



**2011 Annual Meeting**  
**Sierra Lighthouse Hotel**  
**Freetown, Sierra Leone**  
**18-21 July 2011**

\*\*\*I want to put this note at the beginning of the minutes because it is important that all see it. There is no way that this meeting could have happened the way it did without the efforts of many people, most importantly Peggy Murrah, Etta Toure and Amadu Massally!!!!

\*\*Also, thank you to Ambassador Hull for the use of some of your notes!

**Monday, 18 July**  
**Opening Meeting and Lunch at 11:30 A. M.**

The meeting began with everyone signing in and getting their FoSL T-shirt.

- There is a list of everyone who signed in in attachment with the minutes
- Introduction of Current Board Members
- Introduction of the RPCVs, starting with those who served in the 1960's, 70's, 80's and their family members and guests,
- Introduction of current PC Directors and current PCVs and their family members who have come to visit them.
- Introduction of other guests: Justin Sampson and Stacy Elmer
- **Bunce Island** (see Bunce Island attachment for more info): Amb. Thomas Hull spoke about the Bunce Island Commission and told about the preservation of the Slave Ruins on the island. They have gotten the National Park Service interested and Syracuse University. Mike D. is chairperson of the FoSL committee on Bunce Island. Mike D. told a little about the background of Joe Opala--RPCV who is an anthropologist and spent his 2nd year as a PCV in the 1970's studying Bunce Island. In his research, he found the connection between the Sierra Leonians and the United States. This fortress (privately owned) was the only one that had slaves come directly to US. Now DNA testing is finding that many African Americans have their ancestry through Bunce Island. There is a direct Gullah Connection. Many slaves linked up with Cheerokees in Oklahoma (Trail of Tears). One of the major share holders was in Charleston (Henry Lawrence) and there was one in London. Both worked on Treaty of Paris and influenced how slaves were treated in the US. There is an exhibit and animation project. Experts are working to recreate Bunce Island as it looked in 1805. There is an anonymous donor of \$5 million and that money is not going through FoSL.

- Dave Magnani spoke about the NPCA concept of the possibility of the 3rd year extension where PCVs would come home to the USA and advocate for the PC and what happens.
- Etta Toure reviewed the schedule and spoke about the the changes schedule for the week: Meeting with the President will be Wednesday at 10:30 A. M. instead of Thursday. We will leave Sierra Lighthouse at 9 A. M. Tomorrow's program will start precisely at 9 A. M. We need to plan for traffic. Wednesday we have a "dress" situation--we have meeting at State House and then day of service--we will need to bring a change of clothes. Thursday's schedule is weather dependent: Bunce Island, River #2, or videos.  
Amadu Massalay: Lunch and business meeting and then panel discussion.

### **Business Meeting (as lunch was being served!) 2 P. M.:**

1. See separate attachment with President's Year in Review and Committee Reports
2. 2011 Elections—We have 2 new people on the board and there is one open "At Large" position
3. September 23<sup>rd</sup> Event in Washington, DC at the Africare House—details will be on the website and in emails
4. Project Committee—Ongoing projects are the Bunce Island Committee, Solar Initiative, HIV Awareness (Justin Sampson) and Bo Teacher Training Workshop. On the last round of applications for project money, there were no projects deemed acceptable. The next date for application is for the fall. We have \$1000 for the Daphne Sawyer Dunn fund—we are looking into a more deserving place for this money. Peggy and Jim raised the money through FoSL for a women's agriculture cooperative and to build a school in Kenema-Blango—6 miles from Mandu (north of Bo)
5. Membership: We have 260 active FoSL members and 1925 on the list.
6. Advocacy—see report in attachment. Advocacy needs a new focus. What do the people of Sierra Leone want?
7. More on Bunce Island—3 of our board members work on this committee: Mike D, Ambassador Hull and Amadu M. They hope to build a museum and have more tourists go out to visit Bunce Island.
8. Ancestry Sierra Leone—Amadu M. spoke about connecting DNA findings and Bunce Island. 60% of U.S. DNA testing is pointing to SL. Some History:
  - 1070's Joe Opala was encouraged by Ambassador to explore this
  - 1980's National Park Service got involved, but no money available at this time.

- 2000's When Ambassador Hull was here, more began to happen with this research and fundraising. Chris DeCorse from Syracuse University has become involved.
9. Teacher Training Workshop will take place in Bo next week. This is cosponsored by FoSL and School for Salone.

