

CELEBRATING UN@80

United Nations Agencies Reflect on Eight Decades of Impact



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UNITED NATIONS
SIERRA LEONE



Building
Our Future
Together



Secretary General's MESSAGE



"We the peoples of the United Nations..."

These are not just the opening words of the United Nations Charter – they define who we are.

The United Nations is more than an institution. It is a living promise – spanning borders, bridging continents, inspiring generations.

For eighty years, we have worked to forge peace, tackle poverty and hunger, advance human rights, and build a more sustainable world – together.

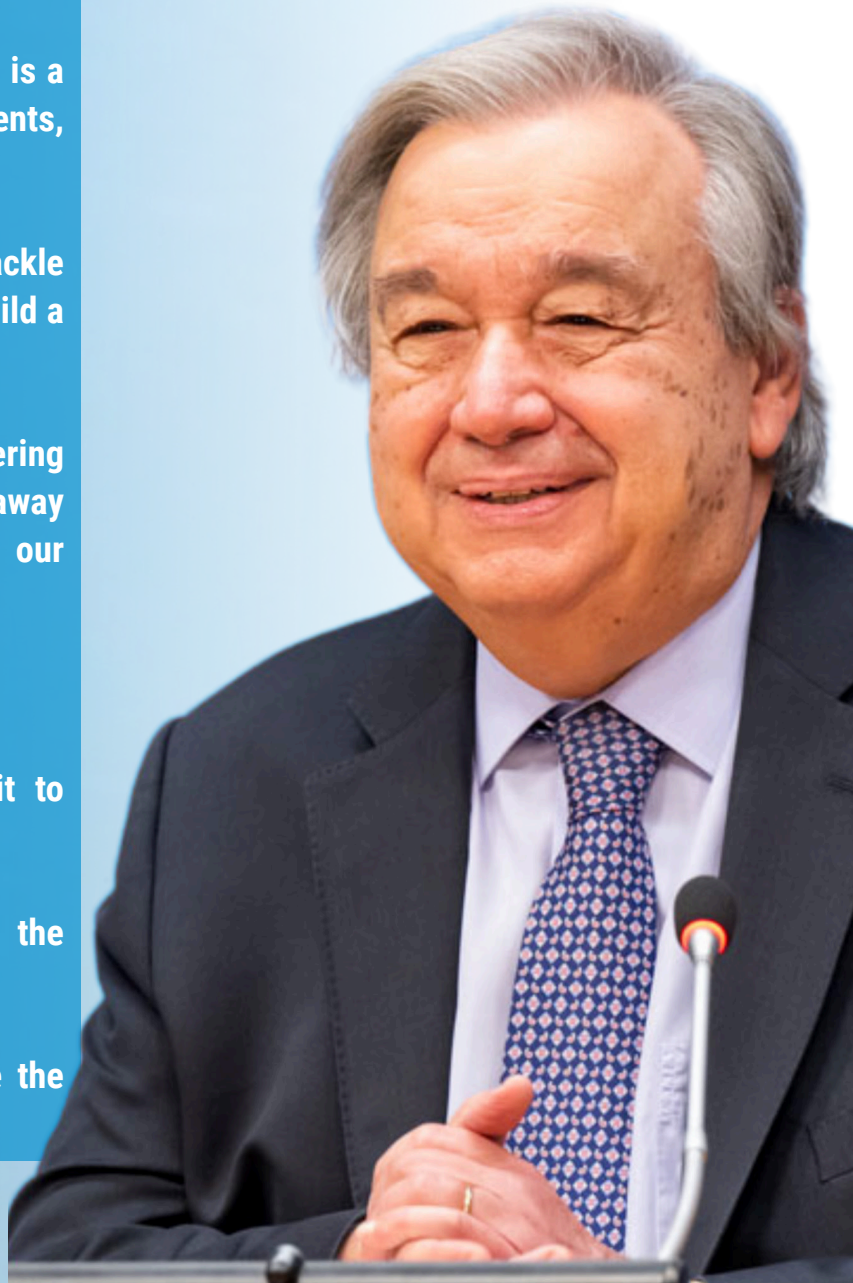
As we look ahead, we confront challenges of staggering scale: escalating conflicts, climate chaos, runaway technologies, and threats to the very fabric of our institution.

This is no time for timidity or retreat.

Now, more than ever, the world must recommit to solving problems no nation can solve alone.

On this UN Day, let's stand together and fulfil the extraordinary promise of your United Nations.

Let's show the world what is possible when "we the peoples" choose to act as one.



Foreword



Building
Our Future
Together

As we mark 80 years of the United Nations, we also celebrate 64 years of enduring partnership with the people and Government of Sierra Leone. This shared journey has been defined by resilience, collaboration, and a steadfast commitment to peace, human rights, and sustainable development.

Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP), and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the UN continues to support national priorities—from inclusive economic growth to climate resilience and social equity.

This milestone is both a reflection of progress and a renewed promise: to build a future where every Sierra Leonean can thrive, leaving no one behind.

Ms. Seraphine Wakana
UN Resident Coordinator



**UNIDO and Sierra Leone:
55 Years of Industrial
Transformation
(1970–2025)**



Building Skills, Boosting Industries: UNIDO's Impact in Sierra Leone



UNIDO Success Stories

Abdul Sesay, 41, once thought medicine was his only path after secondary school. But like many Sierra Leoneans facing financial hardship and the quiet desperation of limited opportunities, he could not pursue that dream. Instead, he turned to the UNIDO Binkolo Growth Centre to learn agribusiness.

Today, Abdul is a trained agribusiness entrepreneur in Binkolo, earning enough to support his family and secure a better future. A grant enabled him to purchase equipment and expand his private business. His journey is shared by many others, including Posseh Kamara, a young woman from Lungi who trained at the UNIDO Automotive Centre of Excellence is one of the very few females in this field. These stories serve as a powerful reminder that behind every development programme are real people whose lives and futures are being transformed.

UNIDO History in Sierra Leone

Since beginning operations in Sierra Leone in 1970, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) has played a pivotal role in the country's post-war development. Guided by its global priorities, creating shared prosperity, advancing competitiveness, and safeguarding the environment, UNIDO has focused on promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial growth. Sierra Leone ratified the UNIDO agreement in March 1983 and became a member state in August 1985.

Since then, UNIDO's work has centred on building capacity, strengthening institutions, and supporting women, youth, and vulnerable groups. Its portfolio spans economic integration, entrepreneurship, renewable energy, employable skills training, and agribusiness development. UNIDO modernised Sierra Leone's outdated automotive training system. A 1975 facility was upgraded into a Regional Centre of Excellence at Freetown Polytechnic, offering competency-based, nationally accredited training to over 2,000 young people, including women and disadvantaged groups.

Through our Centres of Excellence in Refrigeration Technology, specialized training hubs in Freetown, Bo, and Kono equip young Sierra Leoneans with the skills and certification needed to work safely and effectively in the refrigeration sector. The centres provide comprehensive technical training, practical experience, and certification, ensuring that only qualified individuals are allowed to practice professionally.

UNIDO rebuilt the war-damaged Marine Training Institute, strengthening Sierra Leone's marine engineering capacity. Supporting compliance with WTO technical barriers to trade (TBT) and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards, established testing laboratories and simulators, and strengthened the fisheries' competent authority.



