



UNITED NATIONS
SIERRA LEONE



NEWSLETTER

JULY 2023 EDITION

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Mr Babatunde Ahonsi - UN Resident Coordinator

MESSAGE FROM THE RC

The most important asset of the UN is its staff and not its financial resources – the people, the technical expertise, the service ethos, and the commitment that each one brings to the work they do on a day-to-day basis.

This was the crux of my message when we last met on Friday, 9th June, for an in-person Town Hall meeting held at the New Brookfield's Hotel Hall with an estimated 300 staff members in attendance.

In addition to the newsletter and special events, the Town Halls that are held twice a year are an integral part of our efforts to interact with each other, for the UN staff to be able to ask questions and get clarifications on issues, and for us as the Country Team to be able to account to you on our joint leadership.

At the Town Hall, I congratulated the agencies, funds, and programmes for their support of Sierra Leone's development aspirations in line with Agenda 2030 and for working together to achieve impressive results. Highlights include delivering on time a high-quality 'One UN' Annual Results Report for 2022, the UNDP-led Elections Support Project, and establishing the UN Youth Advisory Group, among others.

Town Hall



Senior management and staff at the Town Hall

Globally, improvement is seen in only 12% of the SDGs; 50% have stagnated, and more than 30% are retrogressing. Therefore, the Summit will be an occasion to generate re-commitment towards rescuing and accelerating the implementation of the SDGs, and countries will be expected to come to the SDG Summit with a progress report and a clear plan for making up lost ground in their respective countries.

I am very pleased that the Town Hall also allowed staff members to be briefed and to ask questions on the recent

I noted the need to shift our focus after the elections to conducting a full Common Country Analysis (CCA) and the independent evaluation of the current UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSCDF). Both exercises will provide us with the analysis and insights for designing the next Cooperation Framework for 2025-2028, which will be aligned with the next Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP). Several agencies will also be advancing the development of their next country programme documents.

Also, I informed staff members that in parallel with the September 2023 General Assembly session, there will be the SDG Summit in which the Heads of State are expected to review progress on the delivery of the SDGs to date.

salary increment and the next steps; prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse; staff welfare issues like 40 hours per week proposal; security updates ahead of the elections on 24 June; and a presentation on the code of conduct and obligations of UN staff during and after the elections period.

A lot of work remains for us to do in support of SDG attainment in Sierra Leone. But I am confident that our dedication to advancing the SDGs and the core values of the United Nations will yield notable returns.

Babatunde Ahonsi
UN Resident Coordinator

FOR ACCOUNTABILITY OF & FOR THE YOUTH, UN SIERRA LEONE LAUNCHES YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP

UN Resident Coordinator Babatunde Ahonsi has noted how proud he was to have a diverse group of Sierra Leonean youth representing a broad range of youth interests and priorities selected to serve as members of the United Nations Youth Advisory Group (UN YAG).

He expressed this sentiment recently during the launching of the 12-member panel after a period of onboarding, the first of its kind for the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Sierra Leone.

In his keynote address, while welcoming the Youth

to the panel, Mr Ahonsi said, "The UN places high importance on the role of the Youth. In Sierra Leone, the UN has and will continue to work closely for and with the Youth."

He also expressed his excitement on behalf of the UNCT to embark on this journey together with the UN YAG and reaffirmed the potentially crucial nature of the group's input into joint UN programmes and projects.

The Resident Coordinator also used the occasion to remind the UN YAG members that they will also

greatly benefit, as they can learn more about UN programmes in Sierra Leone and the functioning of the United Nations globally.

He concluded by expressing his confidence in the members for being selected for this group but also in the skills they have gained and the work accomplished during the onboarding, and that he looks forward to working closely with them in ensuring that Youth is a key focus and priority of the UNCT.

Mr Mohamed Orman Bangura, Minister of Youth Affairs, who also attended the launch ceremony, indicated his interest in and support of the UNCT working with the UN YAG.

He also highlighted the importance of youth perspectives and ensuring they are provided with a platform for engagement.

The UN YAG onboarding and launch took place from 29 May – 1 June 2023. They will be the primary mechanism for accountability of both Sierra Leonean Youth to the UNCT and of UNCT to the Youth, as envisaged by the Youth2030 Scorecard.

