

STATEMENT BY HON. BENJAMIN O.DAVIS MINISTER OF LANDS,COUNTRY PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT AT THE TURNING OF THE SOIL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF LOWINCOME HOUSING AT WATERLOO TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE NATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY AND INSURANCE TRUST (NASSIT) ON THE 22ND MAY,2008

Mr Chairman, Your Excellency the President, Hon .Vice President, Colleague Cabinet Ministers, Head of Local and Central Governments Departments, Traditional Rulers, The Executive Director, NASSIT, Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Members of the Forth Estate, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me the greatest honor and privilege to be given the opportunity to make a statement as the Minister of Lands, County Planning and the Environment at this historic occasion of the turning of the soil for the construction of Affordable housing pilot project which is to be undertaken by NASSIT.

This is accordance with H.E, s vision of built environment countrywide.Mr Chairman, the importance of land as a commodity that provides space for every socio-economic activity cannot be overemphasized. Thus ,our presence here today is an indication of our concern and commitment as a Government to the socio-economic development of our people, especially those in the low-income bracket.Moreover,compared to most other gross cutting economic goods, land has very strong public aspects.

Although the borderline between public and private interest in land may significantly vary across ethnic groups, the idea that land is a permanently fixed community resource has led to the recognition of Government obligations which my Ministry is efficiently ready to work with other stakeholders in land to ensure that land is made available for viable socio-economic development purposes.Mr Chairman,essentially,in the community of today, the development of land and especially, its value is only fully derived from private-public investments. In other words, in order to effectively measure national progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. (MDGs) partners helping Government in its human development efforts for poverty reduction are highly valued.Therefore, Mr Chairman; I want to commend NASSIT for undertaking the construction of Low-Cost housing for our people, which is in line with Government Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Mr Chairman, please allow me ,on behalf of Government to thank NASSOT for this noble venture and I want to assure them am all prospective investors of my ministry's willingness to work in close collaboration with all the local authorities throughout Sierra Leone to make land available for commercial and other development purposes in any part of the Country.

I thank you all for your attention.