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UAE kick-starts Sierra Leone recovery

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LAST week's visitation of the First Lady of Sierra Leone to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to create awareness of the coun-

try's investment potential and extension of assistance to the children ravaged recovering from a brutal civil war has started yielding dividends.

Alice Sia N. Koroma, wife of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, visited the UAE for three days from June 15, on the invitation of the Dubai based Institute of International Research in

the Middle East (IIRME) to address the 5th Corporate Social Responsibility Conference (CSR) which she did in the Le Meridien Hotel. She was hosted by the All As One (AAO), a charity based in Dubai but running an orphanage with 42 children so far in Sierra Leone.

She said that the 1991-2002 brutal civil war paralysed the country's economic mainstay, the natural resources over which it was largely fought. Over 50,000 lives were lost, and around 2 million people were left displaced, and an army of orphans was created.

"I have come to call for their help," pleaded the First Lady before well wishers, and CSR members. "I as a mother and a nurse understand their appeal and what they're going through."

She also called upon investors to her country saying that her office will "do whatever it takes" to have them establish their businesses.

The Senior 5th CSR Manager, Kosta Petrov thanked the IIRME and the AAO for "helping to bring us to the attention of the country that we had hitherto heard of except through the horrific movie, Blood Diamond." He was flanked by the AAO's Dubai based Country Manager, Mathew Morgan-Jones.

Sierra Leone, the West



The First Lady, Alice Sia Koroma.

African nation with about six million people boasts of huge mineral resources such as Gold, Diamond, Iron Ore, Bauxite and Rutile.

UAE, Arabs weigh in

Apparently, Sierra Leone is one of the six countries that will have projects financed by the Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation in coordination with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In a workshop at Abu

Dhabi organised by the foundation and the UNDP last week, it was announced that Sierra Leone, Sudan, Comoros, India, Palestine and Afghanistan would be the beneficiaries.

In similar development in the same week the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organisations (AGFUND) announced it was planning to establish "a bank for the poor" of West African region to be based in Sierra Leone.

Established in 1980, Agfund is led by Prince Talal, the father of the Saudi billionaire, Prince Al waleed Bin Talal Bin Abdul Aziz.

The "bank for the poor" of West Africa will be one of over 1,040 projects Agfund has supported since its establishment.

Struggle continues

All As One has made similar fundraising before. Last November, they hosted the Irish anti-poverty campaigner, Bob Geldof and managed to raise "money to secure a land on which to build a permanent home."

A senior official from the AAO told The Gulf Today that "We are starting to witness fruits out of the First Lady's visit," she added that still "further assistance is needed to develop the land and widen the project."



The UAE helps to bring smile the war emerging children of Sierra Leone through Dubai based All As One organisation.