



UNITED NATIONS
SIERRA LEONE



2022

**UN ANNUAL
RESULTS REPORT**
Sierra Leone



2022

UN ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT

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UN COUNTRY TEAM IN SIERRA LEONE

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) is composed of the heads of all the United Nations (UN) agencies, funds and programmes active in Sierra Leone. The UNCT leads the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020- 2024, with its steering committee co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) and the Minister of Planning and Economic Development.

21 UN Agencies, Funds, and Programmes signed the UNSDCF 2020-2023. The UNCT is composed of 17 resident agencies and 4 non-resident agencies. 4 International Financial Institutions (IFIs) also closely interact with the UNCT. The UN family works as One UN with the Government and development partners to deliver sustainable development interventions across People, Prosperity, Planet, Partnership, and Peace.



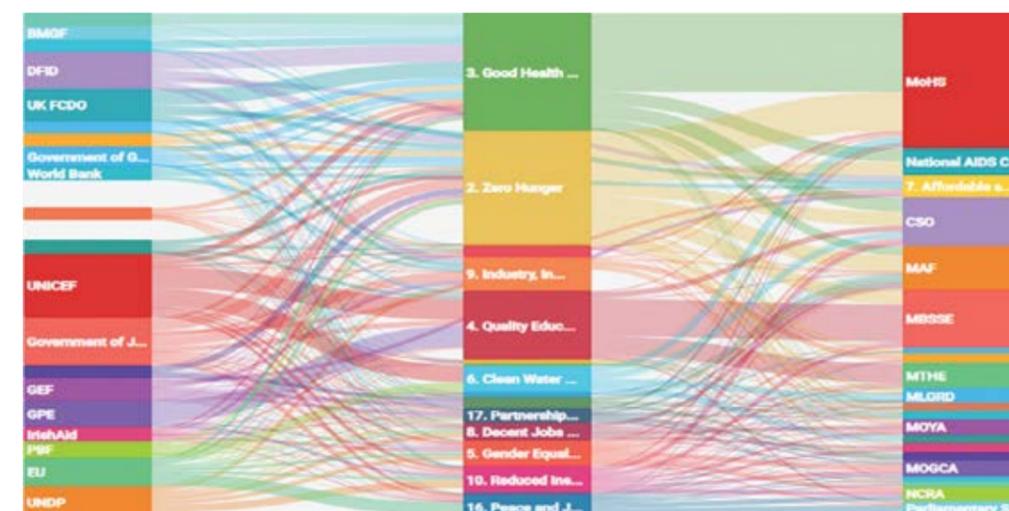
KEY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

The key development partners of the UN in Sierra Leone are the Government of Sierra Leone, IFIs, donor governments and development agencies, civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations, the private sector, other public sector institutions, academia, the mass media, and the people of Sierra Leone. Through productive collaborations, we have together advanced objectives of the UNSDCF in 2022. The UNCT also wishes to thank our dedicated implementing partners in helping us to progress the 2030 Agenda in Sierra Leone.

We wish to give special acknowledgement to the co-chair of the UNSDCF Joint Steering Committee, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, and the Government Ministries who serve as members of the Committee —Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security; Basic and Senior Secondary Education; Gender and Children’s Affairs; Health and Sanitation; and Social Welfare.



LEVERAGING UN INVESTMENTS TO ADVANCE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



This graphic shows how UN funding is contributing to the work of different agencies and partners to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



FOREWORD

The UNCT continues to implement the UNSDCF with significant achievements in 2022. This report captures notable results gained together with the Government of Sierra Leone and the UNCT's key partners.

The impact of the UNCT is seen across the four strategic priorities of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. These include:

Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security, and Climate Resilience: The UNCT contributed to strengthening systems and wider adoption of sustainable and climate-smart agricultural, fishery, and agri-business practices. This led to 10,005 farmers, including 395 boys and 370 girls, and 11,173 community members benefitting from improved access to information, inputs, technology, financial services, and linkages to markets. Further, 216,000 schoolchildren from 1,020 schools in 5 districts were provided with nutritious and diverse fortified meals through the implementation of a new seasonal national school feeding menu. UN also took lead in strengthening the capacity of the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) on geospatial technology that assisted in the rollout of Voluntary Guidelines on Governance and Land Tenure in Sierra Leone.

Transformational Governance: The UN contributed to the enactment of several development-enabling bills, including the recent signing into law of the Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act, which seeks to increase the number of women in positions of power in both private and public sectors ensuring that at least 30% of leadership or decision-making roles are set aside for women.

Access to Basic Services: During the year 2022, the gross enrolment rate for pre-primary education rose from 20.6% (in 2021) to 24% and doubled compared to a baseline of 12.6%. The transition rate between primary and lower secondary education increased from 97.6% to 120%, and primary gross completion rate increased from 79.6% to 95%, showing significant progress towards the goal of universal basic education. Additionally, UN support contributed to the notable decline recorded in the country's maternal mortality ratio from 507 to 443. Further, clean and renewable energy penetration, up to 26% in rural communities has been achieved.

Protection and Empowerment of the Most Vulnerable:

Through collective efforts in pursuit of the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the UNCT strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (MOGCA) and the Rainbow Initiative to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and to eliminate harmful practices. Through this support, 336 cases were reported and 2,240 received a comprehensive package of GBV response services in the 8 One-Stop care centres. The UN supported the SGBV response - seeing 44 sexual penetration cases committed to High Court. Also, 53 convictions were secured on cases of sexual penetration, rape, property deprivation, and domestic violence.

Even with these advances, significant challenges remain in the context of the impact of multiple and interconnected global crises. Efforts would have to be redoubled to support Sierra Leone to address long-standing weaknesses in the fundamentals of the national economy, build resilience to natural hazards and external shocks, and to provide greater economic opportunities and empowerment for all Sierra Leoneans, regardless of region, gender, generation, or disability status.

As a UNCT with 21 resident and non-resident agencies, funds, and programmes, including the IFIs, we renew our commitment to faithfully accompany Sierra Leone in its quest for sustainable development as we present to you the 'One UN' 2022 Annual Results Report. In doing so, we would ensure that we work together in delivering as one, remain focused on our shared priorities of peace, good governance, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and ensure that no one is left behind in accessing basic services and economic opportunities.

I thank the Government of Sierra Leone, IFIs, development partners, civil society groups, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, other public sector institutions, the academia, the mass media, and the people of Sierra Leone for their contributions to the efforts of the UNCT in 2022. Through productive collaborations, we advanced the objectives of the UNSDCF. In particular, the UNCT wishes to thank our dedicated implementing partners for helping us to progress the 2030 Agenda in Sierra Leone.

Babatunde Ahonsi
United Nations Resident Coordinator
Sierra Leone

SIERRA LEONE AT A GLANCE

POPULATION 7,092,113 

-  41% Urban
-  59% Rural
-  42% of the population is under the age of 15

FOOD SECURITY

-  3.8 million people is food insecure.
-  2.2 million people chronically hungry.
-  1.6 million people acutely hungry.

MATERNAL AND INFANT MORTALITY

-  1 in 32 babies die during their first month of life.
-  1 in 563 pregnant women die due to complications from pregnancy or childbirth.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

-  83% of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years have undergone some form of FGM, with
-  61% already having undergone FGM.
-  1 in 7 adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 are currently married.
- Approximately
-  half of all women believe a husband is justified in beating his wife.

CHILD MARRIAGE PREVALENCE

-  Girls married before the age of 18 years, as a proportion of all girls is 30%

FGM PREVALENCE

-  Proportion of women and girls aged 15–49 years who have undergone FGM is 83%

NUTRITION

-  29.5% of children under 5 are stunted.
-  5% of children under 5 are malnourished.

EDUCATION

- Only
-  1 in 10 children aged 3–5 years attends an early education programme.
- About
-  half of children aged 3–5 years are developmentally on track, but the majority have below average literacy and numeracy skills.
-  82% of primary school-aged children attend school.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

-  59.5% of households have access to an improved source of drinking water, with a roundtrip collection time of no more than 30 minutes – though only 2% are actually accessing water from safely managed sources.
-  23% of households have soap and water for handwashing.
-  16% have access to improved toilet facilities that are not shared with other households.
-  17% still practice open defecation.
-  35% of peripheral healthcare units and 26% of primary schools do not have appropriate WASH facilities.
-  More than 80% of under-five deaths at hospitals have environmental health and sanitation-related causes.



1. COUNTRY CONTEXT

According to the 2015 Population and Housing Census, Sierra Leone has a total population of 7,092,113, of which household population is 7,076,119, and institutional population is 15,994. The population annual growth rate between 2004 and 2015 is 3.5%¹. 59.2% of the population in Sierra Leone is multidimensionally poor while an additional 21.3% is classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty². The poverty rate is estimated to have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. However, since 2021, poverty is estimated to have declined, albeit slowly, due to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth which occurred mostly in the capital-intensive mining sector³. Extreme poverty in rural areas rose from 9% to 13%, although it remained unchanged nationally. Sierra Leone has shown a minor improvement in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) score, with an increase of 0.025. Sierra Leone's HDI value for 2021 is 0.477, which puts the country in the low human development category and keeps it ranked 181 out of 195 countries and territories. Life expectancy at birth and average years of schooling increased by 5.4 years and 0.9 years respectively while the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita decreased by 2.8%⁴.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP) (2022), 73% of Sierra Leoneans are food insecure. Annual consumer price inflation (year on year) for January 2023 stood at 38.48%, with food inflation reaching 47.51%⁵. GDP growth in 2022 was revised downwards to an estimated 2.8% from an earlier forecast of 5.9%⁶. The country's nascent economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic was disrupted in 2022 by a net negative terms-of-trade shock with the onset of the war in Ukraine. The overall fiscal deficit was projected at 5.0% of GDP in 2022⁷. The economy remains mostly agrarian, with agriculture contributing 57.5% to the GDP in 2022⁸.

The country is vulnerable to climate change, leading to climate change impact disasters and events. According to the University of Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index for 2019, Sierra Leone is among 10% of the countries of the world that are most vulnerable to climate change-induced hazards.

Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Council elections will be held on 24 June 2023. A new electoral system, based on proportional representation in the form of district block, will be used for the Parliamentary and Local Council elections, while the presidential and mayorship election will continue to be based on simple majority, first past the post. Political tension has increased in the run-up to the June 2023 elections, and it is hoped that the country's record of peaceful elections and respect for its outcomes will be maintained.



2. UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM RESULTS THROUGH THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

2.1 Overview of the Cooperation Framework Results

In October 2019, the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Sierra Leone and the Minister of Planning and Economic Development for the Government of Sierra Leone signed the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2023. This framework is currently in its penultimate year of implementation as signed. However, the life of the UNSDCF is extended by a year (extended as such; 2020-2024) to align with the national development planning cycle. The implementation of the UNSDCF involves 17 resident and 4 non-resident UN agencies, funds, and programs working to support Sierra Leone's national development priorities and strategies as outlined in the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2019-2023, as well as progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Efforts to strengthen both financial and non-financial partnerships have been made, while prioritizing gender equality, human rights, conflict sensitivity, and inclusivity. The recommendations from the Food Systems Summit are being integrated into programmatic work to promote sustainable and inclusive transformation of food systems in Sierra Leone.

This report details the progress made in 2022 towards achieving the outcomes and outputs outlined in the UNSDCF. The 2022 results provide support to the people of Sierra Leone through capacity strengthening, technical assistance, information, support, strengthened governance, sustainable management of resources, direct service provision and protection of the left behind, benefiting communities, and promoting sustainable development.

OUTCOME 1

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY, AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



In 2022, **10,005 farmers** including 395 boys, and 370 girls, and 11,173 community members, benefitted from improved **access to information, inputs, technology, financial services, and linkages to markets** made possible through strengthened governance and systems on sustainable and climate-smart agriculture, fishery, and agri-business.



To support land reform efforts including sustainable use of land and natural resources, **2,500 individuals received training on geospatial technology** as part of the rollout of the Voluntary Guidelines on Governance and Tenure in Sierra Leone.



216,000 school children from **1,020 schools** in **5 districts** were provided with **nutritious and diverse fortified meals** through the implementation of a new seasonal national school feeding menu.

RURAL PEOPLE ARE BANKABLE

Rural people are not looking for handouts. Rather, they seek opportunities to access agricultural inputs and markets and financial services that can enable them to transform their livelihoods and their communities. The IFAD and the GoSL established the Rural Finance and Community Improvement Programme (RFCIP) in 2008 to help ensure that rural communities have access to financial services. In 2022, the program now boasts 76 Rural Financial Institutions (RFIs) located in rural towns and villages across the country.

