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Sierra Leone Improves in Global Rankings on Budget Transparency

Freetown, Sierra Leone, May 29, --Sierra Leone improves its 2023 Open Budget Survey index score. The country's transparency score rose 10 points above the global average (45%), from 45% in 2021 to 55% in 2023. This progress also means that Sierra Leone climbed 17 points from 64th, in 2021 to 47th, in 2023 out of 125 countries. This ranks the country higher than Liberia (52%), Ghana (46%), Gambia (36%), São Tomé e Príncipe (32%), Nigeria (31%), and Equatorial Guinea (4%). Publication of the Citizens' Budget, the Enacted Budget, and In-Year Reports, in accordance with the 2016 Public Financial Management Act and its 2018 regulations boost the country's scores in the survey.

However, Sierra Leone is 5% below the pass mark (60%). “To ensure adequate budget information disclosure, Sierra Leone's government must publish the Pre-Budget Statement online at least one month before submitting the Executive's Budget Proposal to Parliament and the Mid-Year Review three months after the end of the six months,” says **Abu Bakarr Kamara, Coordinator of the Budget Advocacy Network (BAN)**.

Citizens' participation in the budget process fell to 20% in 2023 from 31% in 2021. According to the International Budget Partnership, 70% more citizens participated in the budget formulation in 2021 than in 2023 (33%). Although 17% of citizens participated in the budget execution stage 33% selected issues for the Audit Service Sierra Leone to audit. Sierra Leone's audit oversight score climbed to 78% in 2023 from 72% in 2021, while legislative oversight fell by 3 points from (33%) in 2021 to (30%) in 2023.

“Accountability systems are still weak globally, but several countries like South Africa, Mexico, and the like are showing that where there is political will, progress is possible,” said **Anjali Garg, head of the Open Budget Survey**. “Open budget practices are a winning proposition— they build public trust that governments can deliver and can lead to lower borrowing costs at a time when global debt and inequality are at an all-time high. We hope that more countries will boldly open up their budget processes to public consultation and scrutiny, ensuring scarce resources reaches those who need them most.

The Open Budget is the world's only comparative, independent, and regular assessment of transparency, oversight, and public participation in public budgets. In 2023, 125 countries were surveyed.