Members of the UN YAG are a group of individuals nominated (either through self-nomination or through a UN Agency) and selected through a diverse team of UN representatives using defined criteria. These criteria aimed at a diverse panel taking into consideration gender and geography to ensure that they represent the Youth across Sierra Leone.

Their onboarding consisted of presentations, information sharing, dialogue, and developing the UN YAG work plan with the UN Youth Thematic Team

and an external moderator. They also gained a strong foundation in their role for the next 12 months.

Priorities raised by the Youth include health, climate education, upskilling, agriculture, and gender equality. A UN YAG member expressed the shared view that “We are not working for ourselves; we are working for others and for the upcoming voices.”

The panel will also play a crucial role by providing the UNCT with new perspectives, information, ideas, critiques, and lessons learned.

Their key responsibilities include, among others, the following: support and promote the vision, mission, and values of the United Nations and the achievement of the Youth2030 Strategy, Agenda 2030, and the SDGs in Sierra Leone; participate in UN advocacy events for Agenda 2030 and the achievement of the SDGs in Sierra Leone; provide inputs to the “Youth” component, and other sections where required, of the Common Country Analysis (CCA) and participate in planning the next UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) in Sierra Leone from the outset.

With enthusiasm for their role, the view was expressed that: “The UNYAG is about young people and their rights – we have the space, now we want to make good use of it. We are the generation that the UN is accountable to and waiting for.”

By working with and for Youth, the objective is to ensure that UN programmes can better address youth issues and concerns.

The UN Country Team & the Youth Technical Team meeting with the recently constituted Youth Advisory Group





SUPPORTING DREAMS: ONE MEAL AT A TIME

WFP is working with the Min of Basic Education & Senior Secondary Education to make nutritious food accessible to those that are least able to afford it

Munjama Kamara, like all eleven-year-olds, loves nothing more than to play with her friends and go to school, and like her friends, she has big aspirations! Living in rural Sierra Leone, she has been brought up and surrounded by adults with little to no education, a high dependency on land yield, and, therefore, variable income, that has left many households vulnerable to poverty. She is also faced with the reality of being a girl child in a country where gender inequality is systemic, and child marriage is common. Hoping for a better future, she knows the path to fulfilling her dreams lies in the classroom. The school feeding programme not only incentivises her parents to continue to send her to school but also provides her with a nutritious meal, so she can better concentrate in class.

Extreme poverty and food insecurity are critical issues in Sierra Leone, especially in rural areas. Pujehun district has the highest rate of poverty nationally (87 percent). In the village of Helebu in Pujehun, where Munjama and her mother live, most households are engaged in small-scale farming, which provides little disposable income for low-income families. Food is not an abundant resource, and families face the annual lean season or 'hungry period' with limited provisions. In this environment, children's education typically takes a backseat to save on household costs.

Mariama Kamara, Munjama's mother, explains the hardships many families face in providing adequate food for their children.

"Sometimes I leave my dinner for the children, so they have something to eat in the morning, before school.

We can't afford to give them lunch, either."

In such instances, it is not only education outcomes that suffer but also those related to health and nutrition. Mr Philip Koroma, Headteacher of RC Primary School Futa Pejeh, highlights the impact of poor nutrition on children.

"Children have to walk for a mile or two to get to school in the morning. An empty stomach and no prospect of lunch make the journey harder, which leads to poor class participation. Before school feeding, even those who attended would break for lunch and never come back as they had no food."

School feeding has not only incentivised attending school, but the mid-day lunch also ensures students stay in school till the end and have access to at least one safe, diverse and nutritious meal every day.

In 2018, the Government of Sierra Leone launched the Free Quality Education (FQE) Initiative to support human capital development. At the same time, WFP, in partnership with the Government, commenced the school feeding programme to improve access to nutritious food for school-going children, such as Munjama, enhancing their ability to focus on learning instead of hunger.

The cost of providing a school lunch is approximately equivalent to 10 percent of a typical household's income in Sierra Leone. The school feeding programme, therefore, acts as an income transfer and works to reduce that burden on the household while guaranteeing that children receive at least one nutritious meal a day. It also helps mothers like

Mariama cope with other household pressures.