Marie Thaimu Kamara is 49 years old, married, and a mother of three children. She is a preschool teacher and earns a modest salary, which is just enough to pay for food to feed her family. In 2012, when the Mambolo Financial Services Association (FSA) first opened its office in her village, its objective was to support community groups. Marie joined a credit group of 5 members. As a shareholder, Marie was able to access her first loan of US\$400 and invested in a start-up business selling cement, rice, and flour. In the following years, taking another loan, she bought 2 vehicles. She used the trucks to diversify her business by offering cargo hauling services between Mambolo and the capital, Freetown.

Reflecting on the development and impact between 2008 to 2022, Marie expressed thanks to Mambolo FSA, she notes "I can consider myself a powerful and successful woman. I have employed my husband and sent my two daughters to university and my boy to secondary school. I continue teaching while managing my business at the same time."



Marie Thaimu Kamara, a shareholder beneficiary of the Mambolo Financial Services Association (FSA).



OUTCOME 1

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY, AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

By 2023, Sierra Leone benefits from a more productive, commercialized, and sustainable agriculture, improved food and nutrition security, and increased resilience to climate change and other shocks.

OUTPUT 1.1

Farmers especially women, youth, and other vulnerable groups to have equal access to information and decision-making opportunities on land tenure, knowledge of improved agricultural practices, inputs, technology, financial services, linkage to markets, leveraging appropriate technologies and innovations.



- Over 7,720 farmers across 6 districts accessed information and support to improve agricultural practices and use of technology through 140 farmer field schools, 78 farmer groups and 57 agriculture extension workers and Community Youth Contractors. This included training on the Technical Package for Rice Production which resulted to 53% adoption of the package among farmers. Farmers were also trained on the effective use of farming machines for rice and cassava post-harvest production, and post-harvest management of rice from warehouse management to food safety and quality assurance. Supplies, tools, and technical assistance were provided to strengthen post-harvest infrastructure such as development and restoration of 31 drying floors.
- 1,000 inland valley swamp farmers, 501 farming households, and 170 farmers were supported on inland valley swamp cultivation, Gender Action Learning System with nutrition education, and Good Agricultural Practices certification through farmer field schools and farmer cooperatives. As a result, 40 communities were supported with a system for continuous cropping of rice and vegetables throughout the year which also prevented deforestation. In addition, 500 compost pits for organic manure production were established, and 50 hectares of irrigation systems were fenced. Certified farmers accessed information on best agriculture practices globally to improve the efficiency of farm processes and management.
- A total of 765 youths, including 370 young women, from 5 districts (Bo, Kenema, Kono, Tonkolili, and Western Area Rural) were supported with information, inputs, and technology on sustainable and climate-smart agriculture, fishery, and agribusiness. This encouraged youth participation in agriculture and fishery for income-generation and food security.



- At least 10,173 households accessed financial services and support from 76 rural financial institutions and Village Savings and Loans Associations, and Agricultural Financing Facility. In 2022, 1,350 community leaders (66% women, 34% men) from 45 farmer groups in 4 districts were trained on financial management, group cohesion and business principles. Communities with trained community leaders were awarded seed fund equivalent to US\$214 each to support establishment of Village Savings and Loans Associations. Through the Agricultural Financing Facility, an equivalent of US\$399,000 was disbursed which supported 2 large poultry farmers, one agro-processor and 4 agricultural groups to increase productivity and improve linkage to markets.
- 33.3 kilometres of road were rehabilitated and maintained in 8 locations in 5 districts (Bo, Bombali, Kenema, Port Loko and Western Area Rural) by 8 UN-supported small and medium enterprise contractors. This resulted in the recruitment of 350 community people for road rehabilitation, rejuvenation of fishing business, and increased access to markets. A total

- of 1,106 farmers from 146 farmer groups benefitted from increased incomes and improved linkage to structured markets and the Home-Grown School Feeding program. Agricultural Business Centers were able to sell up to 70 metric tonnes of rice through their aggregation systems which generated approximately US\$45,707 in revenue for smallholder farmers thereby improving the livelihood and food security situation.
- More than 500,000 people from 5 districts (Falaba, Kambia, Koinadugu, Port Loko, and Tonkolili) benefitted from strengthened governance, sustainable management of fisheries, farmer group mobilization and management, and electrification efforts towards increased livelihood and income through access to technology, finance and markets. Farmer group leadership and governance in 40 farmer groups improved due to tailored governance strengthening support to improve trust and accountability. A 10,000-litre fuel tank and dispenser were installed in Konakri-Dee community in Port Loko, which supported mini-grid electrifications.



OUTPUT 1.2 

Land and other natural resources (forests, minerals, marine, wetlands, etc.) are utilized in a sustainable and equitable manner.

- To support land reform efforts including sustainable use of land and natural resources, 2,500 individuals received training on geospatial technology as part of the rollout of the Voluntary Guidelines on Governance and Tenure in Sierra Leone in collaboration with landowners, land users, local authorities, CSOs, the Ministry of Lands and other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

OUTPUT 1.3 

Access to diversified, nutritious and safe food is increased, and adequate dietary intake improved.

- For over two-thirds of the school year, 216,000 school children from 1,020 schools in 5 districts received nutritious meals based on the newly designed seasonal national school feeding menu to ensure provision of diverse and nutritious foods.
- Over 5,200 school children in 2 districts, Kambia and Pujehun, accessed diversified and nutritious foods daily through the home-grown school feeding programme. The programme organized school assessment verification exercise, procured 130 metric tonnes of local rice equivalent to US\$103,000 from 146 farmer organizations, and enabled cash transfer amounting to US\$21,000 for schools to buy fresh nutritious vegetables from local smallholders who are mostly women. 2,040

headteachers and school management committee members composed of community leaders and parents were engaged and trained on food safety, hygiene and sanitation, kitchen management, and use of the national school feeding menu.

- National food systems improved access to diversified, nutritious, and safe foods continued to improve through intensified political commitment and leadership through the Office of the Vice-President and the Scaling Up Nutrition movement. Further, investment in the food system was strengthened and transformed into a sustainable one. Capacity of key food system actors were strengthened through the construction of local complementary food processing facilities based on standardized design and layout, ISO certification for the calibration of equipment by the Sierra Leone Standards Bureau and Real Value Food Manufacturing Company to ensure food safety, and operationalisation of the temperature and humidity laboratory of the Sierra Leone Standards Bureau.
- By the end of 2022, there was better-enabling environment to improve dietary intake through policy development, evidence-generation, and community mobilization supporting the adoption of optimal food and nutrition practices. The National Nutrition Policy 2022 - 2031 of the Directorate of Food and Nutrition under the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) was finalized through technical and financial contribution from the UN, World Vision International, and other nutrition stakeholders. The handbook on the Breastmilk Substitute Act 2021 was disseminated to support awareness-creation and compliance on the marketing and use of breastmilk substitutes. The Food Safety Costed Work Plan was developed

to initiate country efforts on food safety through the International Food Safety Authority Network from 5 key ministries (health, agriculture, trade, fisheries and environment).

- Formative research on adolescent health, nutrition, and support systems was completed to support development of an adolescent nutrition strategy. Over 2,400 nutrition actors nationwide composed of policymakers, nutrition champions, health care professionals, and mothers support group members were engaged and mobilized to promote and uphold optimal breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices.

OUTPUT 1.4 

An enabling environment for sustainable agriculture, food and nutrition (regulatory, institutional, research and policy framework) is in place.

- Research, and policy development capacity of domestic financing, agriculture, food, and nutrition institutions in the country was strengthened as demonstrated by the use research findings to inform policies. Critical information reported from continued food and nutrition information system strengthening revealed an estimated 73% food insecure population during the post-harvest season, and the average inflation rate for food and non-food items reached 43%. The capacity of 130 food and nutrition staff of key Government ministries and agencies were strengthened to support data collection and analysis of the Food Security Monitoring System and quarterly market price bulletin.
- The National Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Information Strategy and Nutrition Surveillance Guidelines were completed as a result of consultations and discussions with more than 100 food and nutrition actors to support harmonized evidence-generation and monitoring of the nutrition situation in the country. Domestic financing for nutrition amounting to US\$300,000 was released by the GoSL for the procurement of nutrition therapeutic supplies.
- For the improvement of sustainable management of fish products and the prevention of fish product contamination, the UN supported Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources in constructing fish landing infrastructure, hygiene facilities, and liquid waste treatment benefiting 500,000 persons in the Konakri-Dee community.



OUTPUT 1.5



Improved competitiveness and trade compliance of selected value chains.

Agriculture product competitiveness was supported through:

- The use of new varieties of cocoa in 750 hectares of cocoa plantations;
- Establishment of 100 oil palm and 50 cocoa farmer field schools;
- Mapping of 1,432 value chain actors;
- Completion of a value chain study for rice, vegetable, oil palm, and cocoa which resulted in a multi-sector innovation platform for sustainable agricultural research; and
- Improved awareness and understanding on good agriculture practices through ISO certification of 32 small and medium enterprises on quality management systems.

OUTPUT 1.6



Preparedness systems in place and functional at community level to mitigate the impact of climate change.

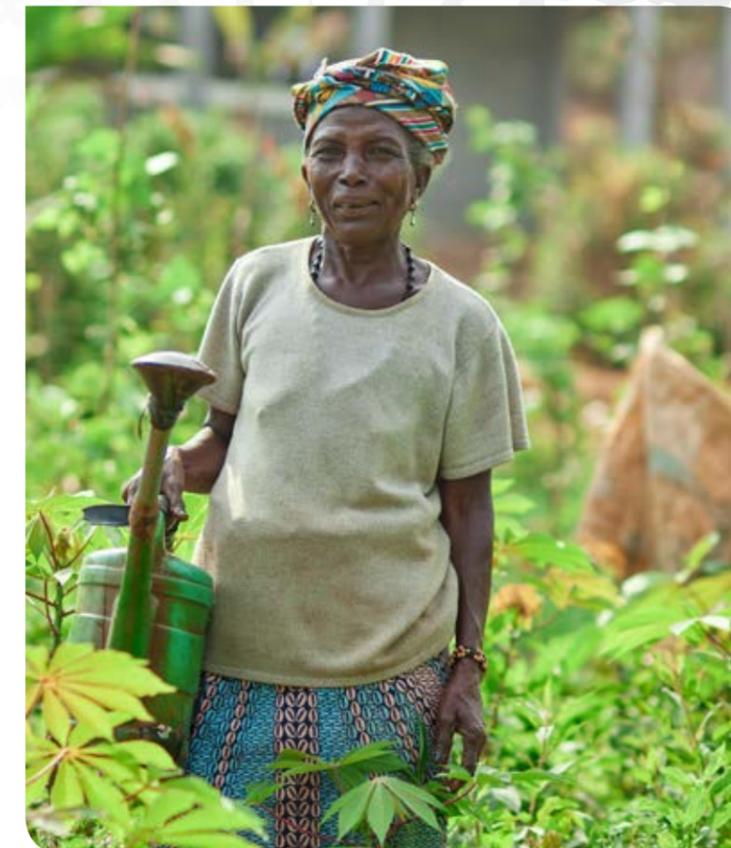
Capacities of government and national institutions have been enhanced to prepare, respond to, and manage disasters including those derived from the impact of climate change. National Disaster Management Agency staff and disaster responders in Sierra Leone are currently strengthening national and sub-national disaster preparedness and response systems. Data analysts were deployed to disaster-prone districts to provide technical backstopping and quickly analyse beneficiary data for rapid response. The pilot of a Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation and Integrated Human Mobility Assessment Tool increased the government's capacity to assess and strengthen its capacity on environmental migration and disaster displacement. District



councils' technical staff were trained, resulting in the integration of Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaption Plan, and National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan into development plans. The Climate Information Disaster Management and Early Warning System (CIDMEWS) platform was launched to strengthen the early warning system for climate-related disasters.

Improved policies and strengthened governance for policy enforcement led to a strengthened enabling environment for climate change and disaster preparedness and response. With support from the UN, policies, standards, and plans related to disaster risk reduction and management were updated, including the Climate Change Policy and a gender-sensitive strategic plan for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. Disaster risk reduction management guidelines were piloted in 4 regional headquarters, resulting in the establishment of disaster school clubs. Furthermore, the Livestock Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security improved its capacity to manage zoonotic diseases across the country, while a 5-year Gender Responsive National Environmental Quality Control Management Policy and Management Policy and Standards were put in place for the strict enforcement of environmental management and the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources.