UNIDO's impact extends beyond introducing Quality Management Systems as a post-graduate course at the IPAM or promoting neem as a bio-friendly pesticide with Njala University or Small-Hydro Power Technology curriculum at FBC, other academic and professional training.

The West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) strengthened cassava, cocoa, and palm oil value chains. Nineteen SMEs generated over \$1.6 million in new business, with women-led enterprises making up more than half of grant beneficiaries. UNIDO's support for Sierra Leone's Quality Infrastructure and national certification system resulted in the country achieving its first ISO 22000 (Food Safety) and ISO 9001 (Quality Management) certifications; the first in the MRU region.



UNIDO made Sierra Leonean products eligible for export to international markets. These certifications not only raised national quality standards but also unlocked new trade opportunities, particularly for agribusinesses and food processors. Today, SMEs such as Jolaks, Sierra Juice, and others have achieved ISO certification, strengthened their competitiveness and expanding their export opportunities. UNIDO's intervention in the energy sector supports the three-megawatt Bankasoka Hydropower Plant in Port Loko District and the Charlotte Dam in the Western Rural District. Both facilities play a vital role in meeting the energy needs of surrounding communities.

UNIDO has also advanced inclusive industrialization through nationwide Growth Centres, solar-powered enterprise platforms, and climate-smart SMEs, among others. These initiatives bridge development gaps between rural and urban communities, expanding access to modern technologies, business support, and energy for production, especially for women and youth.

All these efforts align closely with Sierra Leone's national development plans, which prioritise agribusiness, sustainable energy, trade competitiveness, and green industrialization. Crosscutting themes such as gender equality, youth empowerment, and institutional strengthening ensure that development outcomes are both inclusive and resilient.



As the current UNIDO Representative in Sierra Leone, I am optimistic about the agency's future collaboration with the Sierra Leonean people. UNIDO's work in Sierra Leone is not just about delivering individual projects; it is about building resilient systems that endure beyond project cycles. We are strengthening institutions, enhancing quality infrastructure, and empowering entrepreneurs to compete in regional and global markets.

From supporting certification and standards that open doors for exports, to promoting renewable energy for productive uses, and green industrial practices that safeguard the environment, UNIDO's engagement is rooted in long-term transformation.

Our goal is to help create an enabling environment where Sierra Leonean industries can thrive, jobs can be created, and prosperity can be shared. In this journey, the impact is clear: investment in people, skills, and industries is creating jobs, raising standards, and unlocking Sierra Leone's economic potential. By modernising training systems, strengthening enterprises, and building institutions, UNIDO is preparing young people for employment while positioning Sierra Leone to compete in regional and global markets.

From Sesay's journey in Binkolo or Posseh's story in Lungi to ISO-certified cocoa in Kailahun, Sierra Leone's path to sustainable industrialisation shows that inclusive development is not only achievable, but already underway.





UNICEF's 40-Year Journey of Partnership and Progress for Children in Sierra Leone



UNICEF's 40-Year Journey of Partnership and Progress for Children in Sierra Leone

unicef
for every child



As the United Nations marks 80 years of global service, UNICEF reflects on four decades of standing with the children and families of Sierra Leone. Since establishing its formal office in 1985, building on initial support from 1982, UNICEF has been part of the UN family's shared journey—through peacebuilding, emergencies, health crises, and development milestones—working to ensure that every child has the opportunity to survive, learn, and thrive. Our story is inextricably linked to that of Sierra Leone itself: one of resilience, recovery, and the pursuit of a brighter future.

Our Journey in Sierra Leone

UNICEF's work in Sierra Leone began at a time of profound challenges. During the civil conflict of the 1990s, we played a leading role in protecting children caught in violence. From supporting the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers to reuniting children separated from their families, UNICEF helped restore hope and dignity to thousands of young lives. At the same time, we worked with partners to maintain essential health, education, and protection services—because even in the most challenging circumstances, children cannot wait.

As Sierra Leone emerged from conflict, UNICEF supported the country in rebuilding and strengthening critical social systems. We worked closely with government institutions to restore schools and health facilities, improve access to safe water, and integrate child rights into national policies. These efforts were not only about recovery; they were about ensuring that the country's development path was anchored in equity and the rights of children.

Responding to Emergencies

When health crises and other emergencies struck—whether the Ebola outbreak in 2014, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Mpox response, or natural disasters such as floods and mudslides—UNICEF worked alongside government, UN agencies, and civil society to protect children and sustain essential services. During Ebola, we supported community mobilization, cared for children in quarantine, child survivors, and children orphaned by EVD, and delivered critical water, sanitation, and hygiene services to treatment centers.

During COVID-19, we ensured continued learning through innovative radio teaching programmes and strengthened vaccine delivery systems, maintaining high immunization coverage even in remote communities. In the Mpox response, UNICEF supported risk communication, community engagement, child-focused health services, and vaccine procurement—reinforcing our role as a partner for both emergency response and long-term system resilience.

Over the decades, UNICEF has contributed to system strengthening across health, education, child protection, social protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). Today, more children survive their early years, more families access safe drinking water, more children are learning in classrooms, more children recover from trauma, and more households benefit from social protection measures. Each achievement reflects collaboration—with government, civil society, local leaders, and international partners—underpinned by the resilience of communities themselves.

Looking Ahead

UNICEF's 40-Year Journey of Partnership and Progress for Children in Sierra Leone

unicef
for every child



While progress has been made, challenges remain. Many children still face barriers to education, malnutrition remains a persistent threat, and inequalities limit access to essential services for the most vulnerable. UNICEF's commitment is clear: to stand with Sierra Leone as it pursues national development priorities outlined in the Medium-Term National Development Plan and the global Sustainable Development Goals.

Our Priorities

- **Transforming education:** Expanding access to quality early childhood education and ensuring inclusive opportunities for girls, children with disabilities, and children in underserved rural communities.
- **Strengthening health and nutrition systems:** Reducing preventable maternal, newborn, and child deaths; tackling malnutrition through integrated approaches; sustaining high immunization coverage; and ensuring vaccines reach every child, including in remote and hard-to-reach communities.
- **Expanding protection and social safety nets:** Addressing violence, exploitation, and harmful practices, while scaling up cash transfers and other social protection mechanisms that cushion families against economic shocks.
- **Investing in WASH:** Ensuring every child and family can access safe water, improved sanitation, and hygiene services as a foundation for health and dignity.

- **Driving innovation and social transformation:** Harnessing digital tools to improve service delivery, engaging young people as leaders of change, and promoting social and behavioral transformation to advance child rights and equality.
- **Promoting disability inclusion:** Ensuring children with disabilities are not left behind by strengthening inclusive education, health, and protection systems, and championing their right to participate fully in society.
- **Enhancing Public Finance for Children (P4C):** Advocating for the government to allocate, track, and spend resources more effectively for children, ensuring that investments deliver results where they are most needed.

UNICEF is also deepening collaboration with sister UN agencies, recognizing that progress for children depends on collective action. Through initiatives such as the Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls, and the new UN Nutrition project, our combined expertise and resources deliver stronger, sustainable results for communities.

These partnerships exemplify the power of “One UN” in advancing Sierra Leone’s development aspirations. In all areas, UNICEF will continue to bring fresh ideas and technologies to bear, while working closely with government, civil society, and communities to ensure solutions are locally owned, sustainable, and equitable.