## **Monday Afternoon**

### **Panel Discussion 3-5 P. M.:**

(See attachment with list of participants and their contact information)

(The following summary is taken from a report written by Former Ambassador Hull)

- This session of FoSL's annual meeting moderated by board member Michael Diliberti. It gave participants an opportunity to hear about a cross-section of NGO programs and projects from their managers. Instead of going into detail about each one, a web site for more information is provided.
- Mr. Sheka Forna spoke about the Rogbonko Village Retreat ([www.rogbonkovillage.com](http://www.rogbonkovillage.com)) - "Three Hours from Freetown, TwoCenturies from Today" - that he is developing for eco and cultural tourism.
- Amadu Massally spoke of his for-profit initiative Fambul Tik Tours ([www.fambultiktours.com](http://www.fambultiktours.com)) that generally engages in heritage, cultural, eco, adventure, and gambit tourism with an emphasis on heritage tourism.
- April Conway, a University of Georgia researcher, spoke about her year studying pygmy hippos at Tiwai Island.
- Mr. Abraham Bah of iEarn ([www.iearn.org](http://www.iearn.org)) spoke not only of his organization's micro-lending activities, but also of its Youth Exchange Scholarship program that sent 6 Sierra Leoneans last year for a year of secondary school study in the U.S. and will be sending another 5 students this year.
- Mr. Peter Andersen of the Special Court ([www.sc-sl.org](http://www.sc-sl.org)) updated participants on the war crimes trials, which are winding down, with a decision in the Charles Taylor case expected soon and the five final defendants on trial now for alleged witness tampering.
- Dr. Alfred Jarrett, head of the Department of Social Work at Fourah Bay College and an Affiliate Professor at George Mason University, updated the group on the International Community College Town Center System (<http://icctc.net/>) project thaDrt is developing community colleges in Makeni in agriculture, Pujehun in forestry, and in Lunsar and Kono in mining.

- Dr. Adonis Abboud discussed his NGO Pikin Bizness (<http://pikinbizness.org>) which sends seriously ill children overseas for medical treatment that is unavailable in Sierra Leone.
- Mr. Justin Sampson of All to Play For spoke about the soccer tournament he is sponsoring in November for the HIV/AIDS Awareness Cup ([www.hivawarenesscup.org/](http://www.hivawarenesscup.org/)) that will lead to World AIDS Day in December. Sixteen boys' teams from the Western Area and 8 girls' teams will participate.

**Monday evening -people had time on their own.**

**Tuesday, 19 July**

**9 A. M. -12 P. M. Country Update at Bank of Sierra Leone Complex—  
KingTom (see attachment for the Country Update)**

We had an introduction by President Peggy Murrah where she thanked Minister of Finance, Dr. Samura Kamara for hosting our meeting. Ambassador Hull was the moderator for the remainder of the meeting.

(Notes taken from a report written by Ambassador Hull)

- American Ambassador Michael Owen updated the group on embassy programs including an expanded Fulbright Senior Scholar Program for U.S. professors to spend 6-8 weeks lecturing and advising in Sierra Leone; a world class medical laboratory being built by the Centers for Disease Control outside Freetown; a USAID 5-year, \$60M program for the sale of Food for Peace commodities; technical advice on oil production to the Government of Sierra Leone; guidance for Sierra Leone on competing for Millennium Challenge Account funding; the recent establishment of a U.S.-Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce; promotion of diaspora relations; and the State Department's new Global Partnership Initiative under which FoSL and other U.S. NGO's might become partners with the embassy in development initiative. Ambassador Owen also graciously hosted a reception for annual meeting participants at his residence.
- Minister of Finance and Economic Development Dr. Samura Kamara thanked FoSL for its advocacy as Sierra Leone seeks donor assistance and investment to double its GDP in the next two to three years. While recognizing that his country needs to "trade out of aid," Dr. Kamara emphasized the need for well coordinated assistance to meet its citizens' expectations for free health care, children's needs, social security, elections, and improved roads and other infrastructure. Sierra Leone, he said, needs investment to process raw materials in-country and greater market access internationally.
- World Bank Country Manager Vijay Pillai was optimistic about Sierra Leone's growth, but noted that its current \$350 per capita annual income would take 17 years to double at a 6% per annum rate of GDP growth. He observed that without human capacity development economic growth will be slowed. He further cite need for greater efficiency (e.g., 40% of electricity from Bumbuna Dam is lost in transmission), and for generating more revenue for

government operations. He and others commented on the importance of reviving the Mano River Union economic agreement for the development of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, and Cote d'Ivoire.

- Minister of Agriculture, Food Security, and Forestry Dr. Sam Sesay briefed on recent significant progress in agriculture, which accounts for over 45% of the GDP and employs over two-thirds of the population while generating a quarter of the export revenue. The Government with donor assistance has invested heavily. As a percentage of the Government's total budget, agriculture increased from 1.6% in 2007 to 10% in 2009.