- Several disaster mitigation measures were implemented at all levels, supported by evidence-generation, strengthened capacity on disaster response, and better information and communication. An assessment report on the extensive degradation of the national park where Freetown's drinking water dam is located led to the deployment of 250 military personnel to protect the area.
- Capacity building of 986 community actors, including 567 women, was conducted to develop Chiefdom action plans for community disaster management, focusing on integrated climate change adaptation mechanisms to bring preparedness close to the community.
- The UN also supported community stakeholders in Moyamba, Bonthe, Port Loko, and Western Rural districts to enhance their skills and knowledge in doing gender-responsive climate risk reduction and disaster preparedness plans.
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan development, coastal vulnerability assessment, and income-generation through the village Savings and Loans Scheme for 300 women were implemented to adapt and mitigate climate risks and disasters in their communities.



- Risk of flooding was reduced in 6 flood-prone coastal communities through rehabilitation of 200 hectares of degraded mangrove forest, establishment of woodlots, and adoption of by-laws against sand mining and mangrove cutting.
- Approximately 175 District Disaster Management Committee members, including 80 women in 4 districts (Port Loko, Moyamba, Bonthe, Western Rural), participated in radio discussions on disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery, which built community resilience in the above communities.

OUTCOME 2

TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNANCE

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



The UN contributed to the enactment of **8 Acts**: GEWE, Data Protection, National Civil Registration Authority, Political Parties Registration & Regulation Commission (PPRC), Public Elections (PEA), National Land Commission, Customary Land Rights, Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling.



The UNCT contributed to **9 Policies, Frameworks, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Guidelines** (Migration Governance profile, Registration and Conferral of Legal identity to Refugees & Return Migrants SOP, Gender Based Violence (GBV) & Case Management SOP, National Community Health Workers Policy, Global Compact on Migration guideline, Parliamentary Standing Order, Medium-Term Revenue Strategy and the National Tax Policy.



The UN also contributed to Sierra Leone achieving **several global standards and improved rankings** like on the Corruption Perception Index, Global Peace Index, Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance, and an overall high score in implementing the 2019 EITI Standard (87.5 points) in 2022.

SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE ELECTIONS IN SIERRA LEONE

During electoral cycles, women and people with disabilities face numerous barriers which affect their full participation in civic and political processes. These include hostile and violent attitudes toward women's candidacy, difficulty in raising funds, low literacy, and lack of confidence and experience.

There are however ongoing efforts to strengthen women's political participation. In 2022, the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone through funding provided by UNDP, Ireland, and the EU established Stakeholders Coordination Groups (Gender and Disability) at district levels to serve as a channel promoting gender and disability rights, mainstreaming the Commission's institutional and programmatic gender policies, and disseminating electoral information to reach the grassroots level.

"This is our first-time gathering women and people with special needs to discuss the issue of their participation in the electoral process," said Edmond Alpha, Electoral Commissioner, Southern Region.

Presently, Gender and Disability Stakeholders Coordination Groups have been trained and formed in 11 districts out of the 16. "This training is a step in the right direction, but also an opportunity to understand the electoral process and to discuss the challenges and successes. Women should assert themselves and take their rightful place. We must encourage each other," declares Marie Bangura, Youth Chairperson of the Western Area Rural District Youth Council.



Some women political party leaders during a training session at Radisson Blue Hotel, Freetown.



OUTCOME 2

TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNANCE

By 2023, people in Sierra Leone benefit from more gender and youth responsive institutions that are innovative, accountable, and transparent at all levels and can better advance respect for human rights and the rule of law, equity, peaceful coexistence, and protection of boys and girls, women and men, including those with disabilities.

OUTPUT 2.1



Democratic institutions are inclusive and the representation of women, young persons, and persons with disabilities in elected offices is institutionalized.



- In 2022, 8 laws were passed which further enhanced inclusivity by more representation of women in leadership positions as well as improved access to services for youths and persons living with disabilities (PwD).
- The new PEA and PPRC Acts mandated more women to be included in governance and electoral process ('for every 3 nominations, 1 shall be a woman').
- Government capacities were strengthened which led to an increase in voter registration by 6.15% in 2022 (a total of 3,374,258 registered).
- The Electoral Commission's capacity was strengthened to address gender preparedness through a pre-election gender assessment to promote inclusivity in elections.
- The UN supported the review of 22 laws that hindered gender equality (which include key sections and provisions of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991). This review recommended 6 to be repealed in whole or in part; and at least 6 new laws must be enacted to bring Sierra Leone's legislative framework in line with international and regional obligations on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- The Parliamentary Standing Order was revised to enable more democratic standards in parliamentary processes and procedures.
- UN support enabled the instalment of new ICT infrastructural system, retrofitting electrical system, health and safety equipment, and ramps for use by PwD, to upgrade critical infrastructure and technology for the Parliament of Sierra Leone.
- Increased women candidacy ahead of the 2023 local council elections was advocated and supported as well as their participation and representation in three targeted districts (Port Loko, Falaba and Pujehun) for 163 participants (105 women, 58 men) was achieved with the support of the UN.



OUTPUT 2.2



Inclusive institutional frameworks (gender, youth and disability responsive) strengthened for peace, citizen's voices and participation for social cohesion.

- UN's support contributed to an increased number of women's taking leadership roles in peacebuilding, social cohesion, and peacekeeping processes and to a revised child protection framework.
- 360 Peace Mothers and Women Peace Ambassadors were equipped with skills in conflict management, prevention, and response, including being able to detect early warning signs.
- 100+ women leaders and paramount chiefs' knowledge was increased on the protection of women's rights and the gender dimensions of the White Paper as part of the Constitutional Review Process.
- 2 women were appointed to decision-making positions in peacekeeping roles as a result of the

recommendations of the UN-supported barrier assessment on meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping missions for the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces.

- Child Rights Act (CRA) (2007) was revised and gazetted. It forbids Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) before age 18 and child marriage.
- Sierra Leone Medium-Term National Development Plan - MTNDP (2019-2023) was reviewed, validated and produced.
- Supported the development of the 'Patient's Charter' to guarantee the rights of recipients of care and responsibility of health workers to provide HIV services in an environment free of stigma and discrimination in line with the Global Partnership for Action to Eliminate All Forms of HIV-related stigma and discrimination and inequalities affecting People Living with HIVs (PLHIV) and Key Populations (KPs) and other vulnerable groups.
- Increased access to social protection assistance to PLHIV and KPs through establishing a partnership agreement between National AIDS Secretariat (NAS), NETHIPS, and other HIV partners, and the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA).



OUTPUT 2.3



Access to justice is open to and affordable for all Sierra Leoneans and the rights of children, girls, women, men, including persons with disabilities are fully protected.

- The UN further contributed to the strengthening of the justice system by providing services to victims of violence and supporting the Judiciary, lawyers, and law enforcement agencies to better serve the most vulnerable populations.
- 1,200+ cases at the Magistrate Courts uploaded to justice app, enabling the judiciary to fastrack court cases.

- New Diversion and Alternatives to Detention Policy piloted in 10 family support units (FSU) in police stations across Sierra Leone.
- 2,700+ cases across 22 Magistrates Courts nationwide were monitored due to strengthened court monitors.
- 100 Family Support Unit officers, (33 women, 67 men), gained capacity to better support child survivors of violence and provided services to 4,085 children (2,761 girls, 1,324 boys).
- 83,936 children benefited from Legal Aid Board services including 2,173 for legal representation, 39,288 for legal assistance and 42,475 were reached through legal education.
- 233 cases were addressed through alternative dispute resolution in 4 remote Chiefdoms (Gbense, Soa, and Kamara in Kono District).

OUTPUT 2.4



Citizens have trust and confidence in the quality and equity of services of public institutions.

- Through UN support, trust and confidence in the quality of public services has increased for the registration of migrants, births and deaths and delivery of health and justice services.
- Set-up of the Identity Management System used to generate the National Identification Number.
- Global Aid Monitoring Report completed through a multi-sectorial engagement that identified more indicators that relate to vulnerable groups including stigma and discrimination and neglected diseases.
- SOP finalized for registration and conferral of legal identity to refugees, migrants, returned migrants, displaced and stateless populations, including disaster-affected persons.
- 4,691 community health workers were capacitated on birth notification and registration and contributed to 170,712 births registered.
- Supported the instalment of a central IT infrastructural system for the National Civil Registration Authority) to strengthen civil registration system in Sierra Leone.
- 3 Government officials from Sierra Leone's Immigration Department and National Revenue Authority capacity strengthened on Integrated Border management.
- An assessment for the installation of the Migration Information and Data Analysis System was conducted to strengthen the Sierra Leone Border Management Information System.

OUTPUT 2.5



Local governance institutions are well-resourced, service delivery functions are devolved to them, and they are service oriented.

- 2022 witnessed a surge in UN contribution to local service delivery and institutional strengthening of local councils.
- District Development Coordination Committees are now functional in all districts except Western Area Urban and an action plan for their sustainability has been developed.
- 4 cities in Sierra Leone have Migration Governance Profiles that summarise well-developed areas of the city's migration governance structures, as well as the areas that need further support and development.
- MoPED with support from the UN reviewed and updated 4 district councils' development plans. The development plans will form the basis of the 2023 budgets of these district councils.
- 49 border management personnel (2 women, 47 men) operational capacity strengthened for border and migration management services at Koindukura Crossing point in Falaba District.



OUTPUT 2.6



Government has strengthened Public Financial Management.

- Contribution by the UN has helped to better inform decision-making around strategic policy frameworks on public financial management (PFM) processes related to revenue, tax and trade.
- NRA supported to develop a Medium-Term Revenue Strategy and a National Tax Policy to bring predictability to the tax system.
- MOPED was supported to maintain and sustain the development assistance database.
- Domestic Resource Mobilization and tax compliance was strengthened through the Integrated National Finance Framework initiative and the SDG Fund for Financing Development.

- Financial consumer protection policy gazetted to improve citizen confidence in the consumption of financial services.
- Special economic zone policy of the Ministry of Trade and Industry validated.
- 100 fiduciary staff capacitated for revenue and expenditure forecasting, collection strategies and reporting, in line with internationally accepted standards.
- Produced a brief on the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for informal businesses in Sierra Leone.
- Ministry of Trade and Industry was capacitated to actualise the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), by the establishment and operationalisation of the Technical Barriers to Trade Committee, a body responsible to support trade facilitation in line with the AfCFTA Agreement.
- The targeted revenue collection in 2021 was increased by 4.1% (collection: Le6.917 trillion, target: Le6.642 trillion) which is a 26% increase compared to the year 2020 thanks to UN support to the Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce, Fiscal Decentralization Unit of the Ministry of Finance, and the National Revenue Authority.



OUTPUT 2.7



Government-wide national M&E system of development results strengthened.

- UN contributed extensively to supporting government institutions with key monitoring and evaluation frameworks and tools to enhance data collection and use.
- A fully functional Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) unit at the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development was established.

- Census data collection was completed in the first quarter of 2022.
- Supported Statistics Sierra Leone to establish a Migration Data Collection Committee.
- Capacities improved to generate high-quality data for Global AIDS Monitoring, 2022 HIV epidemiological estimates, national assessment of Procurement and Supply Chain Management (PSM) & Logistics Management Information System (LMIS) to strengthen expenditure tracking of commodities and services reporting.
- Network of PLHIV and KP organization supported with SOP for electronic-based Community Led Monitoring (CLM) tools.
- A digital national SDGs Monitoring Platform to be hosted by Statistics Sierra Leone was developed.

OUTCOME 3

ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



There is a sustained increase (to 24% in 2022 and doubled from the baseline of 12%) in **gross enrolment rate in schools**, and **primary gross completion rate** increased from 79.6% to 95%, showing significant progress towards achieving country program targets.



During the period under review, a 10% reduction in the number of maternal deaths in the country was recorded through the Maternal Death Surveillance and Response system. The 2000-2020 UN trend analysis on **maternal mortality** showed that Sierra Leone had reduced the maternal mortality ratio from 507 to 443.



Sierra Leone achieved **73.2% full vaccination coverage** of the target population for **COVID-19** and also covered over **80%** of 10-years old school-going children with the **HPV Vaccine** (to prevent cervical cancer).



Energy access increased to 29.53% in 2022 from 26.2% in 2020 and compared to a baseline of 21.6%.