UN@80 and UNICEF's reflection

UN@80 is more than a commemoration; it is a call to renew our shared promise of peace, dignity, and human rights for all. For UNICEF, this milestone is an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the children of Sierra Leone—to amplify their voices, defend their rights, and partner with them in shaping their future.

The legacy of the United Nations in Sierra Leone is one of solidarity through crisis and partnership in development. UNICEF's 40 years here are a testament to that legacy. We draw inspiration from the resilience of Sierra Leone's people, particularly its young population, and from the belief that investing in children is investing in the nation's future.

As the UN family celebrates 80 years of global service, UNICEF reaffirms its commitment to stand with Sierra Leone—strengthening systems, driving innovation, collaborating across the UN, and working tirelessly so that no child is left behind. Together, we will build on the progress of the past and seize the opportunities of the future. In this spirit, UNICEF is fully committed to supporting the UN reform efforts spearheaded by the Secretary-General, ensuring a stronger, more effective, and united UN system for children and communities worldwide. Because when every child is given the chance to survive, learn, be protected, and thrive, Sierra Leone—and the world—becomes a better place.





UNOPS

UNOPS 25 -Year Journey in Sierra Leone



The Architect of Recovery: UNOPS in Sierra Leone, bring action where needs are greatest on solid ground.

Introduction

As the global community reflects on the eight-decade legacy of the United Nations, UNOPS' work in Sierra Leone offers a compelling case study in evolution from conflict resolution to sustainable infrastructure and development management.

By its non-programmatic agility, UNOPS is the operational engine of the UN system, turning high-level goals into tangible, lasting results on the ground. In Sierra Leone, UNOPS has been providing the physical and technical foundations necessary for peace to translate into prosperity.

The UNOPS Journey: From Crisis Support to Transformational Infrastructure

UNOPS has been active in Sierra Leone since 2000, immediately following the most intense period of the civil conflict. Previously, UNOPS was heavily focused on emergency support, rapid procurement, and the restoration of essential services, the building blocks needed to stabilise a nation.

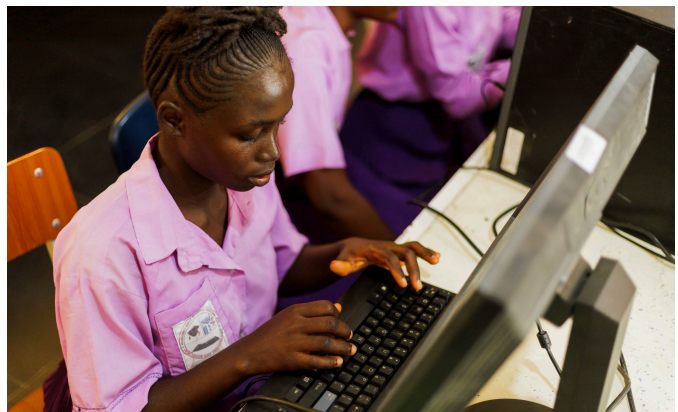
Key Milestones and Achievements: The agency's achievements are rooted in expertise on sustainable infrastructure, procurement, and project management. A defining achievement has been UNOPS' role in the Rural Renewable Energy Project, where UNOPS successfully implemented the installation of nearly 100 solar mini-grids across rural Sierra Leone.

This leapfrogged traditional energy barriers, providing clean, affordable electricity to remote communities. This work directly supports several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), and unlocks potential in health and education.

Furthermore, UNOPS has prioritised human capital development by building vital health infrastructure, such as the Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (BEmONC) facilities, ensuring safe delivery for mothers and children in high-need districts like Kailahun, directly supporting Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being). UNOPS' work in governance has been equally critical, including providing IT and infrastructure support, such as building a Tier 3 Primary Data Centre, essential for modernising the country's civil registration and electoral systems.



The path is never easy. UNOPS have consistently faced challenges related to logistics in remote locations, ensuring robust and transparent procurement in difficult operational environments, and building local capacity. UNOPS' commitment to transparent implementation requires constant innovation and rigorous project management to mitigate risks like supply chain disruptions and limited local technical expertise.



UNOPS is poised to be one of the principal implementation partners for the infrastructure components of the "Feed Salone" initiative. This includes providing the technical and management oversight for crucial infrastructure, such as improving fisheries landing sites and building storage facilities, that link local farmers and fishers to larger markets, significantly boosting Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) and local economic growth.

In partnership with the European Union and other donors, UNOPS is spearheading the Salone Off-Grid Renewable Energy Acceleration (SOGREA) initiative. This initiative will expand access to sustainable energy for thousands of households and businesses, further stimulating green industrialisation and job creation, directly addressing the national priority of youth employment. UNOPS' future work is focused on maximising community impact.

Every project is designed in consultation with local councils to ensure local ownership. By utilising UNOPS expertise in risk-informed infrastructure, UNOPS is helping Sierra Leone adapt to climate change, ensuring that new water and energy systems are resilient against future environmental shocks.



UN@80: The Evolving Role of an Operational Partner

The UN@80 initiative calls for a more streamlined, efficient, and impactful multilateral system. This reflection confirms UNOPS' unique value proposition: UNOPS is an entity focused on delivery and implementation. UN@80 means strengthening the UN system coherence. UNOPS is already a central resource, managing shared services and procurement for the wider UN Country Team, which enhances overall efficiency.

The emphasis on relocating resources closer to need aligns perfectly with UNOPS' decentralised model, ensuring project delivery is responsive to community demands.

The UN's legacy in Sierra Leone is one of perseverance and partnership. From the blue helmets of UNAMSIL securing peace to the technical experts of UNOPS building the resilient infrastructure of today, the mission remains constant: to support the Sierra Leonean people in achieving their highest aspirations. UNOPS' commitment is simple: UNOPS will continue to provide sustainable, efficient, and effective implementation services, ensuring that every project contributes to a future where peace is underpinned by prosperity and opportunity for all.





Two Decades of Migration Impact: IOM Sierra Leone's Journey and Vision for the Future A Journey of Milestones and Impact in Sierra Leone

Two Decades of Migration: IOM Sierra Leone's Impact and Future Vision



IOM History in Sierra Leone

IOM Sierra Leone, established in 2001 and based in Freetown, began its journey in the aftermath of the civil war, when migration was shaped by displacement, refugee flows, and fragile governance. Over the years, IOM has become a key actor in migration management, working closely with the Government and partners, including donors, civil society, academia, and UN agencies.

Its programming spans humanitarian response, border management, counter trafficking, climate-related mobility, diaspora engagement, and migration health. IOM also supports youth and returnees through vocational training, entrepreneurship, and reintegration. Policy efforts include support for the National Migration Policy, Migration Governance Indicators (MGI), and the National Coordination Mechanism (NCM). IOM's work aligns with the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and contributes to Sierra Leone's 2024-2030 development priorities, including food security, human capital, and youth employment.

Key milestones include

Migration Governance: IOM played a pivotal role in developing Sierra Leone's first dedicated migration policy, aligning national priorities with global frameworks such as the GCM. The recent validation of the National Implementation Plan and the establishment of a National Coordination Mechanism mark significant progress in institutionalizing migration governance.

Crisis Response and Recovery: During the Ebola outbreak and the COVID-19 pandemic, IOM provided life-saving support to migrants and displaced populations. This included strengthening border health systems, supporting quarantine facilities, and enhancing community resilience through health education and psychosocial support.

