



Budget Advocacy Network

“we believe in participation transparency & accountability”

PRESS STATEMENT ON THE 2021 AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Freetown –12th January, 2023 --- Budget Advocacy Network (BAN) is concerned about the growing cash losses and other service delivery issues, as stated in the 2021 Auditor General's Report in the face of an economic downturn. The cash losses grew from **153.9 billion (old Leones) in 2020 to Le187.3 billion (old Leones)** in 2021. This has negative implications regarding the government's ability to provide social services to the citizens.

BAN also is therefore concerned about the attendant effect of these losses on the inadequacies of health, education, water and other services delivery.

BAN is worried that successive parliaments rarely give Audit Reports the deserved attention by failing to demand improved standards from MDAs or bring defaulters to account.

BAN notes with concern that the annual Audit Reports of 2019, 2020 and five Special Audit reports have not been discussed and no reports have been produced by parliament. **“Failure by parliament to take adequate action on the 2019, 2020, and now 2021 findings may send the wrong signals about our country's commitment to improving Public Financial Management (PFM), especially in the light of our impressive record in controlling corruption over the last four years. This may even sound contradictory-for how can corruption control be impressive when MDAs are seriously wanting in accountability!”**

The persistence of corruption in Sierra Leone is not because of poor quality audits, but rather the historic unwillingness of MDAs to implement or address audit recommendations, with no consequences.

We, however, want to commend the government for turning in an unqualified Audit Opinion in 2021 from a qualified opinion in 2020; and for proposing measures to strengthen audit accountability, which, if implemented, will increase the implementation of audit recommendations.

We are encouraged by the recent efforts by the ACC to investigate findings and take action on the Audit Reports. We want to entreat the ACC to do more by expanding its investigations to the service delivery issues in the report.

BAN believes that parliament has a great role in holding duty bearers accountable on audit accountability issues. We, therefore, urge parliament to debate and produce reports on the Audit Reports on time.

BAN also calls on the government to fully implement the Standard Operating Procedures for implementing the Auditor General's reports, and that such reports are made public in a timely and transparent manner. We urge the government to address service delivery issues captured in the Audit Report promptly.

**For more inquiries, please Contact Abu Bakarr Kamara,
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