THE ESSENTIALS OF INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN HEALTH FACILITIES IN SIERRA LEONE

Memunatu Bangura, a Community Health Officer (CHO) at the Gbalamuya Community Health Centre has just finished administering medication to a female patient and turns on the tap to wash her hands.

The availability of running water is taken for granted in health facilities in many parts of the world, but just a year ago, in this health center, it was a pipe dream. Providing access to adequate amounts of clean and safe water; waste management facilities for the sanitary disposal of medical and other waste; and infection prevention materials for sound hygiene behaviors are vital to reduce the spread of infectious diseases.

“We had a well but fetching water from it was very strenuous, especially when the water level was down,” says Nurse Isatu. “During some dry seasons, we could not use the well because it dried up. When pregnant women came to deliver, we had to go and fetch water to wash the equipment, clean the delivery room and they or their relatives had to go and fetch water to launder their clothes,” she adds.

As part of the Emergency COVID-19 Relief Assistance for WASH Improvement Programme, the construction of over 55 modern toilets, 33 showers, 11 laundries, and 11 waste management facilities and installation of water supply systems in the 11 PHUs covering the eight districts have had a positive impact on the health care workers and the patients.

“We believe that providing easy access to such facilities is vital to encourage good hygiene behaviors, this will in turn help to reduce the risk of the spread of infectious diseases among patients and health workers” says Bishnu Timilsina, UNICEF Chief of WASH. Nurse Memunatu is also positive. “Now my motivation for the job has increased. I can even concentrate more on the job because I don’t have to worry about or spend time trying to fetch water for use at the facility,” she says.



Community Health Officer Memunatu Bangura washes her hands in the Gbalamuya Community Health Centre in Kambia District.



OUTCOME 3

ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

By 2023, the population of Sierra Leone, particularly the most vulnerable, will benefit from increased and more equitable access to and utilization of quality education, healthcare, energy and water, sanitation and hygiene services, including during emergencies.

OUTPUT 3.1

Children, adolescents, young women and youth have increased access to comprehensive quality education services with improved learning outcomes.

Sierra Leone has achieved significant progress in education access, equity, and quality through the Free Quality School Education (FQSE) program since its launch in 2018, with a focus on marginalized children and early-years learners. Results achieved in 2022 include:

- Gross enrolment rate of pre-primary education increased to 24% in 2022 from 20.6% in the previous year and doubled compared to the baseline of 12.6%.
- Transition rate between primary and lower secondary education increased to 120% from 97.6%.



- Primary gross completion rate increased from 79.6% to 95%, showing significant progress towards achieving country program targets.
- Access and improved learning environment for over 21,000 3-5-year-old children through the construction of 29 early childhood development (ECD) centers.
- Improved competencies in reading and numeracy for over 2 million primary school children through the instruction skills and competencies development of 4,000 teachers (33% women).

The UN's support to the government in 2022 focused on policies, strategies, and initiatives that contributed to the achievement of these results, including the development and dissemination of the Education Sector Plan 2022-2026, the development and dissemination of the National Out-of-School (OOS) Children Strategy, and the rollout of the 'Reimagine Education Agenda' incorporating modern skills and the Learning Passport.

A joint venture between the government and the UN established a regional center of excellence for automotive training in Freetown, provided institutional support to three vocational centers in Bo and Kailahun, and set up a learning assessment unit at the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) that would contribute to improving assessment of learning outcomes at all levels of the school system. These initiatives have contributed to improving coordination, human capital, and socio-economic development in the country.

Institutional capacity was strengthened through the training of 8 faculty members of the Government Technical Institute, with a knowledge exchange initiative targeting the management of the GTI and the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education.

However, challenges remain, including limited government capacity and a lack of available, timely, and quality data, which result in poorly informed or delayed decisions on programs and budget allocation. The country still faces challenges in fully strengthening and transforming the system to improve foundational learning outcomes for all.



OUTPUT 3.2

The population has improved WASH coverage, quality services and positive WASH behaviours.

In 2022, the UN supported Sierra Leone in strengthening the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) system by developing policy and institutional frameworks, capacity building of partners, and evidence generation using real-time data for planning, monitoring, and resource mobilization. Specific results include:

- The collection of reliable WASH data.
- The development of sanitation policy implementation guidelines.
- The training of engineers and technicians on solar-powered pumping systems.

Additionally, the UN improved the coverage and quality of water services for rural and poor urban households and institutions, with 30 healthcare facilities and 27 schools now having access to basic WASH services. 10 communities also obtained access to safe drinking water, and 14 chiefdoms have been declared open defecation-free. 430 Communities have WASH committees and Community Hygiene Promoters who are empowered to manage all WASH activities and maintain WASH infrastructures for continued functionality while

the hygiene promoters anchor behaviour change communication around proper hand washing and safe menstrual health management.

The UN also supported the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources in constructing fish landing and processing platforms, 4 fish markets in Goderich and Conakry Dee and rehabilitating WASH facilities at 3 points of entry (Kailahun, Pujehun (Jendema) and Falaba districts) that will serve hundreds of users.

OUTPUT 3.3

The population has access to integrated people-centred health services to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

The UN collaboratively worked with the government of Sierra Leone and other development partners to improve health outcomes as presented below:

- UN supported the review, update, and development of health sector laws and policies that contributed to improved access to quality and patient safety health services.
- The Public Health Bill, and the Tobacco and Nicotine Bill, have been enacted into law with the support and advocacy of UN agencies. By 2033, 20,000 lives will be saved and SLLE 1.9 trillion in health costs and economic losses will be averted by implementing Tobacco and Nicotine Law.
- National guiding documents including policies, strategic plans, guidelines, and tools² have been developed and contributed to the Government's vision for achieving Universal Health Coverage through improved access, quality and people-centered health services.
- The first National Health Summit was successfully organized with UN support; Aide memoire summarizing the recommendations and follow-up actions were put forward and are being implemented through 18-month workplans with the target of improving health service delivery. Among other recommendations, maternal deaths have been declared as a Public Health Emergency, and UN agencies supported MOHS in establishing an incident management system and situation room for improving accountability for every single maternal death.



- UN agencies supported government efforts at ending preventable maternal and child death by strengthening the capacity to deliver quality comprehensive reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health plus nutrition. (RMNCAH+N) services at all levels of healthcare and with an effective referral mechanism.
- During the period under review, a 10% reduction in the number of maternal deaths in the country was recorded through the Maternal Death Surveillance and Response (MDSR) system. The 2000-2020 UN trend analysis on maternal mortality showed that Sierra Leone had reduced the maternal mortality ratio from 507 to 443. Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) functionality and service provision were improved with support provided to 27 EmONC health facilities in targeted districts (Western Area Urban and Rural, Bo, Bombali, Kailahun, Koinadugu and Falaba) contributing to the direct obstetric case fatality rate reduction from 3% in 2017 to 1% in 2022.
- Furthermore, 2,217 women accessed cervical cancer screening services which enabled early detection and treatment of cervical cancer. Additionally, 42 women

with obstetric fistula were successfully surgically repaired (no leaking on discharge). 54 Women with obstetric fistula were rehabilitated, provided with livelihood skills and socially re-integrated back into their respective communities.

- Quality of RMNCAH service delivery was strengthened and scaled up through development of Family Planning Policy, Guidelines, and Integrated Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care Guidelines, that provide policy and strategic framework for provision of RMNCAH services. Revising the legal framework that create suitable environment for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is well in progress.
- Supported policy dialogue that made possible SRHR service provision reform and allowed post-abortion care (PAC) to be offered in every single facility that was previously limited to BeMONC and CEmONC facilities.
- Improved skills of 236 family planning providers in health facilities in Western Area districts on SAYANA Press which enabled the introduction of self-care intervention for contraception.

- Supported conduct of National SRHR Summit which resulted in the development of National Self-care Guidelines and dissemination of the clinical mentorship framework for SRMNH.
- Supported improvement of quality of care (QoC) of health services by strengthening leadership and management for QoC at national and hospital levels, organization of a national QoC summit, capacity building of health workers on quality improvement (QI) methodologies, conduct of child death audit including mortality conference, and development and rolling out of MNH Implementation Package for reducing institutional maternal and child deaths from common causes.
- Conducted experience-of-care assessment on selected facilities that showed the magnitude and scale of disrespect and abuse including client satisfaction in the care provided. Developed QOC dashboard that facilitate data visualization and performance review.
- Completed the construction of one Basic Emergency Obstetric Neonatal Care Facility at Jojoima Health Centre (Kailahun District) and formally handed it over to the MoHS in December 2022. In addition, infrastructure improvement was completed with access to water and sanitation which improved infection prevention practices in targeted facilities.

Infant and neonatal mortalities also show a declining trend. However, a recent analysis indicates that Sierra Leone is one of the 54 countries requiring urgent acceleration of efforts to achieve the SDG 2030 target on child mortality (25 per 1,000). Sierra Leone still has the highest proportion of under-5 deaths (with over 70% of all deaths occurring in children aged 1-59 months). With UN support, key interventions were undertaken to address this situation in 2022 including:

- 10,915 children benefitted from Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) services with a survival rate of 87% (9515/10915) to reduce child mortality.
- A total of 3,601,150 under-5 children in 2022 benefitted from integrated management of childhood illnesses services (integrated community case management and/or integrated management of neonatal and childhood illness).
- To maintain the continuity and increase coverage of the management of neonatal and childhood illness in hard-to-reach communities, the capacity of 564 health workers in MNH and that of 8450 community health workers was enhanced through training.
- Strengthened child survival initiatives through training, supervision and mentoring of health care workers and community health workers on IMNCI

and iCCM. Supported the development of a child survival action plan (CSA), care for the critically sick child guideline, essential newborn care action plan (ENAP), and the Ending Preventable Maternal Mortality (EPMM) Plan.

- The percentage of women initiating early breastfeeding (skin to skin) increased from 42% to 65% by the end of 2022 following capacity building of health workers and one-to-one counselling session on optimal infant feeding for 8,474 mothers who delivered in facilities implementing the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative.
- 20 hospitals in 14 districts benefited from UN operationalization of the national policy on medical equipment maintenance, through systematic capacity building of biomedical technicians and routinization of preventive and corrective maintenance. The computerized maintenance and management system was launched, standard equipment listed, and the medical equipment lifecycle guidelines developed to guide practices, which ensured the constant continuity of services within the targeted hospital.

To reduce financial barriers for health services, the Strategic Purchasing Landscaping has been developed and Sierra Leone Social Health Insurance (SLESHI) Secretariat facilitated institutionalization of health insurance in Sierra Leone. Resource mapping and Expenditure tracking (ReMet) and Health Financing Policy Matrix (HFPM) were developed to provide more evidence on financial resources to the health sector. National Health Account (NHA) 2019-2020 was



launched and NHA 2021 reports was developed in 2022 and the capacity for the Health Financing Unit to be able to undertake NHA effectively and timely enhanced. Furthermore, government of Sierra Leone signed a domestic financing compact and created a budget line for the procurement of RH commodities and supplies for the first time.

UN supported improvement in human resources for health by facilitating the development and roll out of the Post-Graduate Paediatrics Course, Post-Basic Neonatal Nursing Programme, and MNH package of care. More specifically:

- 7 beneficiary doctors from Sierra Leone (with 3 nearing completion) enrolled in the Post Graduate Training of Paediatricians, accredited by the West Africa College of Paediatricians.
- Skilled birth attendance increased by 15% with the graduation and deployment of 260 additional midwives and 6 Surgical Assistants to health facilities across the country with UN support.
- 44 management tools for all the midwifery schools have been harmonized and adapted for the newly established direct entry midwifery training programme.
- Sierra Leone hosted the Global Coordination Meeting for strengthening midwifery education and adopted

the strategies for implementing the Framework for Action to Strengthen Quality of Midwifery Education for Universal Health Coverage 2030.

- The midwifery census was conducted and informs the National Health Workforce database for midwives.

In 2022, the UN also focused on strengthening the capacity for health supply chain management, last mile assurance, and monitoring of the utilization of health care commodities and equipment, vaccines, RHFP and HIV commodities, and nutrition therapeutics. Consequently:

- US\$ 3 Million worth of reproductive health commodities were distributed, with commodities worth US\$2.2 Million being delivered to last-mile facilities and estimated to protect 881,000 couples. 80% of targeted health centres had their maximum stock level restored at all District Medical stores.
- The integrated national health supply chain strategy was developed and validated which now provides guidance for health commodity procurement and distribution.
- Quantification and forecasting and the family planning and reproductive health service availability survey were undertaken and are currently informing policy and programming and ongoing quality improvements.