Combating Irregular Migration: Through initiatives like Migrants as Messengers (MaM), IOM empowered returned migrants to share their experiences and raise awareness among youth about the risks of irregular migration. These peer-led campaigns have helped shift narratives and promote informed decision-making.

Cross-Border Peacebuilding: The GOLA-REAP project, co-implemented with the World Food Programme (WFP), promotes peace, climate-smart agriculture, and local governance in the Gola Forest region shared with Liberia. This initiative fosters community cohesion and sustainable livelihoods in border communities.

Strategic Partnerships: IOM has worked closely with government ministries, civil society, and international partners to ensure migration is integrated into Sierra Leone's Medium Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2024–2030. This alignment ensures that migration contributes meaningfully to national development goals and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As Sierra Leone advances its development agenda under the "Big Five Game Changers": agriculture, human capital, youth empowerment, technology, and public service.



IOM remains committed to:

As Sierra Leone advances its development agenda under the “Big Five Game Changers”—agriculture, human capital, youth empowerment, technology, and public service—IOM remains committed to:

Strengthening Regular Migration Pathways: Enhancing labour mobility and youth opportunities through safe and legal migration channels.

Supporting Reintegration and Social Inclusion: Providing psychosocial, vocational, and economic support to returnees and vulnerable migrants to foster sustainable reintegration.

Advancing Data and Innovation: Leveraging migration data systems to inform policy, improve service delivery, and support evidence-based decision-making.

Addressing the Climate-Migration Nexus: Tackling climate-induced displacement and promoting resilience in communities vulnerable to environmental shocks.



Strengthening migration governance through policy support and capacity building.

Expanding reintegration services to include mental health, education, and entrepreneurship.

Enhancing border management and counter-trafficking efforts.

Promoting youth empowerment through skills training and job creation.

For IOM, the UN's 80th anniversary is more than a celebration, it is a reaffirmation of multilateralism and shared responsibility.

Migration, often misunderstood or politicized, must be recognized as a driver of development, dignity, and opportunity. At the 80th UN General Assembly, IOM reiterated its commitment to practical, inclusive solutions that make migration work for all. **“No country can manage migration alone.”**



The multilateral system must deliver practical and principled responses that put people first, protect their rights, and recognize both the challenges and possibilities of human mobility. **“Migration must be transformed from a divisive issue into a shared public good that benefits people and societies.”** — Amy Pope, IOM Director General at UNGA80 In Sierra Leone.

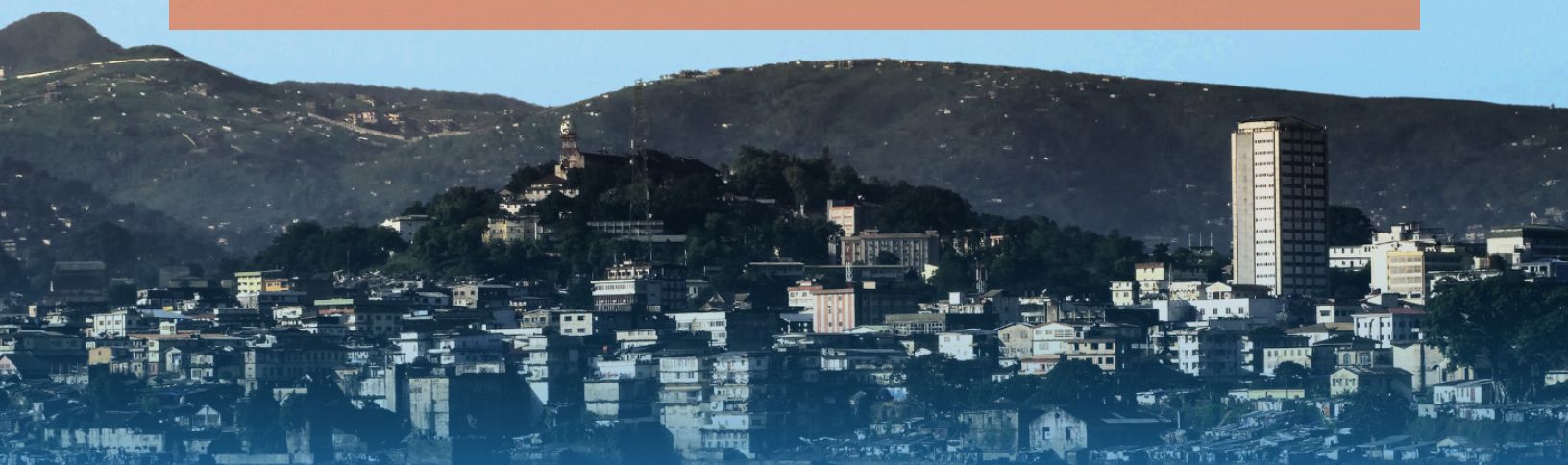
In Sierra Leone, IOM's work embodies the UN's enduring values—peace, human rights, and development. As we look to the future, IOM will continue to walk alongside Sierra Leone, ensuring that migration is not a challenge to be managed, but a force to be harnessed for national transformation.





The United Nations
sexual and reproductive
health agency

**Ensuring Rights and
Choices for Every Woman
and Girl: UNFPA's
Journey in Sierra Leone**



Ensuring Rights and Choices for Every Woman and Girl: UNFPA's Journey in Sierra Leone



A Partnership Built on Hope

As the United Nations marks 80 years of service to humanity, we are reminded of the power of partnership and how collective action transforms lives. In Sierra Leone, this spirit of solidarity has defined UNFPA's journey, one built on trust, shared commitment and undying hope.

When UNFPA first began supporting Sierra Leone in 1971, the focus was on helping the country conduct its first population and housing census. Over time, this collaboration grew into a deeper relationship: a shared mission to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is realized. What began as support for data systems has become a story of saved lives, empowered women and futures restored.

Crisis to Progress

Two decades ago, giving birth in Sierra Leone was one of the most dangerous moments of a woman's life. Reproductive health services were limited and too many girls and women lost their lives while giving life. Today, the story is changing. Maternal mortality rate has fallen by nearly 80 percent, from 1,682 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 354 in 2023. This progress reflects the determination of health workers across the country and the enduring partnership between UNFPA, the Government and people of Sierra Leone.

Together, we have strengthened midwifery education and service delivery, improved emergency obstetric care and expanded national maternal health programmes to ensure that every woman can give birth safely.

Our partnership continues to restore dignity and hope to women living with obstetric fistula.

Empowering Choice and Voice

Equally important is the right and opportunity to decide freely and responsibly whether and when to have children. Through the Global Supplies Partnership, UNFPA currently provides about 90 percent of all modern contraceptives supplied through the public system in Sierra Leone. In 2024 alone, more than 620,000 women accessed family planning services, preventing an estimated 230,000 unintended pregnancies, 85,000 unsafe abortions, and 740 maternal deaths. Beyond these numbers lies a broader vision. One where Sierra Leone builds its own sustainable systems, invests domestic resources and strengthens supply chains to ensure lasting access for all.



UNFPA's work to end gender-based violence and harmful practices continues to change lives. Together with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and community partners, an expanded network of one-stop centres now offer survivor centred care to victims of gender-based violence and other harmful practices including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Safe spaces for girls have expanded nationwide, and over 75,000 girls have participated in the Comprehensive Adolescent Health and Life Skills (CAHLS) programme endorsed by the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education. Each girl is learning that empowerment begins with autonomy, choice and confidence.