In 2022, WFP assisted over 200,000 school-aged children with school meals (52 percent girls) in over 1,000 schools in 5 districts. Community support has been essential and overwhelmingly positive, with the School Management Committees (SMCs) comprising of community members providing complementary support to ensure the delivery of school meals. This complementary support includes the management of cooks and the provision of firewood and condiments.

Jeneba Kamara, a cook at Helebu Primary, sees the difference in the children following the provision of condiments.

“The families are providing fish and vegetables to make the dishes better for the children. When the children come for their food, I can see that they are happy, and that encourages us to continue volunteering.”

Mohamed (12) walks to school every day from the nearby village and describes how school meals have changed his parent’s perspective on school attendance.

“Sometimes I didn’t want to go to school because there was no lunch. My parents urge me to go to school daily, saying my food is at school.”



Munjama plays with her colleagues after a school meal

For the district’s education track record, the impact has been huge. Mr Augustine Fallay, Deputy Headmaster at Helebu Primary School, has seen visible results.

“Now, because we do head counts in the morning before food is cooked, all children make it a point to attend.”

The attendance at Helebu Primary School has not only improved, but Mr. Fallay reports increased concentration on schoolwork.

As the 2022/2023 academic year ends, Munjama is optimistic about her learning experience and focused on continuing her education.

ELECTORAL PEACE PLEDGE MARKS LAUNCH OF SIERRA LEONE’S 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS

In May this year, Sierra Leone marked the start of its fifth electoral consultation since 2002 with the signing of a formal Electoral Peace Pledge. During the event, held under the joint aegis of the Inter-Religious Council and the National Council of Paramount Chiefs, leading presidential candidates and political parties publicly committed to peace during the elections and to use the judicial system for any electoral disputes.

The ceremony, witnessed by UNDP Resident Representative Pa Lamin Beyai on behalf of the United Nations Country Team, capped an eventful month which saw the publication of the official list of candidates; followed by the launch of a national outreach drive by the Political Parties Registration



Young Sierra Leoneans at the National Youth Election Lab pledging their commitment to uphold peace in Sierra Leone

Commission (PPRC) to solicit the support of Traditional Chiefs and Paramount Rulers; and the organization of a National Youth Election Lab on 25 through 27 May.

Throughout this election cycle, UNDP Election's Project has been providing essential support to strengthen the planning and management capacities of the country's electoral management bodies, notably the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL); to promote a peaceful environment for the participation of voters especially women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the electoral process; and to raise public awareness through a nationwide voter outreach and education drive.

In March 2023, the Project facilitated the Judiciary's review of a new Electoral Compendium designed to strengthen the existing dispute resolution mechanism.

In early April, UNDP launched an iVerify digital platform to identify, analyze and respond to cases of misinformation, disinformation and hate speech in partnership with BBC Media Action, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and the Independent Radio Network (IRN).

The Project also handed over to PPRC 16 laptop computers, an all-terrain vehicle, internet connectivity equipment (two servers, eight routers), 75 conference chairs and tables, a generator, two air conditioning units to improve its operational capacities as well as 18 generators and printers to the ESCL.

The Project identified and recruited 5 local civil society organizations to support the ECSL's voter education drive and efforts to enhance voter accessibility in 448 localities.



Participating in a peace march in Kono District

The Project ("Fostering Peaceful, Credible, and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023") is administered thanks to a multi-donor Election Support Basket Fund financed by the Government of Ireland, the European Union, the Government of Canada, the Government of Iceland, UNDP and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund.

3,374,258 people registered to vote during the 2022 exercise (including 1,759,529 females and 22, 385 PWDs). It is also worth noting that women constitute 36 % of the candidates nominated.

SIERRA LEONE LAUNCHES FISTULA STRATEGY THAT SEEKS TO ELIMINATE THE DEVASTATING HEALTH CONDITION



Launching of a five-year National Fistula Strategy during the commemoration

In May, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) joined the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and other partners in commemorating the International Day to End Obstetric Fistula, a day set aside by the United Nations to galvanize worldwide action to end fistula.