- SRHR commodities were procured for hospitals and community health centers that helped to improve access to quality SRHR services for all women regardless of their location.
- 210,000 unintended pregnancies, 76,000 unsafe abortions and 1,700 maternal deaths have been averted because of 550,000 women currently using a modern method of contraception in Sierra Leone.
- Women estimated to have their demand for family planning met with a modern method of contraception increased from 45% in 2019 to 55% in 2022.
- 99.3% of all primary, secondary, and tertiary service delivery points (SDPs) offered at least 3 modern contraceptive methods, while 90% of the SDPs offered at least 5 methods with 45% of SDPs having experienced 'no stock out' of any modern contraceptive method in the last three months of 2022.
- Essential diagnostic commodities for clinical and public health diagnostics worth over 50,000 tests were provided. These included kits for COVID-19 testing, genomic sequencing, monkeypox, yellow fever, and other laboratory consumables and supplies.
- Free health care commodities, routine and COVID-19 vaccines, medical equipment, and PPE were also procured and donated to the MoHS. UN biomedical engineer provided cutting edge technical assistance in oxygen supply chain planning, installation, and operationalization of 10 oxygen plants to MoHS personnel.

The emergence of drug-resistant bacteria and viruses is a significant global health threat caused by the abuse of antibiotics and other antimicrobial drugs. To address this issue, the UN strengthened government capacity through surveillance systems, laboratory capacity, antimicrobial stewardship, and infection prevention and control. Specifically:

- Capacity for antimicrobial resistance (AMR) surveillance was strengthened through the establishment of the AMR National Coordinating Committee that coordinates AMR surveillance, and facilitation of publication of 17 papers on AMR in the country as part of efforts to improve the availability of data on AMR and therefore aid data-driven decision making.
- The production and distribution of alcohol-based hand rub was enabled to improve hand hygiene and as was the conduct of point-prevalence surveys in 28 hospitals across the country to highlight the extent of use of antibiotics and collectively agreed on measures to control overuse of antibiotics (overuse = 75%) that contributes to AMR.



- Rational use of medicines and drugs was strengthened through supporting Drugs Therapeutic Committees in 11 Government hospitals. Also, advocated for Traditional Medicines (TRM) institutionalization into PHC directorate with development of tools and consultations with stakeholders including MOHS directorates, teaching institutions undertaken, and support for the development and launch of Assistive Technology equipment list was provided.
- Sierra Leoneans are facing a double burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases that negatively impact their quality of life and perpetuate poverty. To address this issue, the UN has been working to strengthen capacity for prevention, diagnosis, and management of these diseases at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. As a result of these efforts, in 2022, the following results were achieved:
 - A functional leprosy contact tracing system has been established in 5 intervention districts, improving access to critical interventions for leprosy patients.
 - The national TB and DR-TB guidelines have been revised, prioritizing the expansion of diagnostic and treatment services in high-burden areas.
 - Client-centered HIV services have been improved through the implementation of revised national guidelines for the management of Hepatitis B and C, Differentiated Service Delivery (DSD) operational guidelines, standard operating procedures, and training materials.



- The Roll Back Malaria Partnership has been established to strategically improve the response to malaria, resulting in increased community engagement, awareness-raising, and mosquito net distribution. In 2022, 5,584,463 people accessed malaria services, with 3,519,541 testing positive and receiving treatment.
- Health staff have been trained to deliver effective Mass Drug Administration for Schistosomiasis, Onchocerciasis, and soil-transmitted helminths.
- The number of persons living with HIV (PLHIV) who know their status and are currently on treatment has increased from 46,445 in 2021 to 58,014 in 2022, due to innovative interventions such as the acceleration of the differentiated service delivery model, advocacy for increased PEPFAR funding for Drop-In Centers, and the Condomize Campaign.
- Scale-up of innovative interventions to reduce HIV and STI transmissions, including Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis services for key populations and the development of a National Comprehensive Condom Strategy was achieved.
- Enhanced effectiveness and efficiency of national responses for HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria through the implementation and monitoring of Global Fund NFM3 and COVID-19 grants

Overall, the UN's efforts have led to improved access to critical interventions, increased community engagement, and the development of innovative strategies to reduce the burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases in Sierra Leone.

The UN also supported the people of Sierra Leone in introducing the HPV vaccine aimed at preventing cervical cancer, which has been administered to 173,458 eligible girls aged 10 years through outreach to schools, communities, and health facilities.

In addition, the UN supported the government and partners in updating and implementing the national comprehensive multi-year plan for immunization (cMYP) and annual implementation plans. Through this initiative, approximately 1,700 health workers at the national, district, and service delivery levels were trained on Immunization Integration Program, and the Reaching Every District Strategy. This contributed to better planning and management of vaccines and other supplies, improvement in the use of recording and reporting tools, and an overall increase in vaccination coverage.

Furthermore, the UN supported the government and partners in achieving and sustaining vaccine-preventable disease (VPD) surveillance performance indicators. This initiative led to the investigation of 141 Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) cases with a non-Polio AFP (NPAFP) rate of 4.1 and 97% of two stools collected within 14 days of onset of paralysis. The knowledge and skills of 1,713 health workers, including 8 National Surveillance Officers, 32 District Surveillance Officers, and 1,673 Health Facility Surveillance Focal Points, were also improved through this initiative, which contributed to achieving the Key VPD surveillance indicators.

UN supported the efforts to increase access to quality and safe health care technologies, including medical devices, mHealth, laboratories, medicines, vaccines, procedures, and systems, which led to improved efficiency in health care.

- As part of efforts to implement and strengthen quality management system, 6 laboratories conducting public health diagnostics were enrolled into external quality assurance (EQA) scheme for COVID-19 and for viral haemorrhagic fevers (VHFs) and all laboratories scored 100%.
- In addition, to improve laboratory data capturing and management, laboratory tools including registers were revised, printed and distributed to laboratories across the country.

Sierra Leone has faced numerous emergencies, outbreaks, and pandemics within the past decade in the context of a weak health system and poor infrastructure for epidemic preparedness and resilience. However, efforts from the UN and other stakeholders have resulted in improvements in pandemic preparedness and resilience. In 2022, the UN supported the health sector to build capacity

to prevent, detect, and respond to public health emergencies of international concern.

The UN ensured the multisectoral coordination of preparedness and response to public health emergencies, and 95% of public health events were detected and responded to within 48 hours. The country also complied with the implementation of the International Health Regulations monitoring and evaluation framework to strengthen health security. Sierra Leone achieved 73.2% fully vaccinated coverage of the target population for COVID-19 vaccination and 48.3% of the total population.

The UN supported the integration of COVID-19 vaccination and HPV vaccine introduction during the immunization campaign in October 2022. Additionally, UN agencies supported coordination of specimen management and referral for priority disease diagnostics to allow for timely confirmation of suspected disease outbreaks.

Sentinel surveillance of PBM, Influenza, and Rotavirus was strengthened with Rotavirus testing kits handed over to the government, and laboratory scientists were capacitated on yellow fever testing. The UN successfully introduced and roll-out of antigen RDTs for point-of-care testing for COVID-19 at Health Facility level, in all 16 districts.



The UN continued to support the MoHS to roll out the 3rd edition of Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) to enhance the public health surveillance and early warning system for early detection and prompt response to public health events. The 3rd edition of IDSR was adapted to enhance public health surveillance and rolled-out to 1,464 health facilities in all districts.

OUTPUT 3.4



Population has improved access to renewable energy in rural areas.

In 2022, the UN supported the people of Sierra Leone to access increased clean and renewable energy in rural areas following the ratification of Mini-grid regulations in 2020. The efforts contributed significantly to improvement in the status of education, health, and socio-economic development outcomes in the country.

Energy access increased to 26.2% in 2022 compared to a baseline of 21.6%. The UN continued to use the Public-Private-Partnership initiative with private operators used as partners that invest in and maintain mini grid-based electricity generation and distribution. The installation of 1.5 Mwh PV mini-grid electrification was completed for 12 new communities, 6,845 households, 23 schools, 12 community health centres, 687 businesses, and 71 public service institutions benefiting 477,115 people. Cumulatively, 4.2 Mwh mini-grid generation capacity were installed in 95 large communities.

2 new projects (funded by the government of Japan and the World Bank) were initiated to install PV mini-grid systems in 16 more communities, expecting to reach 620,462 beneficiaries in the country. Business grants and technical development support were also provided to 16 productive-use grantees, benefiting 18,874 productive-use beneficiaries and creating 337 new jobs.

The institutional capacity of Ministry of Energy personnel was strengthened to facilitate and sustain mini-grid development in Sierra Leone. The UN also strengthened the reporting system of the Electricity and Water Regulation Commission and provided technical assistance to the Sustainable Energy for All Program.

OUTCOME 4

PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT OF THE MOST VULNERABLE

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



With technical support from the UN through coordinated prevention and response initiatives, **202 SGBV cases were charged** to Magistrate Court, and **44 sexual penetration cases** committed to High Court with **53 convictions** secured on cases of sexual penetration, rape, property deprivation and domestic violence.



336 cases were reported through **GBV hotlines** (116) and **2,240 women and girls** received comprehensive package of **GBV response services** in the **8 One-Stop care centres** across the country.



Over 283 survivors of human trafficking stranded in 9 countries were safely repatriated to Sierra Leone. As part of the social reintegration process for migrant returnees, **1,341 returnees**; including **323 young women** received **protection** and psychosocial services.

RESTORING HOPES & BRINGING SMILES TO BO-JONG FLOOD VICTIMS

Jebbeh Lahai is a mother of two. Her family is among those who were seriously affected by the recent floods in Bojong. Annual floods cause serious consequences for people living on the Island of Bojong and neighboring towns and villages. Each year floods seriously impact families in the community. In 2022, floods devastated households affecting more than 400 people in Bo-Jong and its environs. The floods destroyed houses and washed away household items, farm produce, and domestic animals, among others. In the peak of the rains, floods force some of the villagers to move from Bojong to settle in neighboring villages.

Jebbeh expresses joy as she sees a boat loaded with aid including shelter, hygiene, and household materials docking at the shores of River Jong. IOM partnered Sierra Leone National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) to carry out assessments to better understand the needs of the affected community. After this process, 57 households were identified and supported in disaster preparedness and response.

Jebbeh and her family were among those who received life-saving items from IOM such as zinc panels, mattresses, and other basic household kits and hygiene items. She was gratified to receive the non-food items (NFIs), as the floods posed serious difficulties for them amidst COVID-19 and the challenging economic situation. "With these items given to us, especially the mattress, I can now sleep with comfort".



IOM delivering household items following severe flooding.



OUTCOME 4

PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT OF THE MOST VULNERABLE

By 2023, the most vulnerable, particularly women, youth, adolescents and children (especially girls), and persons living with disabilities are empowered and benefit from increased social protection services, economic and social opportunities.

OUTPUT 4.1



Community behaviour towards women and girls' rights have changed towards increased understanding and respect of these rights.

UN has contributed to progress on protecting and empowering the most vulnerable members of society by changing harmful social norms and ensuring communities have increased understanding and respect for human rights. This has been achieved through awareness and community advocacy drives in 52 communities that resulted in the reduction of child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and improved good hygiene practices, reaching 7,971 girls across Koinadugu, Pujehun and Kambia Districts. (7,695 in-school girls; 299 out-of-school girls: 47 adolescent girls with disabilities).

UN established 18 'husband' schools which enhanced the capacity of 450 men to lead community sensitizations and advocacy on GBV, taking the message to men which contributed to the reduction of GBV incidences in programme communities. Additionally, 88 men advocates and peer educators were mobilized and trained to advocate for the rights of women, prevent child marriage, and GBV, and promote SRHR. They were able to raise awareness on these issues in 44 communities across 3 Districts (Kambia, Koinadugu and Pujehun).

A national curriculum was developed for positive parenting for children 0–5, 6–10, and 11–17 years, and supported the roll-out through safe space programmes in Moyamba, and Koinadugu Districts reaching 18,080 adolescents, between 10–19 years (12,030 girls; 6,050 boys).



OUTPUT 4.2



Legal, policy and regulatory frameworks for the protection of the rights of women, children and people living with disabilities are further developed, promoted and implemented.