Ensuring Rights and Choices for Every Woman and Girl: UNFPA's Journey in Sierra Leone



Data: The Backbone of Development

Data remains at the heart of this progress. That true progress must be measurable, inclusive, and leave no one behind. UNFPA has supported five national censuses since 1976. We have helped to strengthen health information systems such as PReSTrack. Through these efforts, UNFPA has helped ensure that policy decisions are grounded in evidence and that progress reaches everyone.

When Crisis Struck

The Ebola outbreak of 2014 to 2016 tested this progress. More than 3,900 lives were lost, including over 200 health workers. Fear and uncertainty crippled health services, and over 18,000 teenage girls became pregnant during the crisis, forcing many to leave school. In those dark days, UNFPA worked alongside the Government to rebuild midwifery schools, strengthen infection prevention and control and support safe deliveries.

Curricula were revised to ensure the lessons of Ebola would not be forgotten. Those lessons shaped Sierra Leone's readiness for future crises whether floods, pandemics or other emergencies. UNFPA's message remains constant: even in crisis, women and girls must have access to care, safety and dignity.

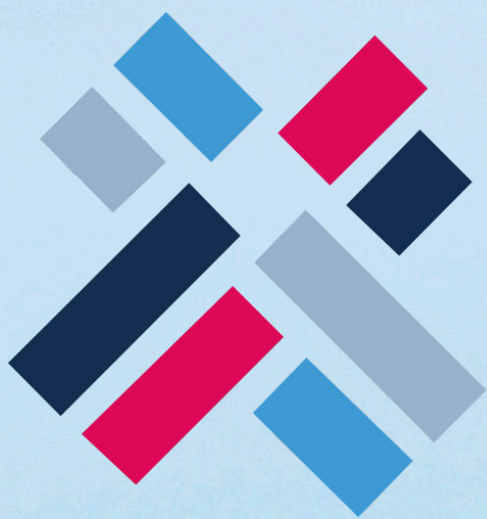
Empowering Choice and Voice

Looking ahead, the newly launched Eighth Country Programme of Assistance to Sierra Leone (2025–2030), is a renewed commitment to accelerate progress on sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality, and youth empowerment. It deepens UNFPA's goal to end preventable maternal deaths, close the unmet need for family planning, and eliminate gender-based violence and harmful practices. It aligns with Sierra Leone's ambition to become an inclusive, green, middle-income country by 2039, placing youth leadership and data-driven development at its core.

As the United Nations turns 80 and over 50 years of UNFPA in Sierra Leone, one truth stands clear: investing in women and girls is the smartest investment a nation can make. When women can decide if, when, and how many children to have, families flourish, communities prosper, and economies grow.



The story of Sierra Leone shows that transformation is possible when we protect rights, expand choices, and place women and young people at the centre of development. That is how we build resilience. That is how no one is left behind.



International
Trade
Centre

**ITC - Transforming Trade.
Changing lives For Over
Two Decades in Sierra
Leone**



Transforming Trade. Changing lives in Sierra Leone



ITC History in Sierra Leone

As part of its mandate, the International Trade Centre (ITC) works to improve the trade competitiveness of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), while ensuring that women and young entrepreneurs have equal access to lucrative new market opportunities. In doing so, ITC contributes to national development agendas and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2001, the Government of Sierra Leone prioritised integrating trade into poverty reduction and national development plans. Since then, ITC has delivered key trade related technical assistance to the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), other ministries, and business support organizations.

Within its framework for strengthening trade and investment support institutions, ITC provided the Sierra Leone Export Development and Investment Corporation (SLEDIC) and the Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA) with institutional support and capacity building to enhance service delivery.

Crisis Arises

The 2014 Ebola outbreak ravaged the economies of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea, significantly affecting the export performance of the cocoa sector, a major revenue generator. Aligned with Sierra Leone's and the UN's post-Ebola recovery plans, ITC, in collaboration with the Center for the Promotion of Imports (CBI) Netherlands, implemented the NTF IV-funded Mano River Cocoa Value Chain project in the three countries to improve production capacities and export competitiveness of cocoa value chain actors.

In Sierra Leone, ITC implemented activities jointly with the MTI, SLIEPA, and the Produce Monitoring Board (PMB). The project not only linked producers and buyers but also identified policy actions for marketing Sierra Leone cocoa in European niche markets, areas for regulatory reform, and boosting competitiveness in the sector.

Sierra Leone's 2019–2023 National Development Plan aimed to improve agricultural productivity, encourage commercialization, and develop market linkages. An element of ITC's strategic plan, aligned with the SDGs, focused on connecting value chains, enhancing SME competitiveness, encouraging diversification, and strengthening export market linkages.

Between 2019 and 2024, ITC implemented two projects in Sierra Leone focused on value chains:

- The KOICA-funded She Trades West Africa (Cashew Value Chain with a strong focus on women), and
 - The EU-funded West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP), which focused on cocoa, cassava, and palm oil.
- Both projects built robust national partnerships and worked closely with value chain stakeholders to enhance trade benefits and market linkages.

Both projects built robust national partnerships and worked closely with value chain stakeholders to enhance trade benefits and market linkages. These included policymakers, business support organizations, agribusinesses (especially women owned), processors, cooperatives, exporters, traders, smallholders, and sector organizations in the value chains. Key activities focused on capacity building, value addition, and creating market linkages.

A She Trades Policy Brief for Sierra Leone, highlighting recommendations to unlock women's participation in trade, and under WACOMP, a Financial Sources Guide providing a comprehensive resource of funding avenues for small businesses in Sierra Leone, were developed.

ITC's total commitment to enhancing regional integration and maximizing the advantages offered by regional trading arrangements is underpinned by its One Trade Africa (OTA) Initiative, which supports implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement.

In 2024, MTI representatives participated in a learning and networking visit to counterparts in Ghana, the AfCFTA Secretariat, and relevant support institutions to gain insights on trading under the AfCFTA. The MTI was also supported to organize tailored training sessions for the private sector and trade support institutions on **"How to Export Under the AfCFTA."** Recently, ITC began implementing two regional projects to support the MTI in operationalizing Sierra Leone's AfCFTA National Implementation Committee (NIC) and facilitating policy reforms for implementing the AfCFTA Protocols on Trade in Services and Investment.

ITC's largest direct project intervention in Sierra Leone, the KOICA-funded READY Salone Project (2024–2028) – Empowering Youth through Digital Technologies – was launched in January 2025 with a high-level event. The project aims to unlock economic opportunities for Sierra Leonean youth and youth-led businesses in the digital economy and is implemented in collaboration with the government through the Ministry of Youth Affairs (MoYA), Ministry of Communication, Technology and Innovation (MoCTI), and the MTI.

Alignment with MTNDP and UNSCDF

Aligned with the five Big Game Changers of the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024–2030), the project will equip women, youth, youth-led startups, and persons with disabilities with the skills and tools to seize economic opportunities in the digital economy.

Following decades of support for Sierra Leone's trade and development initiatives, ITC maintains a permanent office in Freetown to deepen existing partnerships and foster new collaborations to help drive Sierra Leone's economic growth and participation in regional and global value chains in line with its Medium-Term National Development Plan and the UN SDGs.



