

## **WORKING UNDER THE THREAT OF EBOLA**

### **Training Workshop on the Methodology for Engaging in Regional, Districts and Diaspora Consultations**

***"Seeking the voices, views and opinions of SLPP membership at all levels in the Design Process of a Family Dialogue Conference"***

#### **Welcome and Opening Remark**

**By**

**Chairman - Dr. Thomas B. R. Yormah<sup>1</sup>**

Distinguished guests - especially the PPRC representative, the Chair and leader of the SLPP, Our Chair Bishop J.C Humper and Co-chair Dr. Morie Manyeh of the Technical Facilitation Team, and the press, workshop participants, ladies and gentlemen, good morning and welcome to this all important methodology workshop!

Please permit me to preface my welcome opening statement with thanks and appreciation to God Almighty for sparing our lives from the scourge of the Ebola pestilence, and making it possible for us to gather here and address amongst other things issues relevant to our response to the threat posed by the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and in the same vein the threat posed to our survival as a political entity. I also thank members of the Campaign for Unity Team (CUT) for doing me the honour to chair this important and watershed occasion.

We all know that the greatest preoccupation of any well-meaning Sierra Leonean is to do everything possible to rid our beloved country of the dreadful Ebola virus. The fight against this virus is taking place at many

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Yormah is one of the distinguished members of the PPRC Mediation Team-the Technical facilitation Team (TFT) task with the responsibility to facilitate the design and preparation for an all-inclusive SLPP Family Dialogue Conference.

fronts. Naturally the government leads the fight and coordinates efforts of various partners, which includes opposition parties, local and international NGOs, United Nations and regional agencies such as the AU, ECOWAS, as well as standalone bilateral partners. The Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) has already made significant contributions to this fight in terms of social mobilisation to inform, educate and sensitize our supporters, donation of food and other relief items to quarantined, holding and treatment centres. Thanks in particular to the CUT College of Medicine and Allied Sciences (COHMAS) Students for their engagement in Public Education (clinical, hygiene and psycholological) through community radio stations.

However, our contribution as a Political Party has been undermined largely by the lack of unity in our ranks. This disunity has hampered the mobilisation of resources needed for the fight as well as the coordination that is needed on the ground to maximise our efforts in fighting this common enemy. For example, during our early consultation, the TFT, it is worth noting that in some of the regions viz., Kono, Kenema, Western Area, etc. there are two rival party executives which makes the fight both untidy and ineffective. Thus in order to hone/sharpen our contribution to the national fight to rid our country of this deadly virus a cross-section of the students, youth and women of our party, haven organised themselves into an umbrella group called Campaign for Unity Team (CUT), have continued, with resilience, to call upon us as elders to lead a mediation team- the PPRC/TFT to facilitate the design and preparation for an all inclusive SLPP family dialogue conference. The activities we have pursued and continue to do are aimed at defining a strategic path way of injecting zest and robustness into the contribution of the SLPP to this fight by first and foremost removing hurdles and uniting the party. The TFT and CUT are not here to replace the National Party Structures and systems, but to reinforce these structures and organs. In this regard, and based on the principle of

party ownership, we have assembled you all as members of the SLPP drawn from every district, who have volunteered to assist the TFT in generating or seeking the voices, views, and opinions of members at the regional, district, constituencies, and zonal levels into the design process of the family dialogue. In order to achieve this, the rationale or strategic objective of this workshop is to introduce you to the process, approach and methodology for seeking this information from our membership. As experienced practitioners, we also expect from you your practical-hands on inputs, advice and blessings to this process.

With this very short welcome address we shall now continue with rest of the programme.

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