On the 16th March 2011 the United States of America Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Michael Owen and Entourage including delegation from AIDS Health Care Foundation paid an official visit to the HIV and Infectious Diseases reference Laboratory reconstructed by the National HIV and AIDS Secretariat situated at Lakka in the outskirt of Freetown. In his address he praised the government of Sierra Leone for the leadership role played in stabilizing the HIV epidemic in the country. He also lauded the effort and energetic leadership of the Director, Dr. Brima Kargbo for transforming a dilapidated structure to a modern and next to non Reference Laboratory in Sierra Leone. He described Sierra Leone as a Centre of excellence. He further said that Sierra Leone because of its laboratory policy is above many other countries in the Sub- region.

He reiterated that the USA will continue to work with Sierra Leone especially in training staff of the Reference laboratory.

The Director of the National HIV and AIDS Secretariat, Dr. Brima Kargbo in his address informed the Ambassador and team that the idea of a reference laboratory was initiated by him.. He said the laboratory started from a humble beginning with just two rooms and a generator in 2005. With the support of Key partners: World Bank, CDC Atlanta in the USA, Global Fund to fight HIV, TB and Malaria, UNICEF, WHO the laboratory can now boost of quality staff and equipments, which has successfully elevated the laboratory to laboratory of excellence.

The team made a conducted tour to the various units in the laboratory: Logistics and quality control unit, Serology unit, Cellular unit, Sample reception unit, Microbiology unit, which is not yet in operation and molecular unit.

Few challenges where highlighted by Dr. Abdulai Kamara who supervises the day to day operations of the Reference laboratory. These are some the challenges:

- Roofing and ceiling of the molecular wing of the laboratory.
- Landscaping of the compound
- Construction of a security post
- Fixing of few doors