- The UN system in Sierra Leone contributed to national progress towards legal, policy and regulatory frameworks that promote the protection of the rights of women, children and people living with disabilities including the enactment of the GEWE Act, and review of the National Strategy for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Marriage (2018 - 2022). It also enhanced the capacity of stakeholders on the 2022 GEWE Act operational strategy including; 72 journalists from 52 media houses to support the popularization of the Act, 60 duty-bearers (32 women; 28 men) from MDA's and Local Councils, and 66 women leaders to foster mainstreaming into program planning and implementation.
- The UN established a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism to support consultations, mobilized Members of Parliament and built their capacity on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability,

which contributed to the creation of an enabling policy environment for non-discrimination through the development of a Persons with Disability Bill which is currently before Parliament.

- The Child Rights Bill (2022) which proposes abolishment of FGM for children and corporal punishment, minimum age of marriage as 18 years, and repeals outdated child justice laws, was developed and laid before Parliament for legislation.
- National HIV/AIDS in the Workplace Policy was reviewed through support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. The policy will serve as a framework for action by government, employers, and workers to prevent HIV/AIDS transmission and support PLHIV in line with international standards.
- The UN supported the development of a Social Work Bill (2022) that will provide the legal framework for the practice of social work in the country, ensuring licensing of social workers and adherence to a national code of ethics that will regulate the conduct of social workers and para-social workers.
- National Strategy on Out-of-School Children was developed with UN support. The strategy allows for greater gender equality through emphasizing the importance of girls' enrolment and retention and reproductive rights through provisions that allows for the implementation of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE).



OUTPUT 4.3



Vulnerable populations benefit from increased access to prevention and protection services related to GBV, and other harmful practices (child marriage, FGM, child labour, trafficking).

- The UN provided technical and financial support to the government to increase access to quality services related to protection, GBV and other harmful practices.
- UN support has increased access to prevention, and protection services resulting in the reduction of harmful practices against women and girls through: sensitization of 960 stakeholders on the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act of 2019; support to 2,345 people (1,160 women; 1,185 men) on SGBV referral

pathways including on 116 hotlines and on One-Stop Centers' operations to support community referrals; and strengthening of 4 District SGBV Steering Committees to enhance community-level responses. Strengthened coordination at national levels among key stakeholders working on GBV has resulted in an increased multisectoral approach to addressing SGBV responses.

- The UN has strengthened the capacity of 2 institutions (MoGCA and Rainbow Initiative) to promote gender equality, prevent and respond to SGBV, and eliminate harmful practices. The MOGCA was supported to establish and operate 8 one-stop centers, and 116 GBV hotlines, and 4 SRH Hubs across the country in collaboration with the MoHS.
- The UN has strengthened the capacity of government (86 social workers, 32 case managers, and 16 gender officers) and 28 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) service providers to improve case management, and demand generation for SRHR, family planning services, and response services for victims of GBV respectively.

- The UN supported the provision of legal aid services and representation to enhance access of SGBV survivors to justice. Through the Survivors' Support Fund, 202 cases supported were charged to Magistrate Courts, 44 sexual penetration cases committed to High Courts with 53 convictions secured on cases of sexual penetration, rape, property deprivation, and domestic violence.
- 336 cases were reported through GBV hotlines (116) and 2,240 received comprehensive package of GBV response services in the 8 One-Stop care centres across the country. The SRH Hubs have been used to provide clinical support services to GBV survivors including victims of rape and in 2022 provided a wide range of family planning services to 213 adolescent girls living in hard-to-reach communities. Additionally, 200 youths (128 women; 72 men) living in slum communities received psychosocial support and skills to enhance their psychosocial and mental health, civic engagement, and sexual and reproductive health.
- Over 283 survivors of human trafficking stranded in 9 countries were safely repatriated to Sierra Leone. As part of the social reintegration process for migrant returnees, 1,341 returnees; including 323 young women received protection and psychosocial services.
- UN collaboration with MoHS also supported 336 (130 women; 206 men) youths-at-risk, with psycho-education on the bio-psychosocial effects of drug abuse. As a result, 296 (88%) out of 336 youths have abstained from illicit drugs intake in their communities, while the remaining 12% have committed to cease consuming such drugs in the near future.
- The UN partnered with the MBSSE and Office of the First Lady to empower adolescent girls and young women to live a life of dignity, with free sanitary pad distribution, free of gender discrimination, violence, and HIV/AIDS through implementation of the Education Plus Initiative (EPI), focusing on SRHR and GBV prevention.
- With the Joint Programme to End Child Marriage, 18,306 adolescent girls between the ages of 10 – 19 years (including 8,504 girls who had dropped out of school and 301 girls with disabilities) were reached and participated in life skills interventions in safe spaces across 187 safe spaces in 4 of the highest child marriage prevalent districts (Moyamba, Koinadugu, Pujehun and Kambia). The girls were equipped with life skills to make healthy lifestyle choices, to prioritize their safety and well-being, and for boys the goal is to have them as influencers to challenge social norms that stifle girls' empowerment.
- UN has strengthened engagement with 1,150 women farmers including women living with AIDS resulting to increased knowledge on SGBV, HIV, and SRH in Makeni and Karene. These women farmers also benefited from the provision of agricultural equipment to increase value of crops.
- The UN supported Action Plans for increased awareness raising and sensitization on GBV referral protocol, development of by-laws for the prevention of stigmatization and ostracising the survivors and their families and increased voluntary testing on HIV and AIDS.

OUTPUT 4.4



Vulnerable groups have increased essential life skills and knowledge (comprehensive sexuality education and HIV education).

- To equip adolescents to make informed decisions on their quality of life in fulfilling their potential, the UN supported the MBSSE in its roll out of CSE in schools. CSE learning and teaching materials were developed and validated for Class 1 to JSS 3, and a training manual for in-service teachers was developed for teachers to roll out CSE in schools.



OUTPUT 4.5
Vulnerable groups have improved entrepreneurial and financial literacy, and employability.

UN contributed to changing the economic situation of vulnerable groups, particularly young persons, by fostering an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and improving employability. In 2022 the UN directly supported efforts on rural SMEs, improved skills, employability, and incomes of women and young people through knowledge transfer in various technologies and innovation areas.

Some of the highlights of gains through the aforementioned approaches include:

- The UN achieved significant results in training rural dwellers, with 519 completing training programs such as Gender Entrepreneurship Together (GET), AHEAD, and Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) programs.
- Training, transfer of technology, and economic empowerment for job creation of youth and women from engaged project road contractors were implemented.
- Establishment of 4 fish farms that created livelihood options for 280 young women and men in Tonkolili, Koinadugu, Kailahun and Falaba districts.



- Support to 10,466 entrepreneurs (92% women) to enhance their business development skills and financial literacy.
- Financial literacy of 200 youth enhanced, and of 300 community women in rural areas that increased their income through accessing financial services from the Village Savings and Loans Associations.
- Supported Mobile Money Operators to improve distribution of digital financial services, including training over 2,000 women as mobile money agents.
- 34 (20 Informal and 14 Formal) Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) accessed investments in form of grants to grow their enterprises as part of the Growth Accelerator Programme initiated in 2022 which is premised on supporting early-stage innovative and impactful entrepreneurs.
- The UN also supported the development of Consumer Protection Guidelines for consumers accessing financial institutions and services, to protect vulnerable consumers from fraud, increase their confidence in the financial sector and to support consumers to better manage their finances and respond to any financial shocks.
- The UN supported the government of Sierra Leone in establishing the National Youth Empowerment Fund which will support 100,000 youths in entrepreneurship, employment, and empowerment.

OUTPUT 4.6
Quality data is available and used for decision-making.

- With support from the UN and in collaboration with MoPED, a report on enablers and drivers of women's participation in revenue mobilization in Sierra Leone was produced. The report highlights the critical issues affecting women's participation in domestic revenue mobilization in Sierra Leone and proposes key recommendations to increase their involvement in the formal business sector and their contributions to stimulating economic activities and national revenue.
- UN supported the finalization and dissemination of the 2021 Integrated Bio-behavioural Surveillance Survey (IBBSS) study and launching by the Global Fund Country Portfolio Manager, which contributed to improving the knowledge of citizens and duty-bearers on the burden of HIV-related disease and service utilization,

and highlighted progress towards reaching 95-95-95 UNAIDS targets. The study on the situation of adolescent girls and young women, and boys, exploited through sex work was also completed and validated, with the available results being used for decision-making including planning, monitoring, and reporting.

- Several data management system support initiatives have been provided to the country, with the aim to improve the health outcomes of pregnant women, provide support for persons with disabilities, and enhance the evidence base on disability issues to inform policies and decision-making. The initiatives include the upgrading of the social registry system, SPRINT, to pre-register PwD. A pilot program called PresTrack App has been launched to register, track, and monitor pregnant women in real-time, ensuring they receive quality services throughout their pregnancy. Furthermore, evidence on the impact of unsafe abortions on maternal mortality has been generated and disseminated. Additionally, a Digital Dashboard on disability has been established to track evidence on disability issues and will be integrated into the SDGs Monitoring Platform.
- The UN supported the Government in updating the multidimensional child poverty estimates, which will be released in 2023 pending further trend analysis. The support has focused on building government officials' capacity to undertake multidimensional poverty analysis employing the most up-to-date methodology.

OUTPUT 4.7
Vulnerable people have increased access to and use of social protection and are more resilient to disasters and emergencies.

- Vulnerable populations' social protection was strengthened because of the development of strong policy frameworks through the support of the UN.
- The UN supported the Government in finalizing the National Social Protection Strategy and validating the National Social Protection Bill in 2022, which has created an enabling environment for discussion around expanding social protection coverage to children and persons with disabilities. The Bill would strengthen social protection sector coordination, and the Strategy sets out strategic steps toward implementing the policy objective of universal coverage of social protection by 2040.

• The UN has continued supporting the Grievance Response Mechanism (GRM), which was actively utilized at all stages of targeting, enrolment, and disbursement of Social Safety Net (SSN) and COVID-19 Emergency Cash Transfer to improve the protection of vulnerable populations.

- The UN supported 292 women to attain increased understanding of disaster risk reduction and climate change policies through promotion of alternative livelihoods. In addition, 75 women were financially empowered through cash grants for the implementation of sustainable waste management techniques.
- 6 coastal communities' capacities were strengthened (Lakka, Hamilton, Tombo, Conakridee, Shenge and Turtle Island) to adapt to climate change and adopt practices to mitigate disaster risks through the adoption of by-laws against sand mining and mangrove cutting.
- To reduce the disadvantages and inequalities that make people vulnerable to HIV infection, the UN in partnership with National Commission on Social Action and the National AIDS Secretariat supported awareness-raising for 38 CSOs on basic elements of social protection schemes to protect PLHIVs.
- The UN decreased the vulnerability of 1,421 households to the effects of natural disasters by increasing the capacity of individuals, communities and authorities to deal with the adverse effects of a disaster through cash transfers to 225 PLHIV.
- In 2022, the UN procured and installed a small-scale waste treatment system to handle waste locally, procured hygiene tools & PPEs and rolled out an intensive 3-phase drainage cleaning in 10 major drainages of Susan's Bay community. It also completed the design and review process for the construction of 5 bio-digester toilets, installation of water supply system and enabling works to prepare the Susan's Bay area for redevelopment by the community, Freetown City Council, and the Government of Sierra Leone.

• To strengthen south-south learning and sharing of best practices on home-grown school feeding, the UN facilitated virtual visits to its Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil in March 2022. This exercise encouraged GoSL to provide support to local farmers to grow food for school children. This led to the UN supporting 146 farmer organizations through its agricultural programme, to supply food directly to schools.

• The UN helped to reduce the protection risks faced by women and girls by securing 64 energy-efficient cooking stoves to aid schools in Kambia and Pujehun, thereby reducing the costs and time spent on cooking, as well as smoke inhalation from cooking using traditional stoves.

2.3 Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

Innovative partnerships forged by UN Sierra Leone helped to advance the SDGs and leverage financing to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNCT supported implementation of the country's Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) developed in 2020 to mobilise public and private resources to support realization of the MTNDP. The UN supported a range of initiatives, including a series of business dialogues between the National Revenue Authority and businesses in the informal sector (where more than 70% of economic activity takes place), on tax reforms and compliance, as well as the importance

of business formalization. NRA designing tailored programs geared to this group of taxpayers, such as neighbourhood tax collection units.

Going forward, the UNCT's efforts on collective partnerships and resource mobilization would be reinvigorated. Innovative funding streams and catalytic partnerships would also be explored, including South-South cooperation, green finance, diaspora finance, public-private-partnerships, and other non-financial partnerships, while also maximizing the impact of existing joint programmes under MPTFs such as the Human Security Fund and the PBF.

