

# Network Movement For Democracy & Human Rights

148 Circular Road Freetown 78 Pendembu Road Kailahun District

Tel: +23276410137/+23277/543865/+23276202104

Email: [nmdhr1@gmail.com](mailto:nmdhr1@gmail.com)

[www.nmdhr.org](http://www.nmdhr.org)

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## PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Ref: A CLARION CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO BOOST PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS THAT SUPPORTS EFFECTIVE AVAILABILITY OF COST RECOVERY DRUGS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Emergencies and disasters impact population health adversely. Moreover, as we face a global health crisis that has influenced by complexities in our environment, demographics and social constructs, Covid 19 continues to ravage the world's population, global health, and economies. While we appreciate and compliment the Government of Sierra Leone's effort for its proactive measures in curbing Covid 19 from entering Sierra Leone to date. We want to make a clarion call to the Government of Sierra Leone through the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) as the Parliament of Sierra Leone has discussed the Public Health Emergency Proclamation by His Excellency, President Julius Maada Bio to exhibit the undermentioned recommendations below;

1. Ensure cost recovery drugs are immediately available at all public health centres and peripheral units across the country and most especially in rural communities where there is a lack of opportunity and resources. In case of an outbreak, people may need to have access to cost recovery drugs in health facilities to respond immediately.
2. Developing tailored messages for persons with disability especially for both visual and hearing-impaired people. Additionally, keeping simple messaging, actions and social distancing behaviour that citizen can understand using local dialects. The risk for persons with disability to contracting the virus cannot be overemphasized at this time.
3. Do massive sensitization on Covid 19 preventive measures especially those recommended by World Health Organisation (WHO) and involve all stakeholders and local groups like Village Development Committees, Village heads, councillors, youth groups etc to educate their communities.
4. Increase responsive emergency preparedness mechanisms that provide intelligence and actively respond to cases of emergency, to ensure that if something does happen, the right people are told and available in a timely fashion.

Even though the Medical Superintendent of MoHS has publicly apologized regarding the unfortunate incident that took place on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 at the Government Connaught Hospital, in Freetown that almost led to the death of a woman, who was rushed for medical treatments but nurses were unprepared. However, we are dissatisfied and want to draw government's attention to establish a responsive emergency mechanism across all healthcare facilities especially in rural-rural and rural-urban settings.

Moreover, we are calling on the Government to uphold the rule of law that respects and promote citizens' rights during Public Emergency. We also expect citizens to be responsible and to adhere to all precautionary measures and to follow government and WHO advise during this time of Covid 19 pandemic.