NGC discusses current economic woes

By David Thorneka
The Chair and Leader of the National Grand Coalition (NGC) Party, Dennis Bright, has come out with “guns blazing”, in their monthly press briefing, hammering home the numerous reasons for the current state of economic hardship. He said the common man and woman is experiencing an economic emergency and as the only leading and credible opposition party now in the country, they have decided to take the lead in fighting for the welfare of all Sierra Leoneans.

Bright said they conducted an economic survey in the hardships and made recommendations for governments’ consideration.

He said that they expected key economic operators like the ECOWAS Court to ban on pregnant girls attending school and writing exams.

By Ade Campbell
To mark this year’s Universal Health Coverage (UHC) day, Government in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation commissioned a state-of-the-art blood transfusion center, at the Princess Christian Maternity Hospital (PCMH), along Fourah Bay road.

Universal health coverage is about ensuring all people can get quality health services, where and when they need them, without suffering financial hardship. Too many people are currently missing out on health coverage and Sierra Leone is no exception, especially for women and children in remote rural communities who continue to die as a result of hemorrhage, a leading cause of maternal and child mortality.

To bridge this gap and reduce the number of deaths, the Italian Government which has made great progress in UHC supported the Government to establish a new blood transfusion center of international standards to assist health workers provide safe blood to save more lives.

According to the Director for the Italian Association for Solidarity among People (AISPO) Federico Daelli, AISPO works with developing countries to strengthen and improve on blood services, which he described as an essential commodity in health care delivery.

He explained that the construction of the new blood center took 9 months and it is equipped with an all truly western system of blood service operation found in developed countries.

“Universal in UHC means for all without discrimination, therefore I am expecting that the western area regional blood transfusion center will benefit the most vulnerable who make use of the facility”. Daelli narrated that the center is fully computerized to ensure effective management.
New blood transfusion Center opens at PCMH

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reduce the burden of paper work which sometimes is responsible for the mixing up of blood test results unknowingly. "The solar powered center will provide 24 hour electricity, which means no more running around to get people who are not properly screened to donate blood which most times can be fatal!"

Providing blood takes a lot of effort, and this was why the President of the National Blood donor Association, Desmond Lewis called on Government to show more commitment to people who voluntarily donate blood and encourage more to see it as a civic responsibility to give blood, a commodity that is not for sale.

He outlined the many challenges the 5,000 more volunteers are going through, noting that records can prove that demotivation over the years has dwindled the number of blood volunteers. "We are not given the recognition we deserve and we provide the commodity to save lives. The doctor who takes care of the sick also needs blood, when in need to survive", he said.

As the highest blood donor in the country with 108 units of blood donation, Lewis says his mission is to save the lives of more infants and children through blood donation.

The Head, National Safe Blood Services, Professor Sahr Gbevo explained that having a modern blood transfusion center has been his dream, and the dedication of the new services has further energized his craving for research to improve on safe blood services, in the country. He added that with freshly trained laboratory technicians, the 1.3 million Euro project will change the narrative of blood services.

The Minister of Health and Sanitation, Dr. Alpha Dr. Wurie while formally commissioning the new facility said UHC is not just about medical treatment for individuals, but also includes services for all the population, and providing safe blood services to save lives is very important in health service delivery.

"UHC enables everyone to access the services that address the most important causes of disease and death and ensures that the quality of those services is good enough to improve the health of the people who receive them".

He noted that in 2016 Government’s budget towards health sector was 6.7%, but now it stands at 10.6% which is a demonstration and show of commitment to improve the sector.

"As a people we are very grateful to the people and Government of Italy and with an additional 10 million to be approved, other regions will also benefit modern blood transfusion centers with all equipment and training that will make health workers independent, in their various regions".

Dr. Wurie commended Minister of Works, Peter Bayuku Conteh who established contact with the Italian Government in 2016 to intervene and upgrade safe blood services in the country. The health and sanitation minister assured that by 2030, Sierra Leone would have gone a long way in achieving goal 3 in the SDG’s