

Donor versus Local Ownership of Agricultural Projects: A Review of Past Agricultural Policies in Sierra Leone

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With the current global economic malaise and the acute food crisis experienced late 2007 and 2008 attention has again focused on the productivity of the agricultural sector particularly in developing countries such as Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone has since independence implemented several agricultural policies but no comprehensive study of past agricultural policies has been undertaken to assess their impact on the current state of what is a very important sector. This policy review is an attempt at looking at past agricultural policy objectives, strategies and their impact on the present state of the agricultural sector. It is expected that the arguments made in this paper will contribute to the debate on the developing of a sustainable agricultural development policy.

I argue in this paper that the agricultural sector in Sierra Leone has never lacked good policy contents neither has there been a dearth of policy; for diverse reasons the problems that have plagued past agricultural policies mainly stemmed from two broad angles: (a) policies lacked the necessary stakeholder support (both financial and moral) or commitment and ended up being poorly and inconsistently implemented; and (b) the inadequate and poor capacity of the agriculture sector to absorb and sustain policy implementation activities and control exogenous factors. Policy problems that emanated from the first instance relate to policy parody, inconsistency, limited financial and material support and administrative mismanagement. Problems from the second instance come from issues relating to inadequate administrative capacity, limited research, inputs, and pest and crop failures etc.