The commemoration in Bo marked 20 years since the launch of the Global Campaign to end Obstetric Fistula. Held under the theme “20 years on - Progress but not enough! Act now to end fistula by 2030!” the event highlighted the need for accelerated efforts at all levels to bring attention to this neglected condition and eliminate it by 2030.

To accelerate national efforts towards ending obstetric fistula, Sierra Leone’s Minister of Health and Sanitation, Dr. Austin Demby, launched a five-year National Fistula Strategy during the commemoration. Developed with technical support from UNFPA and other stakeholders and funding from the Government of Iceland, the strategy seeks to strengthen the prevention of obstetric fistula, improve care for women living with fistula, and increase advocacy and partnerships towards eliminating fistula.

Dr. Demby stated, “Sierra Leone has joined the global community in setting the target of ending obstetric fistula by 2030, and the Ministry of Health and

Sanitation and partners have been making significant strides. We have developed and validated a roadmap for the elimination of obstetric fistula in Sierra Leone, and with support from our partners, we are already working on the implementation of this roadmap. Our goal is simple: by 2030, no woman in Sierra Leone should experience this preventable catastrophe.”

In Sierra Leone, since 2011, over 1,800 fistula surgeries have been performed at Aberdeen Women’s Centre with support from UNFPA and other partners and in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation.

Iye Joseph, a fistula champion in Bo, shared her story. “My husband left me. People in my community were mocking me. I felt so isolated that I wanted to drink caustic soda and die. I was, however, rescued by the Haikal Foundation, with support from UNFPA and Iceland. They supported me by treating my condition and empowering me with soap-making skills. Today, I use the proceeds from my soap business to manage my expenses and care for my baby.”

In support of the government’s efforts to eliminate obstetric fistula, UNFPA is partnering with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and the Government of Iceland to implement a comprehensive five-year programme to support fistula prevention and treatment, reintegration of fistula survivors and strengthening of the quality of health services.

The UNFPA Sierra Leone Country Representative, Nadia Rasheed, stated that “a whole of society approach led by the health sector in partnership with the social sector, traditional and religious leaders and communities” is needed to bring fistula out of the shadows and reach women and girls living with the condition.

She called for timely access to high-quality emergency obstetric care, universal access to modern contraception, and intensified efforts to end child marriage and reduce adolescent pregnancy to eliminate the condition.

SUPPORTING GIRLS IN SIERRA LEONE TO ENSURE SAFE AND DIGNIFIED MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT

Rugiatu Gando Peer Mentor at the Services Secondary School, chats with her school mate about menstrual hygiene management

It is the end of the school day at the Services Secondary School in Juba, Freetown. Whilst a crowd of pupils make their way out of the compound, the Girls' Club members gather in one corner of the school's assembly grounds for their weekly meeting. "Today, we will talk about the challenges our fellow girls face when they have their menses and what we can do to support them," says Rugiatu Gando, a fifteen-year-old Peer Mentor and member of the Girls Club. As a peer mentor, Rugiatu has been trained in menstrual hygiene management and helps run the school club with the support of the other peer mentor and teachers.

When a girl starts her period, it doesn't just indicate a biological change but often brings an immense difference in her life. In Sierra Leone, most girls face cultural stigma and societal discrimination when they start menstruating. In addition, girls' right to uninterrupted education gets violated through inadequate menstrual hygiene education, insufficient water and sanitation facilities, and poor access to sanitary menstrual materials in schools. Thousands of Sierra Leonean girls are forced to miss lessons by staying home during their menses.

Thanks to the generous contribution from the Swedish Committee for UNICEF, menstrual hygiene facilities are being provided in schools through the Government and other partners, to promote safe

hygiene practices. Through this support, 36 Girls' Clubs have been established, 6,189 adolescent girls in 36 schools have received menstrual hygiene management information, and 6,000 menstrual hygiene kits distributed.

Two months ago, Esther Kowa, a pupil of Services School and beneficiary of the MHM programme in her school, had her menses for the first time and found the information and materials valuable. "I was not scared at all when it came. I took care of myself and told my grandmother later that evening," says Esther. "The programme helped prepare me because I had received all the information I needed, and most importantly, I had the disposable pads, which came in very handy."

