PRESS RELEASE

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**SOS CHILDREN’S VILLAGES AND DHL SIERRA LEONE LAUNCH THE YOUTHCAN! PROJECT, A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY AND THE PROGRAM GOTEACH**

SOS Children’s Villages, in partnership with DHL has launched a Youth Can! Project and GoTeach program for Youth Employability in Sierra Leone. With the theme: ***Youth Empowerment for Self-Reliance***, the event took place at the Radisson Blu, Mammy Yoko Hotel in Freetown on 14th April, and was presided over by the Minister of Youth Affairs, Mr Mohamed Bangura and the SOS International Director of Region West, Central and North Africa (WCNA) Mr. Benoit Piot.

The Youth Can! Project with GoTeach program will directly benefit 350 young people with skills training, a business start-up for young entrepreneurs, employability and mentorship. The project is a global partnership between SOS Children’s Villages International and the private sector which aims at supporting young people who have lost parental care or are at risk of losing it to successfully transition from school to decent work and independent life. In this joint effort, partners and employees are mobilized to share their time, skills, expertise and career stories both online and offline. The project will also provide skills trainings and mentorship that will enhance the employability of young people in the country.

“*SOS Children’s Villages is realigning its programming with the government of Sierra Leone strategic priorities particularly in the area of Human Capital Development and with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. While we continue supporting children of our target group, we also engage in reintegrating young people within communities. In doing so, we must ensure that they are well prepared for self-reliance, because we know that young people leaving care settings are disproportionately affected by the youth employment crisis. SOS Children’s Villages therefore invest on the empowerment and employability of young people so that they can become independent when exiting our programmes and contribute to the development of their communities. The shift in focus further underpinned our 2030 strategy and the SOS Care Promise, both promoting innovation of qualitative and locally rooted alternative care programmes in a changing global environment*: said Ms. Sophie Ndong, Country Director, SOS Children’s Villages Sierra Leone.

*“At DHL, our purpose is connecting people and improving lives. The YouthCan project in partnership with SOS Children’s Village in some way, resonates with our mission of improving lives. We believe that this project will help to transform our youth and give them the impetus to overcome challenges and to be self-reliant,”* stated Mr Alphonso Pratt, Country Manager DHL Express Sierra Leone.

A panel discussion also took place immediately after the launch where eminent personalities spoke on the topic: ***Youth Empowerment for Self-reliance- integrated solutions from multiple actors.*** It is envisaged that this project will support government’s efforts in human capital development and enhance the employability of beneficiaries. SOS Children’s villages strives to build families for children in need and help them shape their own future and contribute on the development of their communities

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**About SOS Children’s Villages**

***SOS Children’s Villages is an international non-governmental; organization founded in 1949 and operating in 136 countries and with over 70 of experience in supporting children who have lost parental care or at risk of losing it. Established in Sierra Leone in 1974 in Freetown with sub-offices in Bo and Makeni, SOS Children’s Villages Sierra Leone is the second oldest in Africa. We work with partners and communities to help families care for their children and provide family in which the love of a care giver is essential***

**About DHL – The logistics company for the world**

***DHL is the leading global brand in the logistics industry. Our DHL divisions offer an unrivalled portfolio of logistics services ranging from national and international parcel delivery, e-commerce shipping and fulfillment solutions, international express, road, air and ocean transport to industrial supply chain management. With about 400,000 employees in more than 220 countries and territories worldwide, DHL connects people and businesses securely and reliably, enabling global sustainable trade flows. With specialized solutions for growth markets and industries including technology, life sciences and healthcare, engineering, manufacturing & energy, auto-mobility and retail, DHL is decisively positioned as “The logistics company for the world”.***

***DHL is part of Deutsche Post DHL Group. The Group generated revenues of more than 66 billion euros in 2020. With sustainable business practices and a commitment to society and the environment, the Group makes a positive contribution to the world. Deutsche Post DHL Group aims to achieve zero-emissions logistics by 2050.***