SEND GHANA
(A Subsidiary of SEND Foundation of West Africa)

For Immediate Release

September 6, 2021

SEND GHANA is appalled at the government's consistent delays in paying cash grants to households depending on the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Programme (LEAP). We also observe a trend in providing two-cycle payments, which is often occasioned by the late release of funds.

It is our profound view that this runs contrary to the established norm of paying beneficiaries bi-monthly. In recent times, funding for LEAP payments has become irregular and unpredictable. This development is eroding public confidence in the effectiveness of the LEAP to eradicate poverty and address inequality. Besides, it is a derision of the country's quest to attain Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2 and 10 in particular. We urge the government to depart from this deviation to safeguard the financial liberties of the poor and vulnerable people who are depending on the cash transfer programme.

In January 2021, the government combined the 69th and 70th cycle payments that went out to 333,967 LEAP beneficiary households. The 71st and 72nd cycle payments, due in March and May 2021, respectively, were delayed and paid together in June. The 73rd payment cycle was due in July, but our investigations have revealed that beneficiaries are yet to receive their cash support. It is uncertain when the 74th cycle, which is also now due, will be paid. The delayed payment has resulted in the denial of income to 344,023 households made up of approximately 1.5 million (1,516,421) Ghanaians who depend on LEAP for their daily sustenance.

SEND GHANA finds the inconsistencies and incessant delays in the release of funds for LEAP payments unacceptable, especially within the context of the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic. We are particularly concerned that those whose livelihoods are adversely affected due to the persistent delays include orphans and vulnerable children, persons living with severe disabilities, and the aged.

Vision: A Ghana where people's rights and well being are guaranteed.
The Mission of SEND is to promote good governance and the equality of women and men in Ghana.
Governments around the world underscore the effectiveness of safety nets in protecting vulnerable populations in times of pandemics. Therefore, there is no better time for the government of Ghana to prioritize strengthening its social protection delivery than now.

We implore the government to be mindful of the distressing consequences of delaying LEAP payments to beneficiaries. We also call on the government to release funding for the payment of LEAP arrears without further delay, while taking urgent steps to put a permanent end to this creeping phenomenon.

Signed

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(Deputy Country Director, SEND GHANA)