a couple of years of crisis response. The economy needs to be jump started. They are into the 2nd phase of post-Ebola with many goals in front of them.
 - ✓ USAID is working full steam ahead, with the health sector being a main goal. They are working on building infrastructure, the President's Malaria Initiative and AGOA. Food for Peace, SNAP and Feed the Future.
 - ✓ The Millennium Challenge Corporation has signed the contract and SL will get \$44 million over 4 years.
 - ✓ Some of the more difficult news is that the economy is fragile (-23% GDP last year and projected 4.3% this year, but it could be less because iron ore prices are going down) . Also, the Leone is depreciating and inflation is high.
 - ✓ The Political World is interesting. It was pretty much pushed to the side during Ebola time. As elections approach for February of 2018, conflicts are increasing throughout the country. There are a lot of things on the agenda before 2018 (Census, voter registration procedure, deamalgamation of the chiefdoms, possible creation of 2 new districts, question of delay of elections). All are hoping for peaceful and fair elections in February of 2018
 - ✓ Peace Corps: They are back and he has begun swearing in new PCVs. There is no Country Director right now (only an acting one), but Penny Alexander will be there in October and there permanently by Thanksgiving.
 - ✓ **Questions asked by audience:**
 - Fourah Bay Update: the Ambassador said he did not have a lot of info on this but the outlook was not great.
 - Why are there so few PCVs coming to SL and they are only in education? USAID seems to be spearheading health initiatives. What can FoSL do to have health PCVs? The Ambassador said that PC is branching out to get

Public Health experts. Associate Director Lonny Born was brought in to get his sector going. The intention is to have as many PCVs in-country as they did in pre-Ebola times.

- Question came up of SL getting a full-fledged USAID mission of their own, instead of having it located in Conakry, Guinea. SL will not be getting their own mission, but they are working to reset their relationship. This could be a good area **for FoSL to LOBBY**: Once the post Ebola money goes away, there is not much else for the bilateral program for SL. We need to invest in SL over time instead of reacting just in crises time.
- One RPCV said that over 300 of them were on The Hill on this past Thursday to lobby for better funding for PC. Only 1 in 9 PC applications are accepted at this point in time.
- The Ambassador was asked his perspective on upcoming Kono Union Elections: We push for accountability and rule of law.
- The issue of Nutrition was brought up by someone. There has been a waiver on the duty on rice so it makes imported rice very competitive pricewise. If the import duty on rice was raised, it would encourage more local rice production. There is a push to phase in gradual higher import duties. There is also a push to better manage the fisheries so they would be more productive.
- Perspective on Minerals:
 - Diamonds are steady in price
 - Iron Ore is going down (and this is a problem)
 - Rutile is steady but going down
 - Off Shore Oil and Gas is "dead in the water" and they are no longer exploring this
 - Gold prices are going down
 - SL needs to diversify their economy and they have a lot of potential in the agricultural exports.



- **Ambassador Stevens came in after he returned from the opening of the new African**

American Art Museum

- ✓ He gave a big thank you to FoSL for their work on behalf of Sierra Leone
- ✓ He said things are not working easily in SL and that Ebola caused a lot of difficulty.
- ✓ He mentioned that they are working to pay more attention to community health.
- ✓ AGOA (African Growth and Opportunity Act) meetings are going on now and they are working to make produce available to the market.
- ✓ President Peggy Murrah presented the Ambassador with a plaque of special recognition for all of the the Embassy's support of FoSL throughout the years.



- **Joe Opala and**

- ✓ Joe Opala
- ✓ Amadu spoke

Joe Opala and the Gullah Connection here in the U. S. He spoke of the different events that took place over time that showed proof of SL ancestry here in the U. S.

- ✓ Amadu spoke of the connections of SL with the Jamaican Maroons. Here is a link to the video showing some of this: <https://www.facebook.com/t4dconsulting>
- ✓ Next he spoke of the connection with Sierra Leone Temnes and Carriacou Temnes in Grenada. They will come together at an historic Reunion in Carriacou between September 27th and 30th. The Grenadian Government and the Carriacou community will welcome their African guests and share the history and culture that bind this family together despite the vast space and time that have separated them. To our knowledge, this Temne Reunion is unique. As far as we know, no family re-connection quite this specific has ever happened in the Caribbean before. Here is a link to the video showing some of this:

Amadu Massally

was not able to be with us due to illness of how he first became connected with

<http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/by-amadu-massallay-usa-a-small-group-of>

- ✓ Amadu would like to challenge FoSL to get more involved in the SL and Grenada connections.

7:00 Sierra Leone House

- Cost is \$20.00 for dinner and 4 drinks. FoSL will pay half of this price (\$10) for those who are registered ahead of time.
- Address: 7502 Taylor Street Hyattsville, MD 20784
- The nearest Metro Station is New Carrollton Metro Station on the Orange Line. Then call for car ride from the
- We had a GREAT dinner!

Participants:

Peggy Murrah
Anthony McMillon
Jeff Cochrane
Ruth Jones
Jim Sheahan

Lawrence Shirley
Meghan Welsh
Sharon Alvarado
Cora Cramer
Tom Johnson
Gary Schulze
Judy Figi
Patty Bruzek
Wendy Diliberti
Barbara Sheehan
Lydia Mayer
Amadu Massally
Joe Opala
Susan Ahmed
Najimu Ahmed
Aiah Fanday
Marion Connell
Saa Emerson Lamina
Dave Magnani
Michael Owen
Michael Lee
Aminata Alharazim
Amit Kapadia
Mariama Turay
Cynthia Barron

The numbers I have, which I can promise you are not accurate, are:

Friday meet and greet	17
Friday night Sumah's	16
Saturday meeting	24
Salone House	14