International
Trade
Centre



**UN@80, 48 years of
UNDP's partnership and
transforming lives in
Sierra Leone**



UN@80, 48 years of UNDP's partnership and transforming lives in Sierra Leone



As the world commemorates UN@80 on 24 October 2025, this milestone is not just a time to reflect on the past but a powerful call to renew our shared commitment to peace, prosperity, and human progress. For the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN's development arm for six decades, this coincides with our 48-year partnership in Sierra Leone.

Our 48-year journey in Sierra Leone is grounded in a single, enduring principle, trust. This trust comes from international partners who have invested in our work, and critically, from the people and Government of Sierra Leone, who have allowed UNDP to accompany them through every stage, from nation-building and post-conflict recovery to today's path toward national transformation.

Standing strong in crisis and recovery

UNDP's support has always been adaptive, mirroring Sierra Leone's own trajectory. Early on, our focus was on technical assistance and institutional development. However, when the devastating civil war (1991–2002) tore the country apart, our role became vital in the broader UN system.

We stood at the forefront of peacebuilding, supporting disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration efforts and restoring essential infrastructure.

Programmes like the Social Relief Resettlement initiative were instrumental, helping to rebuild schools and hospitals and focusing intensely on restoring dignity and livelihood to war-torn communities. Our commitment was reaffirmed during subsequent national crises. When Ebola struck in 2014, we rapidly mobilized to strengthen national coordination and health systems.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we supported the development a national strategy to mitigate the pandemic's economic impact on businesses and households, promoting prevention, and coordinating response actors together with other UN agencies. The greatest lesson learned from these crises is the necessity of adaptive, integrated, and locally owned solutions, moving swiftly from humanitarian response back onto the path of long-term sustainable development.

Architects of Policy and Institutional Reform

At the heart of our work for the past two decades has been a strong support to promoting good governance and democratic accountability. UNDP recognizes that durable peace requires strong, responsive institutions. We have remained a crucial policy partner, supporting the government in developing enabling policies, laws, and national development frameworks.

This collaboration has yielded significant legal and policy reforms, including:

The groundbreaking Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act, which has increased women political representation in public leadership from 12% previously to over 30%.

- The Criminal Procedure Act of 2024 and the Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan are paving the way for a more accessible, efficient, and accountable justice system in Sierra Leone.
- Support for the modernization of laws and the transition of the Sierra Leone Police into a more community-oriented service.



In the democratic sphere, we have partnered with the National Electoral Commission (ECSL) and the Political Parties Regulation Commission to ensure credible, transparent, and peaceful elections. This support extends from introducing biometric voter registration to civic education and conflict prevention initiatives, helping safeguard the integrity of the nation's democratic processes. Furthermore, our focus on decentralization ensures that public services and decision-making are brought closer to the communities themselves.

The era of innovation and co-creation

Today, UNDP's work is driven by the principles of sustainability, innovation, and inclusion. Our support is closely aligned with the Government's Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024–2030), the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2025–2030), and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A defining innovation is the shift toward co-creation and integrated financing. We have supported key policies aimed at sustainable resource management and economic diversification, such as the Blue Economy Strategic Framework and National Action Plan. Crucially, the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) is a systemic innovation designed to move beyond traditional aid by attracting and leveraging both public and private sector investment for national priorities.

Our current priorities are clear and forward-looking:

- Strengthening governance and peacebuilding through transparent institutions and civic engagement.
- Promoting climate action and environmental sustainability by enhancing resilience, conserving biodiversity, and expanding renewable energy solutions.
- Driving inclusive growth through youth employment, entrepreneurship, and digital transformation.
- Fostering gender equality by supporting women's leadership, economic empowerment, and protection from gender-based violence.



Tacaguma Waterfalls, Walkaway Canopy Project, UNDP Sierra Leone

As we mark UN@80, the story of UNDP and Sierra Leone is one of shared resilience and renewal. With close to 50 years of partnership in this nation, our commitment endures: to bring fresh thinking, innovative partnerships, and sustainable solutions that deliver lasting social, economic, and environmental impact. We will continue to work hand in hand with the government, communities, and civil society partners to build a more inclusive, sustainable, and hopeful future for all.



World Health Organization

Enhancing Universal Health Coverage – The role of WHO and UN in supporting Sierra Leone to address national health priorities.

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Six Decades of Partnership with Sierra Leone in advancing health for all

Since its establishment in Sierra Leone in 1961, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been a committed partner in Sierra Leone's journey towards improved health and well-being. For over six decades, WHO in line with its constitutional mandate, has provided normative guidance and technical support to national health authorities to strengthen health systems at all levels, expand access to care, and contribute to improving health outcomes for the people of Sierra Leone.

In more recent years, WHO has played a critical role in addressing Sierra Leone's most pressing health challenges, including major outbreaks of Ebola and Mpox, and the COVID-19 pandemic.



Milestones in disease outbreak response and immunization

WHO has contributed to the country's major public health achievements. Sierra Leone was declared polio-free in 2020 after several years of implementing control measures, including numerous vaccination campaigns over a decade. Progress has also been made, working with other vaccination partners like GAVI and UNICEF in boosting access to routine vaccines for children. Today, Sierra Leone is one of the 10 African countries that have continuously sustained annual vaccination coverage for targeted children at 90 percent and above.



Furthermore, in 2024, with the assistance of WHO and these same partners, Sierra Leone introduced the malaria vaccine (RTS, S), acquiring over 550,000 doses to combat this leading cause of death in children. This intervention is expected to save hundreds of young lives from avoidable deaths and reduce hospital admissions annually.

Strengthening the prevention, preparation and response for public health emergencies

WHO has played a frontal role in building national core capacities to prevent and prepare for public health emergencies in the country. Sierra Leone has made significant progress in this respect, with over 1,400 reporting sources for notification of priority diseases, conditions and events using the WHO supported Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) strategy. Over 90 percent of the reports from these sites are received in a timely manner..

With regards to the response and control of disease outbreaks, WHO support during the 2014–2016 Ebola outbreak, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, and the 2025 Mpox outbreak further underscores its leading role in coordinating response measures. Through the rapid mobilization of technical expertise and coordinated action in strengthened surveillance, case management, laboratory capacity, risk communication, community engagement, and vaccination initiatives, the WHO Country Office helped to contain the outbreaks and safeguard communities. Working together with the government, WHO and its partners have enabled the deployment of vaccines during the 2025 Mpox outbreak, reaching over 160,000 high risk persons.

Strengthening Health Systems and Outcomes

Beyond disease control, WHO has shifted its focus to engagement with government and health partners for a more holistic approach of strengthening health systems. This shift is contributing significantly to improved health outcomes. The health outcomes landscape is improving since the end of the civil war in 2002, with better access to primary health care gauged by the doubling of the universal health care service coverage index (SDG 3.8.1) in the country to 41 in 2021.

Furthermore, maternal mortality has declined by nearly 79 percent, from 1,603 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 354 in 2023. Under-five mortality has dropped by 58 percent, and neonatal deaths have nearly halved over the same period. WHO has contributed to these gains by providing technical assistance for the adoption of evidence-based practices, high impact interventions, and strategies in recent years.

Other measures of assistance have been provided for the capacity building for health workers and supplies of medical equipment and infrastructure across the country.

