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*Madam Finda Diana Konomanyi*  
*Minister of Local Government and Rural Development*  
*Sierra Leone*  
 12<sup>th</sup> April 2013

*Dear Minister,*

**RE: REQUEST FOR WITHHOLDING OF FUNDS**

The members of the Kono District Development Association (KDDA) in the United Kingdom are deeply concerned about the content of your letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2013, requesting that the Minister of Finance and Economic Development Dr. Kaifala Marah withhold all government funds allocated for the running of the Koidu New Sembehun City Council in Kono District.

In light of the negative implications of such a drastic action on the wellbeing and livelihood of the local people in the District, our association launched an immediate investigation to establish the facts behind such a decision, and to get a clear picture of the issues leading to this very serious and sorrowful saga, that could undermine much-needed development of the district.

Madam Minister, members of this association will be remiss if we do not mention our appreciation of your prompt reply to our email expressing our intention to investigate the above-mentioned matter. Equally so, your willingness to grant us unimpeded access to senior members of your department and other possible sources of information is highly commendable and cannot be gainsaid.

This investigation led us to those we consider as the key actors in this pathetic and totally avoidable situation. Foremost among these are: yourself as the political and overall head of local government in Sierra Leone; second, the Mayor of Koidu New Sembehun City Council, His Lordship Saa Emerson Lamina; third, the Director of Local Government Mr. Aiah. J.P Lebbie; fourth, the Senior District Officer in Kono District, Mr. Moses Gbetu; fifth, the Chief Administrator of the Council in Kono District, Mr. Charlie Patrick Jay Kallon; Last but not least, the Director of Decentralization Secretariat Mr. Alhassan Kanu.

Our investigation has revealed shortcomings in procedural inputs by civil servants in the exercise of their public duties. For instance, it is good practice to notify the civil service commission and liaise with the administrative head of the local government ministry before major disciplinary decision that could lead to dismissal are arrived at.

Standard communication procedures among staff at the ministry are either poor or non-existent and needs major improvement. For instance, we had to endure unedifying backwards and forwards movements between officials of the local government ministry and the Mayor in order to establish whether the Mayor was invited to a meeting with the Minister regarding his decision to suspend the Chief Administrator in the local Council, Mr. Charlie Patrick Jay Kallon. The Mayor is adamant that nobody from the ministry contacted him. Officials on the other hand insisted that they contacted him for this very important meeting. Officials from the ministry confirmed that ONLY VERBAL COMMUNICATION was used to contact the Mayor. This is totally unacceptable giving the multi tracks of communication lines available to society in our modern age – electronics and postal services to mention a few.

It is also clear that there has been a total disregard or ignorance, or both, for the procedures spelled out in the Local Government Act of 2004. It is imperative that these procedures are strictly followed, and established rules and guidelines observed before a Minister could venture into taking decision of such magnitude and gravity i.e. withholding funds allocated for any local authority. Based on the foregoing, your letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2013 and the following letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2013 (Suspension from office refers) were premature and inappropriate.

We think your ministry's exercising of its prerogative to withholding funding to the Koidu New Sembehun City Council is worrying and will make it extremely difficult or impossible for our local Council to function and this is not in the interests of locals.

Government must ensure that Councils across the country get their full allocation of funds at the right time. More important, full training on local governance matters and issues relating to devolved democracy must be provided by government for councilors at specific periods.

We welcome your desire to investigate the local administration in Kono District. We believe that it could lead to improvement. We expect nothing but the delivery of excellent services by our council. Public servants must manage public funds with due regard and probity. As such, improving the quality of governance in the public sector can not be emphasized enough. However, any investigation of the activities of the administration must be seen to be transparent, independent and fair, and done expeditiously within the confines of the required statutes. Public servants must be accountable to Parliament and citizens.

We have concluded that our Minister Finda Diana Konomanyi and the Mayor His Lordship Saa Emerson Lamina must deeply reflect on what is at stake in Kono District and must work together in promoting the interests of our beloved District. We are open to assist, if required, to discuss common strategies in resolving this matter

We are united in our resolve to ensure that the dignity, rights and interests of our people are protected as we await your response.

Thanks.

Yours sincerely,



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The Minister, MoFED  
The Financial Secretary, MoFED  
PS-MLGRD  
His Excellency the Sierra Leone High Commissioner, UK  
The Minister and Head of Chancery, Sierra Leone High Commission UK  
All Paramount Chiefs in Kono District  
All MPs in Kono District  
The Chairman, Kono District Council  
His Lordship Mayor Saa Emerson Lamina, KNSCC  
All Councilors in Kono District  
The Executive Secretary, Local Government Service Commission  
SDO, Kono District  
The Chief Administrator, KNSCC  
The Chairman, Kono Tribal Authority Western Area  
The Chairman, KONDU Sierra Leone  
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