Government for Sierra Leone
COVID-19 Response

Messages for community settings on how to wear and care for a cloth face mask

- Cloth masks used alone do not stop the spread of coronavirus, but they can help when used together with other actions.
    - The most effective actions to protect yourself and others against coronavirus are to wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, cough and sneeze into your upper arm or sleeve, and keep a safe distance of at least 1 meter (arms'-stretched length) from others, especially any person who is coughing or sneezing.

- Wear a cloth face mask if you are coughing or sneezing, or you are caring for someone who is coughing or sneezing.
    - If you or a family member has fever, tiredness, and cough, call 117 right away.

- Some people who get coronavirus do not show signs and symptoms but can still spread the virus to others. Wearing a cloth mask is one of the ways someone who has the virus and does not know it can help stop the spread to others.

- Masks made of cloth should be used by members of the public.

- Masks that you typically see worn by health workers in hospitals should only be used by health workers.
    - Currently, there are not enough masks around the world for all the health workers who need them. Health workers who care for coronavirus patients without the equipment to keep them safe can get the coronavirus and spread it to their families, coworkers, neighbors, and other patients.

- If you wear a cloth mask, it is important to know how to use it and care for it safely.
    - Before putting on a cloth mask, wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol-based.
    - Cover your mouth and nose with the cloth mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.
    - Tie the mask behind your head or place the elastic loops over your ears.
    - Make sure the mask fits well. Move it around using the ties or elastic loops to get the best fit. Do not touch the cloth part of the mask.
    - Once you have put on the cloth mask, do not touch your face again until you take it off.
        - If you touch the mask, wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
    - Cloth masks should not be lowered when speaking, coughing or sneezing.

- To take off the mask safely, undo the ties or loops. Do not touch the front of mask or your eyes, nose and mouth. Carefully fold the cloth mask inside out and hold it by the ties or loops.
- Wash the cloth mask right away with soap and water or put it in a plastic by itself until you can wash it later. After removing the mask from the plastic, throw the plastic away.
- Dry the cloth mask well before using it again. Iron the cloth mask if possible.
- Use a fresh, clean cloth mask every day. If the mask gets damp from sweat or from talking or breathing, replace it with a clean dry one.

- It is good to have at least two cloth masks so you have a clean, dry one you can wear while the washed one dries.

- Masks should not be placed on young children under the age of two or any person who cannot remove it themselves or tell someone they need help.

- Do not share cloth masks with others.

- Place cloth masks that have tears, cuts, or holes in a plastic and throw away.