"Menstrual hygiene facilities help to keep girls in school where they can reach their full potential," says Suman, Education Specialist at UNICEF Sierra Leone. "The support we are providing through our partners will help girls to keep learning during their periods, because they deserve to be in school any day of the month," she adds.

Rashidatu Massaquoi, the lead teacher for the Menstrual Hygiene Management programme at the Services School says that absenteeism among girls in her school was common before the programme was introduced. "Most of them missed school when



A group of pupils display the packs of reusable pads they received

they had their menses because of fear of getting their uniforms messed up while in school,” says Rashidatu. She agrees that the programme has triggered a positive change as it helps girls stay in school. “Through this programme, we keep working to ensure that girls in our school have access to menstrual products like sanitary pads and the necessary information and guidance they need so that when they have their period, even if it comes during school hours, they’ll

feel confident and comfortable to attend lessons school without shame,” she adds.

With the knowledge about menstruation and the MHM materials available in her school, Esther, now in her second year of secondary school, says she and other beneficiaries of the programme will no longer worry about missing school because of their menses.

“CERTIFIED IN SIERRA LEONE, ACCEPTED GLOBALLY”: ACCREDITATION OF SLSB MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CERTIFICATION BODY

Under the EU-funded West Africa Competitiveness Programme, UNIDO established the Management System Certification Body (MSCB) of the Sierra Leone Standards Bureau (SLSB). It aims to help companies and organizations improve their professional results through certification, training and audit services based on consistency, impartiality, and integrity.

This landmark achievement is part of a broader UNIDO objective to develop effective and efficient National Quality Infrastructure (NQI). Also, this is the first time, Sierra Leone can now certify its enterprises under the brand “Certified in Sierra Leone, Accepted Globally”.

The MSCB was established per the requirements of ISO 17021, an international standard for certification bodies that provide management system certification. The standard provides guidelines for the management system certification process, including the requirements for the certification body’s management system and the processes for conducting audits and issuing certifications.

A management system body as per ISO 17021 is an organization that provides certification services for management systems such as ISO 9001 (Quality Management System), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management System), ISO22000 (Food Safety Management System) and others. The body’s role is to assess and certify organizations’ management

systems against the requirements of the relevant management system standards.

In 2022, with support from UNIDO, the MSCB pursued accreditation from the International Accreditation Service (IAS), a prestigious accreditation body based in the United States. Following remote and on-site assessment, on 23 March 2023, SLSB MSCB achieved international accreditation, marking a significant milestone in Sierra Leone. The accomplishment was commemorated through a ceremony held in Freetown, attended by esteemed guests, including Dr. Edward Hinga Sandy, the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr Babatunde Ahonsi, UN Resident Coordinator and Mr. Gerald Hatler, Head of Cooperation of the Delegation of the European Union to Sierra Leone.

This event was also an opportunity to award certificates to the first SMEs in Sierra Leone certified for ISO 9001 by the newly established certification body. By obtaining ISO 9001 certification, these SMEs have demonstrated their commitment to implementing robust quality management systems and SLSB the ability to demonstrate and prove their compliance. This collective effort to raise the bar for quality infrastructure in Sierra Leone will contribute to the country's economic development, foster a culture of excellence, and strengthen its competitiveness in international markets.



Participants at the Sierra Leone Standards Bureau accreditation ceremony



Officials from the UN, EU & the Govt of Sierra Leone displaying a replica certificate of accreditation



**LEAVE
NO ONE
BEHIND**

NEW REGIONAL ROADMAP TO STRENGTHEN COUNTER-TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA



The Freetown Roadmap was signed, setting a regional framework to combat human trafficking through collaboration

Thousands of young women and boys are trafficked yearly in West Africa for sexual exploitation or forced labour. As part of an effort to fight this, representatives from member countries of the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) recently unveiled a roadmap to end human trafficking in the region.

The roadmap further enhances the effectiveness of measures already outlined in the ECOWAS Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. It will set anti-trafficking priorities for the region – such as sharing lessons learned and strategies to implement national action plans, promoting more robust data collection mechanisms, and finding opportunities for regional mechanisms to strengthen prevention, protection of trafficking victims, and prosecute traffickers.

