



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

MINISTRY OF BASIC AND SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION –  
NEW ENGLAND VILLE FREETOWN

The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education hereby announces that the 2010 decision of the government of Sierra Leone preventing pregnant girls from attending school is overturned. It is to be replaced by two (2) new policies focused on the 'Radical Inclusion' and 'Comprehensive Safety' of all children in the education system. It was also pronounced by His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio in 2019 as follows:

"We have a moral and constitutional duty to protect the girl child and to change her outcomes. My government is focused on and committed to inclusive national development meaning the radical inclusion of every citizen regardless of their gender, ethnicity, ability and socioeconomic or other circumstances."

HE Julius Maada Bio, 13 December, 2019

Since His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio assumed office in April 2018, education has been a cornerstone of his governing agenda. The Free Quality School Education (FQSE) framework lays out an overarching vision and holistic set of principles, towards a Sierra Leone where all children are entitled to meaningful and equitable opportunities to learn and prosper.

In line with this commitment, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE), under the leadership of Honourable Dr. David Moinina Sengeh, hereby announces that the **"ban on pregnant girls attending school"** – **inherited from the previous administration – is overturned with immediate effect.** This decision was taken by Cabinet at its sitting on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. This is an eloquent testament to the Government's commitment to accessible and quality education (SDG 4), and gender equality (SDG 5).

We recognize that pregnant girls' school attendance has become a divisive issue across legislative, educational and civil society spaces for the last ten (10) years since the ban came into effect. However, President Bio made it clear that his 'New Direction' Government makes decisions based on both evidence and constitutional due process.

A multi-sectoral and broad-based Taskforce convened by the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education - including Religious Leaders, Government Ministries, National and International Development Partners, Teachers and School Administrators, Lawmakers



D. S. Sengeh  
30<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

and Civil Society Organizations - reviewed the evidence, consulted with appropriate stakeholders including the girls most impacted by the ban, and thereafter developed a set of recommendations for **radical inclusion and comprehensive safety** of all children in Sierra Leonean's education sector.

MBSSE will now lead a collaborative and comprehensive policy development and implementation process which lays out the principles, practices, systems and structures needed to support the vision of **radical inclusion** - where all children are encouraged and supported to realize their right to universal education, without discrimination - a reality.

Overturing the ban is the first step in building a radically inclusive Sierra Leone where all children - regardless of class, ethnicity, tribe, disability, location, gender, reproductive or parenting status - are able to live and learn in safety and dignity.



*D. S. Banga*  
30<sup>th</sup> March, 2020