

## **THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE CLINCHES THE SILVER AWARD**

In the recent performance rating of all Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) for the year 2013, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) was rated second, clinching the Silver Award after the Ministry of Water Resources which won the Gold Award. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation was rated third with a Bronze Award. This annual performance rating system is a novelty adopted by the current Government of Sierra Leone in order to encourage MDAs to show more commitment and work harder in carrying out their responsibilities to the people and the nation. The process usually starts with the signing of performance contracts by all MDAs with His Excellency the President at the beginning of the year. The performance contract system is supervised by the President himself through the Office of the Chief of Staff at State House.

As part of his 2013 Performance Contract, the Hon Minister of Defence committed himself to: increasing the RSLAF participation in peacekeeping operations; improving on the healthcare facilities of the RSLAF; improving on the living conditions of soldiers; and establishing an RSLAF Tailoring Industry. On peacekeeping, the RSLAF completed five rotations of a Sector Reconnaissance Company (SRC) in the United Nations African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), Sudan from 2009 to 2012. It increased its participation in peacekeeping by contributing a Battalion (850 soldiers) to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), where the RSLAF has now been assigned control of a separate sector (Sector 5 – Kismayo). On healthcare, there has been vast improvement in the conditions at the 34 Hospital, and a drug store, a nursing school and mortuary have been also constructed; whilst the construction and re-establishment of the Moa Barracks Hospital are ongoing in Daru. On soldiers' living conditions, fifteen blocks are being constructed at Gondama Barracks in Bo whilst construction of the same number for Wilberforce Barracks will soon commence. Bidding has also been invited from construction enterprises for the construction of a battalion-sized barracks at Kambia and the same will be replicated for Kono and Pujehun. Water facility for Juba Barracks has also been rehabilitated whilst those for Wilberforce and Benguema are near completion. Lastly, the RSLAF Tailoring Industry has been established at Juba Barracks and they are currently sewing ceremonial uniforms for the entire force. So in the not-too-distant future, the GoSL will no longer order uniforms for the RSLAF as they will be sewn locally. More development to follow.