2.4 One UN Sierra Leone: Coherence, Effectiveness, and Efficiency

WHERE WE WORK



UN Sierra Leone continued to deliver together under the UNSDCF, ensuring coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency across 7 thematic and 2 operational areas. The UNSDCF Joint Workplan 2020-2024 was reviewed with the host government in November 2022.

Operations Management Team (OMT)

The Operations Management Team (OMT) reviewed the Business Operation Strategy (BOS) by 31 March 2022 and continues to monitor progress at monthly meetings to ensure UN programme efficiency in Sierra Leone. Regular reviews of the Daily Subsistence Allowance, Transport, and Fuel Allowance for non-UN personnel were done to support programme delivery. To mitigate the impact of the depreciation of Sierra Leone Leones on UN contracts with local vendors and contractors, the OMT prepared risk mitigation measures that have been helpful in executing UN programmes. OMT collaborated with the Staff Association on the 2022 Interim Local Staff Salary Survey and analyzed the impact of the depreciation of the Leone on local staff salaries.

UN Communications Group (UNCG)

In 2022, the United Nations Country Group (UNCG) used the lessons learned from the 2021 UN Annual Results Report launch ceremony to improve coordination efforts and deliver better results as one UN coordination mechanism. Despite facing challenges such as limited capacity-building opportunities, a lack of a dedicated budget, and regular requests for funding from media



houses, the UNCT received excellent visibility on the implementation of the UNSDCF. The group ensured inclusive involvement of all agencies and supported those without dedicated communication persons. In the first quarter of 2022, UNCG uploaded 11 stories and 3 publication documents to the UN in Sierra Leone website, branded all SDG materials, and regularly shared information on social media, resulting in increased followers on Twitter (from 25000 to 32,000) and Facebook (20,000 to 28,000), with 75% men and 27% women, in the age bracket of 25-34. In 2022, the UNCG effectively disseminated common messaging aimed at shifting public perception on key development indicators.

In addition to supporting successful UN Town Hall sessions as platforms for staff socialization and improvement of workplace, the UNCG also led planning and organizing efforts for the UN Day celebrations, which included a 5KM walk and an exhibition showcasing the work of agencies, funds, and programs. It also planned and coordinated 3 joint UN project monitoring missions across the country led by the Resident Coordinator. The missions all included SDGs-themed town halls with university students and community groups.

Disability Inclusion Group (DIG)

Through the implementation of a UNPRPD-funded joint programme, aimed at enhancing the capacity of national stakeholders to ensure disability inclusive policies, systems and for the effective implementation of the CRPD and SDGs; the UN supported the ongoing revision of the People with Disabilities Act (PWDA) Act of 2011. Once enacted, the revisions will clarify certain elements in the Act such as the definition of persons with disabilities and the main structure of a Disability Fund outlined in the 2011 PWDA. The national monitoring mechanisms of disability inclusion-related SDGs was also strengthened through the development of an SDG Monitoring Platform in collaboration with Statistics Sierra Leone. In order to strengthen coordination among disability rights actors, the UN in partnership with the Ministry of Social Welfare and the National Commission for Persons Living with Disabilities, supported the establishment of a multi-stakeholder coordination committee and capacity building of OPDs.

Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR)

Through the inter-UN agencies Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) coordinating platform, the UN supported the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) in its flood preparedness, mitigation plan, and response to the August floods in Freetown, which affected 1,817 families from 18 vulnerable urban communities. The NDMA through EPR support was able to register affected households within 48 hours, which allowed for timely provision of much-needed relief, including food assistance, protection, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) support.

The EPR also supported the NDMA in reviewing and updating its Early Warning System (EWS), assessment and registration tools, and provided technical assistance for the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for relief and disaster management committees.

Additionally, the EPR facilitated the provision of life-saving supplies and access to basic services through partners in response to a series of eight urban fires in Freetown slums.

The EPR also organized a five-day Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) - Disaster Management training for NDMA, Red Cross, MDAs' Emergency Focal Points, and INGOs staff at the national level to strengthen their capacities in disaster management and coordination.



Gender Thematic Group (GTG)

The GTG provided support to the UNCT leadership in 2022 to fulfill their GEWE commitments through joint advocacy events. As a result, 18 Heads of Agencies committed to the NO Manel Pledge during the 2022 IWD event, and the Honorable Chief Justice of Sierra Leone launched 4 knowledge products during the 16 Days of Activism events. Joint advocacy events were also held at the community level to end SGBV.

In addition, the GTG supported the UNCT in strengthening its capacities to integrate GEWE commitments into UN programs and operations. 16 GTG members received training on the use of Gender Marker to assess gender integration in joint projects.

Data on gender parity within the UN in Sierra Leone were analyzed to assess inclusivity, revealing that only 40% of UN personnel were women. No agency achieved overall gender parity, but three were within 5 percentage points of gender parity.

To monitor accountability to GEWE within UNCT programs, the GTG submitted the SWAP Annual Report. The report showed progress from the previous year, with 6 indicators meeting minimum requirements, 6 indicators approaching minimum requirements, and 2 indicators exceeding minimum standards.

Human Rights

The UNCT, supported by the Senior Human Rights Adviser, continued to mainstream human rights in UN programmes and activities including through the implementation of global human rights policies such as the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) and the integration of comprehensive human rights sections in the CCA and other UNCT programmatic tools. During the year, UNCT provided support to key national human rights institutions and organizations mainly the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL), the Sierra Leone Correctional Service, the Parliament, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and CSOs.

The UNCT also supported the Government in the development of its Action Plan to implement recommendations from Sierra Leone's 3rd cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and facilitated preparations for the country's 4th UPR review. Also, the Senior Human Rights Adviser conducted series of activities aiming at reinforcing the capacity of the National Reporting Mechanism to International Treaty Bodies (NRM) and UPR. Through the year, the UN RC and the UNCT continued to engage the Government on key human rights issues such as FGM, civic space,

arbitrary arrests and detentions, and prison conditions, and supported national efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights including the passage of the GEWE Act 2022 through Parliament.

Joint HIV Group

The Joint Team on HIV and AIDS facilitated access to HIV treatment services from 46,445 in 2021 to 58,014 in 2022 and new HIV infections reduced by 10% during the year under review. The Team supported the development of differentiated services delivery for HIV testing and treatment guidelines in addition to eMTCT integration guidelines. Over 7,000 key populations have been supported to access pre-exposure prophylaxis and 12 SGBV one stop centres provided with post exposure prophylaxis to rape survivors to avert HIV infections. Additionally, the Joint Team supported the network of people living with HIV (PLHIV) and key population organizations to develop the community charter and patient charter to accelerate community HIV responses. Community-led monitoring tools were developed and used for monitoring the AIDS response, which contributed to three policy dialogues with relevant stakeholders. To create an enabling environment for the AIDS response, policy dialogue with law enforcement agencies was organized on the rights of key population and harm reduction strategies, which contributed to a reduction in the number of sex workers arrested during the year. The joint team also facilitated the recruitment of an attorney on retainer basis to defend arbitrary arrest of key populations.

Challenges included perennial stockout of HIV commodities as a result of delayed clearance of commodities from the port, has been a major setback for the country progress on the 95:95:95 targets. Additionally, domestic financing of the national response has remained low and dwindling leading to extreme dependence on Global Fund, PEPFAR, KfW and the UN funding of the national response. Further, although there hasn't been any human rights crisis over the last three years, HIV related stigma and discrimination remains high due to repressive laws that criminalizes same sex relationships.

A major lesson during the year was introduction of the CLM tools and differentiated service delivery have heightened community response and evidence-based advocacy leading to policy changes and people centered HIV response.

UN Network on Migration (UNNM)

The UN Network on Migration (UNNM) was launched in June 2021 to facilitate effective, timely and coordinated UN system-wide support to Sierra Leone on migration governance. Members of the UNNM have discussed



strategies to integrate Migration, Environment, Climate Change and Risks Reduction into programming, topics reflected in a workplan adopted early in 2022. The UNNM supported the Government to capture progress made on GCM implementation as well as contributed to the discussion looking at concrete ways to address gaps in policies and services along the migration landscape.

Youth Task Team (YTT)

The International Youth Day celebrations for 2022 were successfully organized by YTT in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs under the theme "Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a World of All Ages" despite tight and tense conditions due to the violence from the August 10th demonstrations.

The UN Sierra Leone Youth Advisory Group, consisting of 12 youth (7 females and 5 males), representing all regions of Sierra Leone, was established to advise the UN Country Team on key youth issues and hold them accountable in line with the implementation of the Youth2030 Strategy.

Two UN Joint Programmes were developed, and one was approved in 2022: "Empowering Youth Bike Riders as Sustainable Agents of Peace" was jointly developed by UNDP and UNCDF, submitted to UN Peace Building Fund and subsequently approved with a funding of US \$1,995,450. "Skilling for digital era – Enhanced opportunities for youth in Salone" was prepared by UNDP, UNCDF and UN Women and presented to Irish Aid for funding, with the aim of promoting peace, addressing vulnerabilities, and enhancing opportunities for disadvantaged youth in Sierra Leone.

2.5 Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

The UNSDCF 2020-2023 is budgeted at US\$371.3 million, of which US\$90.2 million was obtained by the end of 2022. The cumulative amount of expenditure by year-end 2022 was US\$76.2 million, reflecting a strong delivery rate of 84%.

