



NATIONAL CIVIL REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NCRA)  
2 WALPOLE STREET,  
FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE



MESSAGE FROM THE AMBASSADOR FOR THE ID4AFRICA MOVEMENT IN  
SIERRA LEONE AND THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE  
NATIONAL CIVIL REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NCRA)- MOHAMED  
MUBASHIR MASSAQUOI ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL IDENTITY DAY – 16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2020

**“Theme: “Because Identity Matters Now More Than Ever  
Before”.**

The Government of Sierra Leone today, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 through the National Civil Registration Authority joins other Governments and nations to observe the International Identity Day. This Day was declared by the ID4Africa Coalition of Partners that constitutes Government Agencies, International Development Agencies and Institutions of public interest with like determination to have and recognize an International Identity Day endorsed by the United Nations to show that identity, and lack of it, should be recognized in tribute to UN Sustainable Development Goal 16.9 that requires *by 2030 Governments to provide legal identity for all including birth registration.*



Research including data from the World Bank holds that worldwide, over One Billion people lack an official identity that permits them to claim, enjoy and exercise their fundamental human rights and access to essential public services in a modern society, including health, education, financial services, social protection and security among others through the recording and maintenance of records of vital events in a person's life that includes Births, Deaths, Marriages, Divorces, Adoptions. Generally, identity service is critical in making a future that will provide identities that can be trusted, used everywhere, in both physical and digital forms. On this Day, the importance of identity for all should be emphasised and Governments urged to observe the Day noting the implications and values of Identity for a nation's security, planning, development, even allocation of national resources in a transparent and accountable manner, monitoring progress towards National Development Plans as well as other International benchmarks such as SDGs.

In Sierra Leone, we have successfully used Biometric and Digital Identity Data to clean the Payroll of Government to make the Civil and Public Service more accountable and productive. We are using the same facility



NATIONAL CIVIL REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NCRA)  
2 WALPOLE STREET,  
FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE



to maintain a cleaned Payroll by validating the identity of potential recruits into the Public and Civil Service, support foreign Missions, other public Institutions such as the National Revenue Authority for increased revenue generation, the Financial Institutions and Banks for financial service and inclusion through the ease of Credit Reference that was largely paper based, support the health sector with credible and real time data to guide policy formulation and health interventions, identifying victims of disasters and pandemics for support, education enrolment to halt impersonation and guide support provided by Government for pupils writing public exams, use of identity to contain money laundering, trafficking, terrorism and easing cross-border information sharing among others.

As the right to a better future remains key to our Government and Governments across the world, the ability of citizens of all nations to prove their unique identity is critical to their economic, financial and social development. It is important to note that lack of proof of identification, people may be constrained to access value-added services such as healthcare, education and other inalienable rights. The Civil



NATIONAL CIVIL REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NCRA)  
2 WALPOLE STREET,  
FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE



Registration System is the foundation for Legal Identity which is a Human Right as enshrined in Article 6 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and several other International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law Instruments that guarantees the undeniable recognition of everyone before the law. This resonates with SDG Target 16.9 that requires that by 2030, Governments to provide legal identity for all including birth registration for various benefits such as proof of Citizenship, Parentage, evidence of death for heirs to access insurance and administer inheritances; establish family relationships and inheritance rights; proof of age to establish rights for school entry, voting rights, immigration services, provides proof of marriage or divorce and the right to marry among others.

In Sierra Leone, Legal Identity service has a long history dating back to the colonial era with the registration of births, deaths and marriages of natives and settlers in the 1790s. Many Institutions have been involved in Identity until in 2016, when the National Civil Registration Act was passed by Parliament, following policy directives to merge, consolidate and integrate civil registration that forms the bedrock of Legal Identity



NATIONAL CIVIL REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NCRA)  
2 WALPOLE STREET,  
FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE



managed by one authority, the NCRA in line with UN Guidelines and International best practice. The NCRA was therefore established in 2016 with mandate to register and account for the existence and exit of all citizens and non-citizens resident in Sierra Leone and to link their registration to unique, non-repeatable, non-duplicating and non-reusable National Identification Number (NIN) to enhance the standard of decision-making and public administration in Sierra Leone.

The NCRA is currently digitizing records of vital events that constitutes Legal Identity instruments beginning with Births and Deaths records dating back to 1800s in order to halt manipulation of people's personal information, eliminate identity fraud and to replace paper-based record system with an electronic system. The Government of Sierra Leone is committed to maintaining a Permanent Register of all residents in the country through a well-functioning Civil Registration and Identity Management System with evidence of both physical and electronic Identity for our people thereby accounting for the existence and permanent legal exit of everyone.



NATIONAL CIVIL REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NCRA)  
2 WALPOLE STREET,  
FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE



We are Commemorating this year's International Identity Day under the

Theme **“Because Identity Matters Now More Than Ever**

**Before”**. The Theme is more relevant now as the world grapples with

the current challenges of COVID-19 that has disrupted social, economic

and political activities of people further exposing the gross socio-

economic vulnerability of over 500 million invisibles on the African

continent, who cannot have access to any form of assistance from their

Governments or International Organizations, because they are not

identified hence are left behind. There is therefore the imperative need

for increased support towards the Civil Registration and Identity

Management System in order to capacitate the NCRA to readily account

for the existence and exit of everyone through Legal Identity.

We will continue to appreciate the Government of Sierra Leone and His

Excellency, the President Brg. RTD Julius Maada Bio in particular for the

continued support provided to the Authority for a robust and well-

functioning integrated Civil Registration and Identity Management System

in Sierra Leone that meets international guidelines and standards. We

wish to thank with gratitude the support and collaboration of other



NATIONAL CIVIL REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NCRA)  
2 WALPOLE STREET,  
FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE



MDAs and Development Partners supporting Legal Identity in Sierra Leone.

As we observe the International Identity Day today September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, let us keep our vision to make “Everyone visible in Africa”, even in times of pandemics by providing uninterrupted service to ‘Leave no one behind’ to have “The Africa We Want” that guarantees the provision of Legal Identity for all including birth registration by 2030

I thank you for your attention.