“This Conference offers a new opportunity to enhance regional collaboration on information sharing, victim identification, and providing services to survivors,” said the President of Sierra Leone, Julius Maada Bio. “It is also an opportunity to strengthen the regional referral system and to intensify the rollout of the ECOWAS Biometric ID system that will facilitate the safe movement of people across ECOWAS.”

“The fight against human trafficking is a moral and humanitarian imperative for ECOWAS, and the

phenomenon represents a serious obstacle to human security and peace,” said H.E. Dr. Omar Alieu Touray, the President of the ECOWAS Commission.

With 20 years of working on this issue, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) recognizes that combatting trafficking in persons requires comprehensive approaches and strong partnerships with government, U.N. agencies, civil society and NGOs to make tangible progress in combatting and preventing human trafficking.

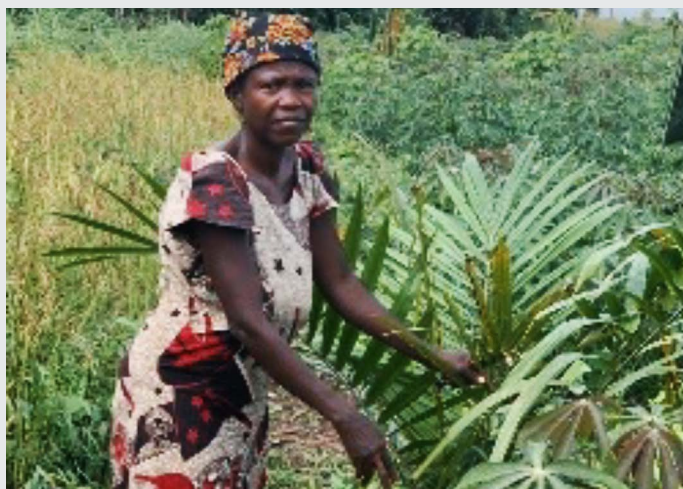
“This Conference is an example of the key role that ECOWAS can play in coordinating actions among Member States and giving them policies and tools for the implementation at the national level. I commend ECOWAS for its commitment to working with IOM to achieve collective solutions,” said IOM Regional Director for West and Central Africa Christopher Gascon.

Partnership is critical to the success of anti-trafficking efforts. The US Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, Cindy Dyer, emphasized the need for stronger partnership and further expressed the commitment of the U.S. Government to support the fight against human trafficking in the region.

“We are deeply committed to engaging with government and civil society stakeholders in the region to support and strengthen anti-trafficking responses. As my boss, Secretary of State Tony Blinken, has said, human trafficking is a global problem that requires a global coalition to confront it.”

The event was made possible thanks to the joint support of IOM Sierra Leone and the African Programming and Research Initiative to End Slavery (APRIES) at the University of Georgia with funding from the United States and the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

AGRICULTURE VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IMPROVES LAND ACCESS & OWNERSHIP FOR WOMEN



A proud owner of a hectare of oil palm plantation at Kalia village,

Women in Sierra Leone can now own land. Thanks to the recently enacted Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act, which is to be enforced alongside the Customary Land Rights Act 2022, allowing women to have equal rights as men. But until then, gender inequality and access to agricultural land generally limits crop production and productivity in many parts of Sierra Leone.

Under customary law, women do not usually manage their couple's property nor make economic decisions in many homes. In patrilineal rural communities, land ownership and access are severely affected by the way land is inherited and owned. Since land belongs to the community or government, women can only be given the right to use land if they obtain the consent of the husband or male relations.

In cases of divorce, separation, or death of the spouse, many women getting the land through their spouse have lost ownership of their plantations. Widows, single mothers, and divorcees find it extremely difficult to pay for agricultural labour to upkeep their plantations. Women's access to credit also remains a challenge, and the rural financial institutions have limited provisions to provide credits for agriculture, especially for permanent crops (oil palm and cocoa), which women do not have access to, nor even by inheritance.

But the Agriculture Value Chain Development Project (AVDP) has helped the youth, especially women,

to own portions of land they can cultivate for the project's various value chain crops (oil palm, cocoa, rice and vegetables).