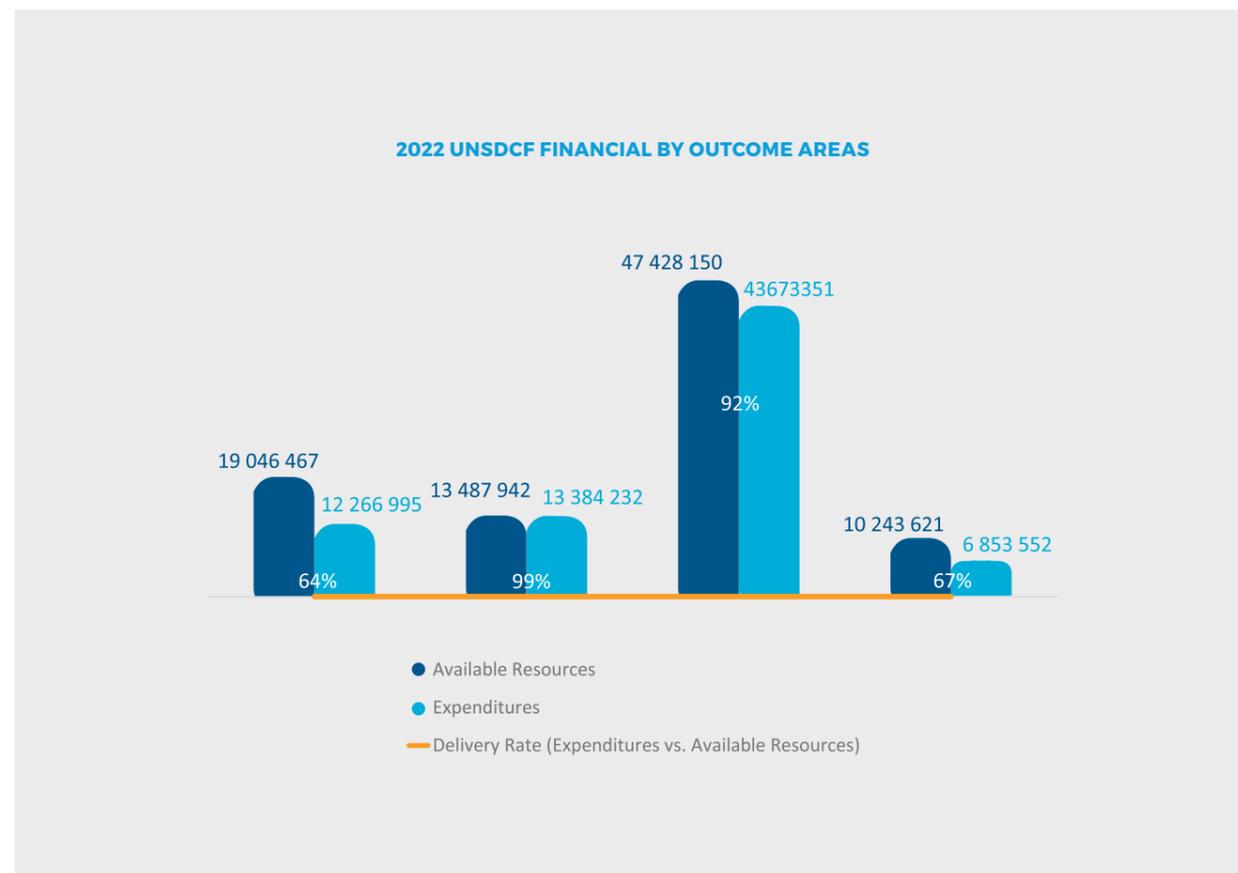
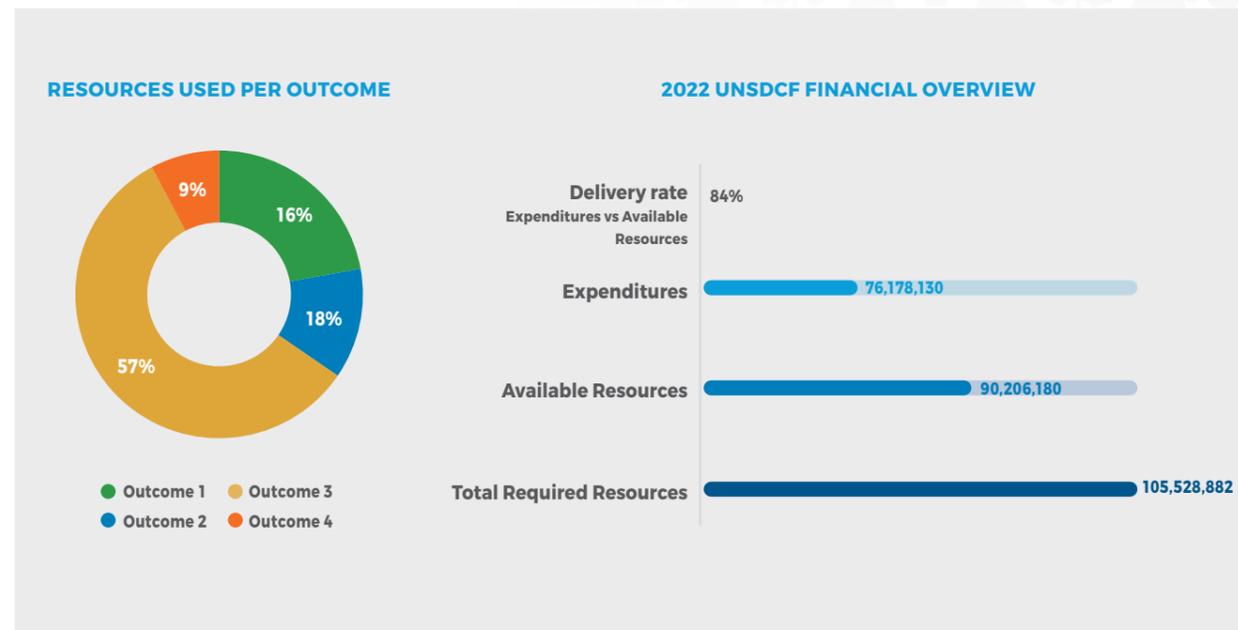
Guided by the UNSDCF Joint Financing and Resource Mobilization Strategy that was drafted and approved by UNCT in 2021, several previously awarded joint programmes continued in 2022, including those funded by the Migration MPTF, the Human Security MPTF, the UNPRPD MPTF, and the Joint SDG Fund, with the latter awarding an additional US\$250,000 in 2022 to the ongoing JP on Domestic Resource Mobilisation, for work linked to the Global Crisis on Food, Energy, and Finance. This additional work is focused on developing an SDG Investors Map, conducting research on Diaspora Finance, and studying the potential of Special Economic Zones.

The UN Secretary General’s Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) country portfolio has further expanded,

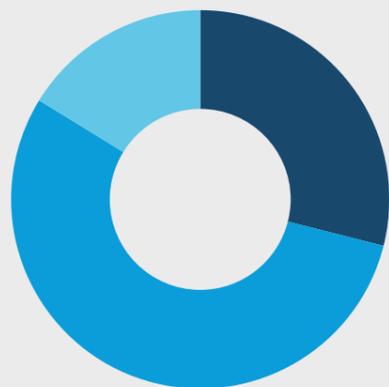
based on proposals developed with support from the Peace and Development Advisor. Four new programmes were added to the portfolio in 2022: 1) “Promote the creation of an enabling environment for the conduct of peaceful elections and the strengthening of social cohesion in Sierra Leone,” a JP funded at US\$3,000,000 and related to the 2023 national elections; 2) “Youth in Politics and Peacebuilding” to be implemented by an international NGO working in Sierra Leone with US\$1,900,000; 3) “Empowering Youth Bike Riders as Sustainable Agents of Peace in Sierra Leone” at US\$1,900,000 million; and 4) “Localization and Working -Together for Peace: Repositioning Women-focused CSOs for Sustainable Peace in Sierra Leone” at US\$2,000,000.

With a total investment of about US\$75 million from 2007 to the present in 49 projects, of which US\$8.8 million was approved in 2022, PBF remains the most strategic Multi-donor Trust Fund of the UNCT in terms of project awards.

UNSDCF Outcome Areas	Total Required Resources	Available Resources	Expenditures	Delivery Rate (Expenditures vs. Available Resources)
Outcome 1. Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security, and Climate Resilience	29,347,512	19,046,467	12,266,995	64%
Outcome 2. Transformational Governance	13,487,942	13,487,942	13,384,232	99%
Outcome 3. Access to Basic Services	52,500,627	47,428,150	43,673,351	92%
Outcome 4. Protection and Empowerment of the Most Vulnerable	10,192,801	10,243,621	6,853,552	67%
Total	105,528,882	90,206,180	76,178,130	84%



GENDER MARKER



1. Contributes to gender equality/women's empowerment in a limited way

Total 2022 Available \$ 2,583,6911
 Total 2022 Expenditure \$ 15,175,928
 Total 2022 Available \$ 29,963,658

2. Gender equality/ women's empowerment is a significant objective

Total 2022 Available \$ 48,924,379
 Total 2022 Expenditure \$ 30,018,030
 Total 2022 Available \$ 54,997,078

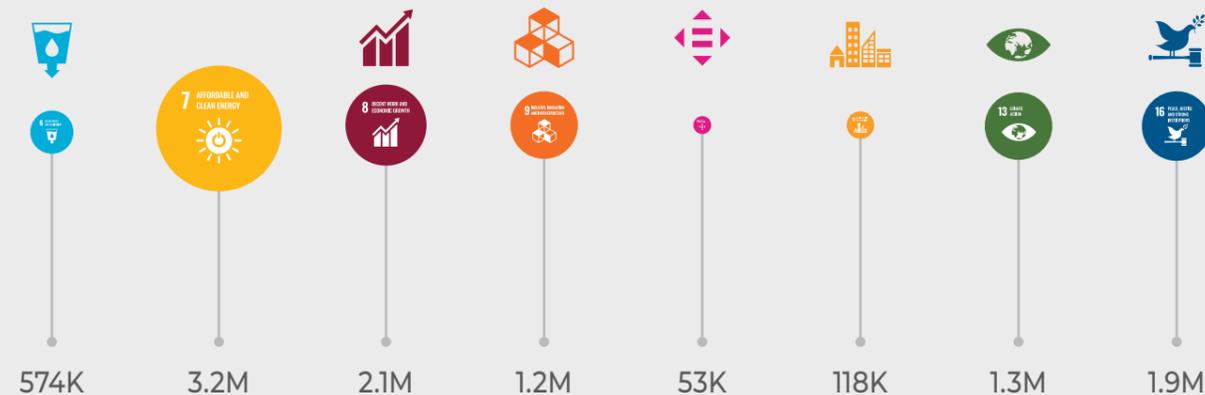
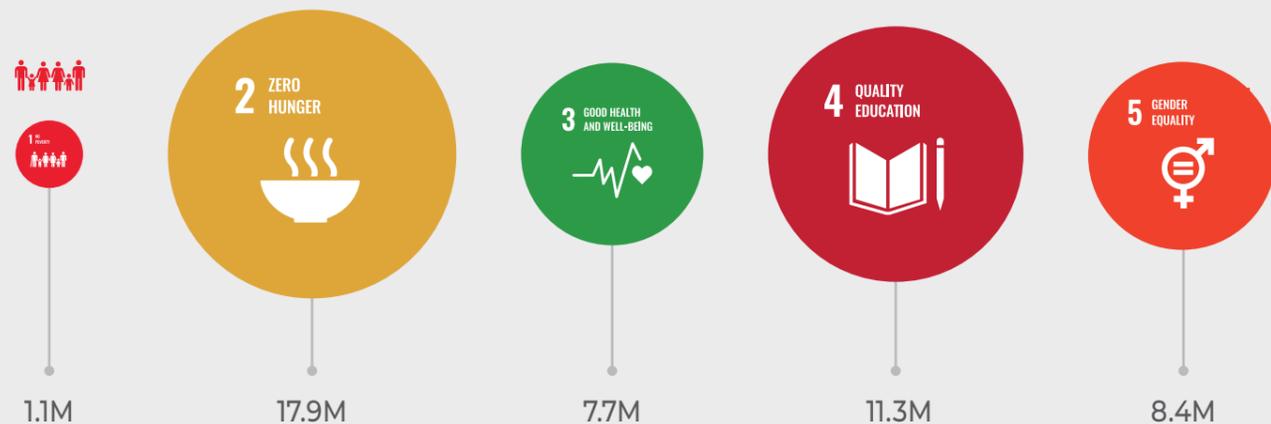
3. Gender equality/ women's empowerment is the principal objective

Total 2022 Available \$ 14,491,322
 Total 2022 Expenditure \$ 8,207,385
 Total 2022 required \$ 491,370,424

- 1. Contributes to gender equality/women's empowerment in a limited way
- 2. Gender equality/ women's empowerment is a significant objective
- 3. Gender equality/ women's empowerment is the principal objective

Funding Source	Programme Title	Implementing Partners	Approved Funding
Peace Building Fund Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (2022-2023)	Empowering Youth Bike Riders as Sustainable Agents of Peace in Sierra Leone	UNDP / UNCDF	\$1.9 million
Peace Building Fund Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (2022-2023)	Localization and Working-Together for Peace: Repositioning Women-focused CSOs for Sustainable Peace in Sierra Leone	UN WOMEN / UNDP / World Vision	\$2 million
Peace Building Fund Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (2022-2023)	Youth in Politics and Peacebuilding	Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	\$1.9 million
Peace Building Fund IRF (2022-2023)	Promote the creation of an enabling environment for the conduct of peaceful elections and the strengthening of social cohesion in Sierra Leone	UNDP / UNICEF	\$3 million
Joint SDG Fund Development Emergency Modality (2022)	Addressing impacts of the Global Crisis on Food, Energy, and Finance	UNDP / UNCDF	\$250,000

2022 EXPENDITURE (US\$)





3. UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR 2023

1. National SDG implementation, results tracking, and monitoring mechanisms.
2. Operationalising the SG's Prevention Vision (prevent and manage risks, strengthen resilience).
3. Engaging key stakeholders and high-level actors on Climate Action (post-COP27) and for post-Global Summit implementation of national roadmaps for food systems and education systems transformation.
4. Leveraging the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to ensure that early recovery and conflict sensitivity are embedded in emergency responses.
5. Leaving No One Behind, Human Rights and Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda.
6. Business Innovation within the UNCT (Business Operations Strategy).

Although general elections take place on 24 June 2023, and might delay implementation of some of the projects, the UNCT continues to work with the government to support the implementation of the Mid-Term National Development Plan.

UNCT will particularly prioritize Leave No One Behind principles and the Secretary-General's "Our Common Agenda" in its activities. Gender equality and women's empowerment will continue to be pro-actively mainstreamed in UN programs and advocated at the national level. A complete Common Country Analysis will be done and the current UNSDCF (2020-2024) will be evaluated to guide the roadmap and inform the design of the next UNSDCF (2025-2028).



ENDNOTES

- ¹ 2015 population and housing census
- ² UNDP briefing note for countries on the 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index
- ³ 2022 World Bank Macro Poverty Study
- ⁴ UNDP2022 HDI report
- ⁵ Statistic Sierra Leone monthly CPI figures
- ⁶ 2023 budget speech
- ⁷ 2022 World Bank Macro Poverty Study
- ⁸ Stats SL 2021 & 2022 GDP Report

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