A recent stellar example of such collaboration is the training in 2024 of a core team Sierran expert in advanced surgical care techniques for the treatment of late stage cervical cancer. These advanced surgical techniques for cervical cancer are now possible in Sierra Leone, with eight women treated locally for the first time since then.



Also, cervical cancer preventive screening for women has now been expanded across 14 districts in the country, benefitting more than 30,000 women till date. In addition, to further strengthen primary health care in the country, WHO has worked with the Ministry of Health to pilot and adopt a new person-centered, life-stages approach to service delivery. This approach focuses on the specific health needs of all critical stages of life, covering children before birth (pregnancy stage), newborns till elder citizen's stage. This transformation is expected to boost efforts towards the attainment of SDG 3 goals in the country.

The Outlook

In addition to ongoing challenges, other new emerging threats, in areas such as climate change and health, antimicrobial resistance and the increasing burden of noncommunicable diseases will receive increasing attention and continued solidarity is essential. WHO's commitment to Sierra Leone remains unwavering. The organization will continue to work closely with the Government of Sierra Leone, the UN family, and other partners to strengthen the health system and accelerate progress toward universal health coverage (UHC).



Unlocking Access to Finance for MSMEs in Sierra Leone: Building an Inclusive Agricultural Future

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Across Sierra Leone, smallholder farmers and agribusinesses form the backbone of the economy, contributing significantly to food security, employment, and livelihoods. Yet, for decades, access to finance has remained one of the most persistent barriers holding back the growth of the agricultural sector. Traditional lending models often view agriculture as a high risk venture-particularly in the face of climate change, price volatility, and limited collateral options for rural farmers.

To unlock the potential of this vital sector, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), with funding from the European Union and in collaboration with the Government of Sierra Leone, launched the Salone Access to Finance (SATF) project-a USD 12 million, five-year initiative designed to expand access to finance for agricultural Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Through innovative approaches that blend concessional finance, digital solutions, and policy reform, SATF is laying out the foundation for a more inclusive and resilient agricultural economy.

Blending Finance to Empower Agri-MSMEs



In August 2025, UNCDF took a bold step forward with the launch of the €6 million Salone Access to Finance Agri-Financing Facility-an innovative approach that matches agri-loans provided by financial institutions with concessional funds. This blended finance model reduces the risk exposure for banks, increases liquidity in the sector, and enables small businesses to access affordable credit. In its first phase, the facility partnered with the Vista Bank Sierra Leone Limited and Safe Capital Microfinance to roll out tailored agri-loan products targeting smallholder farmers, processors, and other agri-service providers along the value chain.

The early results are encouraging: 42 loan applications have already been received, and SLE 1.2 million disbursed to eligible agribusinesses. These initial disbursements represent more than just financial transactions-they symbolize trust, empowerment, and a growing confidence in the agricultural economy. By crowding in private sector investment, the facility demonstrates that when risks are shared, opportunities expand. It is also helping local financial institutions view agriculture not as a liability, but as a viable and sustainable growth sector.

Building Resilience through Climate Insurance

Agriculture remains at the mercy of climate variability. In recent years, Sierra Leone has experienced recurring floods, and erratic rainfall patterns that have devastated harvests and reduced farmers' incomes. Recognizing that access to finance alone is not enough, SATF has introduced an innovative climate risk insurance pilot to protect smallholder farmers from weather-related shocks.

In partnership with Activa International Insurance, the initiative aims to reach 4,000 farmers during its pilot phase. Already, 1,200 smallholder farmers have been covered through leading agricultural aggregators such as Solidaridad and Nyada Agricultural Enterprise. This insurance model offers farmers a safety net that can help them recover quickly after a climatic shock, ensuring that a single season's misfortune does not erase years of progress.



Beyond financial protection, the project is investing in awareness campaigns to educate farmers about the benefits of insurance—an essential step toward building trust and uptake in rural communities. By fostering resilience through insurance, SATF is helping to create a culture of risk preparedness that supports long-term stability, confidence and increased food security.

Digital Finance: Bringing Banking to the Doorstep of Rural Communities

Another pillar of SATF is Digital Finance, recognizing that meaningful financial inclusion must extend beyond traditional banking halls. In partnership with Rokel Commercial Bank and Guarantee Trust Bank, the project is rolling out an Agri agency banking model aimed at establishing 900 financial access points by 2026.

So far, 450 bank agents have signed up across 11 districts—including Kenema, Portloko, Kambia, Bonthe, Pujehun, Kailahun, Falaba, Tonkolili, Kono, Bombali, and Kabala—bringing essential financial services closer to farming communities that have long been underserved. This model not only improves access to cash and savings but also supports digital payments, remittances, and agricultural transactions in real time.



SATF's focus on digital finance extends beyond access points. In partnership with the Bank of Sierra Leone, the project is supporting the development of an in-house web portal to digitalize regulatory reporting for other financial institutions—including mobile money providers, microfinance institutions, and community banks. This will help automate data collection, enhance transparency, and strengthen oversight of the national financial ecosystem.

In addition, UNCDF, through SATF, has supported two landmark publications—“State of Digital Financial Services Landscape in Sierra Leone 2024” and the “National Digital Financial Literacy Baseline Survey 2024”. These reports provide valuable data and insights that inform the “National Strategy for Financial Inclusion” (NSFI2) and help policymakers, development partners, and private sector actors design more responsive financial solutions.

For low-income households, a “pay-as-you-go” smartphone initiative—implemented in partnership with Africell Mobile Money, once launched will bridge the digital divide by enabling 6,000 vulnerable families to access smartphones through flexible payment plans. This innovation will connect households to mobile banking, digital learning, and e-commerce opportunities—thereby creating a pathway for digital inclusion and empowerment.

Creating an Enabling Policy and Regulatory Environment

Unlocking access to finance for MSMEs also requires a supportive policy framework. SATF is working closely with key regulatory bodies—including the Bank of Sierra Leone (BSL), the Sierra Leone Insurance Commission (SLICOM), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) to strengthen the business environment for agricultural finance.

Key milestones include the drafting and approval of Agri-Insurance Regulatory Guidelines, issued by SLICOM in June 2025. These guidelines establish a clear legal foundation for agricultural insurance products to thrive, ensuring that both farmers and insurers operate within a transparent and fair framework.

In addition, an Agricultural Finance Policy Market Gap Assessment was conducted, providing data-driven insights to guide future reforms. UNCDF has also supported the development of a National Agricultural Finance Policy, which is now being prepared for Cabinet approval—an important step towards institutionalizing agricultural finance as a cornerstone of national development. The project is further supporting the midterm review of the National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (2022–2026), ensuring that lessons from SATF inform national policies and drive measurable progress toward inclusive finance for all.

A Call to Sustain the Momentum

The journey to unlocking access to finance for Sierra Leone's MSMEs is far from over, however, we need to build a stronger foundation. Through partnerships, innovation, and policy reform, SATF is proving that inclusive finance is not just an economic objective-it is a driver of social transformation.

As Sierra Leone continues its path toward sustainable development, the collaboration between the European Union, UNCDF, and the Government of Sierra Leone stands as a model of how blended finance and digital innovation can empower farmers, create jobs, and strengthen resilience against climate and economic shocks.

Unlocking finance for MSMEs is unlocking potential for communities, for homes, and for the nation's future.