The aim is to ensure that 40% of the targeted community per value chain crops are women. The project has succeeded in ensuring that women signed land lease agreements in their own names together with landowners and other key stakeholders (land-owning families, the Ministry of Agriculture officials and local authorities) for permanent ownership of at least a hectare of land for either cocoa or oil palm plantation.

The land lease document allows the women to use land for a period of 10 years or more for inland valley swamps (IVS) while promoting permanent ownership by women for perennial crops such as oil palm or cocoa. The cocoa or oil palm plantations are often intercropped with plantain, pineapple suckers, cassava cutting, rice, groundnut, timber and other economic trees to serve as quick response in providing income for the women. Increasing access and opportunity for women through extension service delivery, Gender Action Learning System (GALS) and nutrition education are being facilitated through functional on-farm farmer field school trainings that change the mindset of people in various areas of inequalities in their communities and households.

Through the land lease arrangements advocated by AVDP, women in targeted communities now have access to land, own plantations, cultivate/produce crops and generate income for themselves and their children. Most importantly, women have now become masters of their own fate, make key decisions, and manage incomes generated by themselves. This intervention by AVDP seems magical for other women in communities that have not been targeted.



Land owning Certificates provided to previously deprived women



ILO Director Madam Vanessa Phala Minister of Labour Alpha Timbo and Social Partners, Show casing the DWCP Document at the lunch in Freetown

ILO, Government of Sierra Leone and Social Partners Launch The SL-DWCP II 2023-2027 in Freetown

The ILO, in conjunction with the government of Sierra Leone, Social Partners, and other partners across the country in May launched the Sierra Leone Decent Work Country Programme (SL-DWCP) 2023-2027 held at the Radisson Blu Mammy Yoko Hotel in Aberdeen - Freetown.

Lack of decent and productive employment and underemployment had remained a huge challenge to achieving effective socio-economic development in the country. The (SL-DWCP) was formulated with the support of the ILO to serve as one of the important measures towards creating decent work opportunities for citizens of the country.

The development of the second generation of the SL-DWCP witnessed the effective participation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS), Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC), Sierra Leone Employers Federation (SLEF), and other stakeholders such as Ministries, Departments, and Agencies of the Government.

The SL-DWCP aims to mobilise resources to create jobs in safe working conditions where women, youth, people with disabilities (PWD), and other vulnerable groups can work in freedom, safety, and dignity. The framework identifies three essential priorities: employment creation, social protection, and social dialogue.

Ms Phala stated that “the success of the implementation of the DWCP would require the collaborative efforts of all the relevant stakeholders, including the trade unions and employers’ organisation, and reiterated the commitment of ILO in working with all the relevant stakeholders in ensuring the full implementation of the DWCP, in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2023.

In his contribution, the President of the Sierra Leone Employers Federation (SLEF), Mr. Kobi Walker, asserts that implementing the DWCP was crucial for promoting decent work, social justice, and inclusive growth in Sierra Leone.



Workers at an ILO-supported feeder-road project

Mr Max K. Conteh, Secretary General of SLLC, appealed for the involvement of workers in the informal economy in line with the concept of leaving no one behind and pledged his organisation's support towards implementing the DWCP in Sierra Leone.

In her remarks, the Director of the ILO, Country Office for Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, and Liaison Office for ECOWAS, Ms. Vanessa Phala, stated that the DWCP is a tool to address social and economic challenges facing the country and would ensure job

rich inclusion and sustainable growth. She recognised the importance of the framework as an instrument that the government and social partners could use to mobilise resources to address the issues of productive employment and decent work in Sierra Leone.

Stated that "the success of the implementation of the DWCP would require the collaborative efforts of all the relevant stakeholders including the trade unions and employers' organisation, and reiterated the commitment of ILO in working with all the relevant stakeholders in ensuring the full implementation of the DWCP, in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2023.

The occasion marked the signing and launch of the second generation of the Decent Work Country Programme (SL-DWCP II) framework for Sierra Leone, from the collaborative and consultative engagements, in mobilising resources to create jobs and ensure decent working conditions for all.

THE GLOBAL GOALS

For Sustainable Development