The payoff is reflected in bumper rice production (the World Food Programme is buying 40,000 bags of locally milled rice). The Government has invested significantly in equipment, weedkillers, seeds, drying facilities, and mills for farmers, and is promoting irrigation to facilitate a second crop cycle annually. The Government strategy includes improving conditions (e.g., clean water, toilets) in rural villages, and Sierra Leone was the first country cited by the WFP for incorporating a social safety net in its agricultural strategy. Export crops have also received attention with cocoa exports having quadrupled in value in just three years. The Minister concluded with an appeal for the Peace Corps to re-establish its agricultural program in Sierra Leone.

- Minister of Health and Sanitation Zainab Hawa Bangura reported that as a result of the introduction of free health care in April 2010, the 300% increase in outpatients is straining the system due to the inadequate number of health professionals. With only 5 pediatricians and fewer than 100 qualified midwives, the problems of child and maternal mortality remain serious. The training of midwives and nurses is being fast-tracked, and 75 new midwives (including some former traditional birth attendants) will graduate from a new school in Makeni in December.
- Minister of Education, Science and Technology Dr. Minkailu Bah recited a litany of educational shortfalls that returned Peace Corps Volunteers are familiar with: teachers without teaching qualifications, oversize classes everywhere, insufficient teaching materials, etc. The Ministry has created a Commission to recruit and license teachers, and a national teacher training curriculum is being developed.

He also observed that the educational system is not producing the "middle level" personnel that the country needs, such as electricians and plumbers. A Government White Paper on education concluded that a total overhaul of the education system is required, but, the minister said, it cannot happen without donor aid.

Mike Diliberti made the closing remarks and we all adjourned for a wonderful lunch served right there.

### **2-5 P. M. Visit Peace Corps Office(see attachment for schedule and "Briefing Paper")**

Another highlight of the annual meeting was a FoS L group visit to the new Peace Corps headquarters on the former British-American Tobacco Company compound

off Signal Hill Road near the Ambassador's Residence. Current Volunteers and Directors Joel Wallach and Gail Metcalf briefed on the current Peace Corps education program in Sierra Leonean schools which is expanding with the arrival of a second group of 49 new PCV's recently. The FoSL visitors were very impressed by the spacious Peace Corps facilities, especially the hostel on the compound for Volunteers when they come to Freetown.

They had hoped to have health PCVs for 2012 but due to budget constraints they will stay with Secondary Education.

### **5 P. M. Reception at Ambassador Owen's Home**

**Wednesday, 20 July**

#### **9 A. M. Meeting with the President**

We gathered in the morning at Sierra Lighthouse to go to the Statehouse to have the meeting with President, His Excellency Dr. Koroma.

"You are all ambassadors," declared President Ernest Bai Koroma to FoSL and Peace Corps participants at the State House in Freetown. Noting that he has Peace Corps teachers in primary and secondary school, the President thanked FoSL for its contributions to his country and to relations between our countries.

The President's remarks came on Wednesday at the Statehouse in Freetown. Board Member Etta Toure arranged this meeting for us and spoke at the meeting. FoSL President Peggy Murrah presented the President with a FoSL T-shirt and FoSL flag pin. Member Stacy Elmer presented the President with an Obama coin. Then someone who worked for the President called on Paramount Chief Doris Lenga Kroma (good friend and former colleague of FoSL Board member Judy Figi) to speak.

After the meeting, many made their way to the Big Market for shopping!

### **6 P. M. Opening Ceremonies for the DSD Center (see attached brochure)**

The FoSL Board Members went to the Opening Ceremonies for the DSD Center (the Daphne Sawyerr-Dunn Center). Daphne was a former FoSL board member who passed away suddenly 4 years ago. Peggy Murrah and Mike Diliberti both spoke at this ceremony.

**Thursday, 21 July**

#### **Travel to Bunce Island**

What started out to be a "3 hour tour" turned into an all day excursion! We all met at the Sierra Lighthouse to be bused over to the boat dock in Aberdeen. There were 49 of us on the trip, with 3 crew boat crew members. We had an uneventful boat ride over to the island. Amadu gave us a VERY memorable tour of the island,

showing us the canons, the remains of the buildings, and the graves. He told us stories of what life would have been like back then for all.

The trip home was fine for the first half and then the boat was all of a sudden in water too shallow to move. Some of our group got out of the boat to try to move it, but the tide was going out too quickly and the water level was dropping. Eventually the boat company sent speed boats to take us back to Aberdeen.

### **6-10 Dinner, Closing Meeting and National Dance Troupe**

Dinner was served, guests were introduced and a few special people were thanked:

- Peggy was given an award from FoSL for ALL of her efforts.
- Etta's sister, Mrs. Yabome Kanu, was thanked for all her efforts of getting things done in Freetown for the meeting when everyone else was in the States
- Amadu Massally was given an award for ALL that he did for the meeting
- Parents were encouraged to write an article about their experiences

The National Dance Troupe entertained us and the 2011 FoSL Annual Meeting was officially closed!

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Bruzek

10 August, 2011