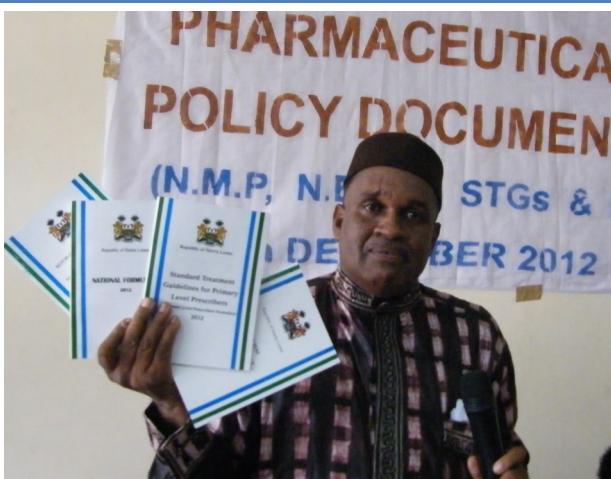


Ministry of Health Launches Four Pharmaceutical Policy Documents



The Dr Seisay Dept CMO Launching the Documents



Dr Teniin Gakuruh delivering a statement



Dr Turay, Director of Drugs and Medical Services



Cross section of the participants at the launching event

The Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) launched four pharmaceutical policy documents on 14 December 2012 in Freetown. The documents included the National Medicines Policy, National Essential Medicines List, Standard Treatment Guidelines for Primary Level Prescribers and a National Formulary. The policy documents were launched by Dr Alhassan Seisay, Deputy Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry on behalf of the Acting Minister of Health. Participants at the event included officials of the MoHS, WHO, the Pharmaceutical Society, civil society and Non-Governmental Organizations.

While launching the documents, Dr Seisay expressed gratitude to WHO for providing technical expertise and financial support to the Ministry to develop the documents. He said the documents would help to respond to the weaknesses and challenges in the delivery of pharmaceutical care in the country.

Speaking on behalf of the WHO Representative, Dr Teniin Gakuruh, Cluster Head for Health System Strengthening at the WHO Country Office, said the Organization was honoured by the opportunity to support the country to develop and launch the documents. She reiterated that it is WHO's role to support countries efforts to develop, implement and monitor the effectiveness of national medicines policies, guidelines, strategies and plans that ensure the availability, affordability and rational use of essential medicines that are safe, effective and of good quality. She assured WHO's continued technical support in the implementation and monitoring of the documents and further preparation of other supportive guidelines and tools and plans.

The National Medicines Policy's aim is to provide clear government statement for the pharmaceutical sector and to enhance transparency and accountability in the sector for a better health outcome. The Standard Treatment Guidelines is aimed at providing the requisite guide on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions at the primary level to ensure patient safety. The national formulary is the first edition and is aimed at providing requisite information for all pharmaceuticals authorized for sale in the country. The Essential Medicines List will help to inform clinicians on medicines that are available in the public health sector supply system; it will also guide the importation and distribution, prescription and dispensing of medicines in the country.

It should be noted that unlike the National Formulary which has been developed for the first time, the other documents were updated to bring them in line with the National Health Sector Strategic Plan and the current trend in the delivery of pharmaceutical services in the country.