WFP in Sierra Leone: A Legacy of Partnership, A Future of Promise



WFP in Sierra Leone: A Legacy of Partnership, A Future of Promise

As the United Nations marks its 80th anniversary, the World Food Programme (WFP) reflects on its enduring journey in Sierra Leone—a partnership rooted in resilience, transformation, and shared aspirations. Since its establishment in the country in 1968, WFP has evolved from a provider of emergency food aid to a strategic partner in national development, aligning its mission with Sierra Leone's vision for inclusive growth and human capital advancement.

Milestones and Achievements: From Relief to Resilience

WFP's trajectory in Sierra Leone has been shaped by pivotal moments and bold interventions. In recent years, the agency has deepened its commitment to food security through integrated programming that spans school feeding, nutrition, climate resilience, and institutional capacity strengthening.

One of the most impactful initiatives has been the school feeding programme reaching over 254,700 through the regular school meals and over 81,200 through the Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programme, across five districts. Supported by partners such as Germany, the Government of Sierra Leone through the Food Systems Resilience Program or Food Systems Resilience Project, and Iceland, HGSF not only provides daily nutritious meals but also strengthens local food systems by sourcing ingredients from smallholder farmers. These supports have enabled WFP to procure over 1,500 metric tons of rice and beans locally during the 2023/2024 harvest season and plans to procure 2,100 tons in the 2024/25 harvest season for the HGSF programme.

WFP collaborates with over 8,000 farmers in Sierra Leone to enhance climate-smart agriculture. The Nyam Nyam Pap initiative boosts child nutrition and empowers women via solar-powered enterprises. Building on prior emergency successes, WFP is transitioning from relief to resilience through local solutions and sustainable development.

Challenges Overcome: Navigating Crises with Innovation



Sierra Leone's development journey has not been without adversity. The country faces high inflation, climate shocks, and persistent malnutrition. WFP's 2023 Food Security Monitoring System revealed that 77 percent of Sierra Leoneans are food insecure, with maternal and child mortality rates among the highest globally.

In response, WFP has adapted its programming to address both immediate needs and long-term vulnerabilities. Cash-based transfers, climate-smart agriculture, and structured demand linkages have become central to its resilience-building efforts. The agency's alignment with the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024–2030) and the Feed Salone strategy ensures that interventions are locally owned and nationally relevant.



Continued Commitment: Supporting Sierra Leone's Aspirations

Looking ahead, WFP remains steadfast in its support for Sierra Leone's development aspirations. The new Country Strategic Plan (CSP) (2026-2030) to be launched consolidates outcomes around crisis response and resilience, with a sharper focus on nutrition integration, food systems transformation, and inclusive governance. WFP will continue to work within the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2025–2030), collaborating with agencies like FAO, UNICEF, and WHO to advance joint goals in health, education, and climate adaptation.



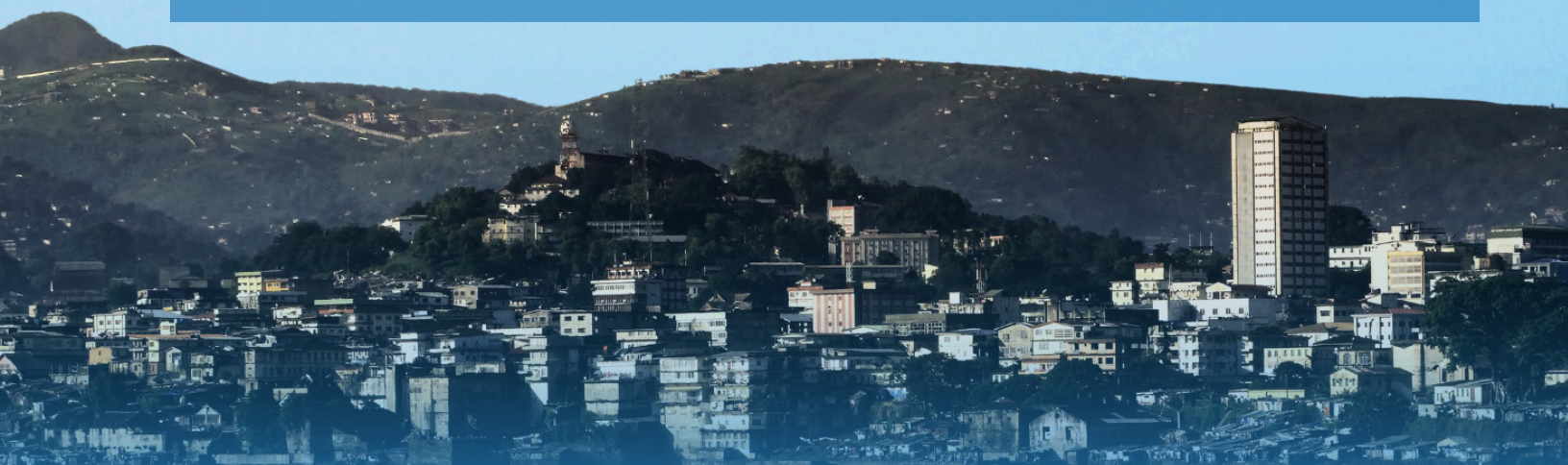
UN@80: A Legacy of Hope, A Future of Action

For WFP, UN@80 is more than a milestone—it is a moment of reflection and renewal. The UN's legacy in Sierra Leone is one of solidarity, innovation, and transformation. WFP's role within this legacy is defined by its ability to adapt, collaborate, and deliver impact where it matters most.

As Sierra Leone charts its path toward sustainable development, WFP stands ready to walk alongside—feeding futures, empowering communities, and building resilience. Together, we honor the past and embrace the promise of a better tomorrow.



UN Women in Sierra Leone: A Journey of Progress, Partnership, and Purpose



UN Women in Sierra Leone: A Journey of Progress, Partnership, and Purpose



UN Women's journey in Sierra Leone demonstrates resilience, collaboration, and transformative change. Since 2002 to present, the vision has been to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Sierra Leone.

Key Milestones and Achievements



Our most significant milestones:

Leadership and Governance: The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act (2022) is a landmark legislation sets a 30% quota for women's representation in decision making positions including Parliament, cabinet, and other institutions. By 2023, women held 30% of parliamentary seats and 34% of local council positions an unprecedented leap in political participation.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW): UN Women has amplified survivors voices and supported the implementation of laws such as the Sexual Offences Act (2019 and the Prohibition of Child Marriages Act (2024). Our work includes establishing and supporting the operationalization of 7 One Stop Centres providing real time, effective, efficient and survivor centered services free of charge resulted to 854 SGBV survivors receiving services from the 7 supported One Stop Centres in 2023 and 2024. Additionally, capacity strengthening through training and logistical support to frontline service providers in all seven One Stop Centre operational districts. Supported District Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Steering Committees for a more robust prevention, awareness raising and knowledge building on SGBV prevention and response in communities whilst-

strengthening advocacy, coordination and collaboration for improved multisectoral approach to SGBV response at district level. Work with paramount chiefs and religious authorities including focused campaigns like the "Real Man Campaign, aims at building partnerships to challenge harmful social norms in communities and promoting positive masculinities across every strata of society.

Economic Empowerment of Rural Women: Through UN Women's tailored initiatives, 21,500 rural farmers (14,624 women and 6,876 men) have increased their livelihood incomes by gaining better access to climate-smart agriculture tools and finance, improved seed varieties and fish fingerlings, digital marketing for women-owned businesses, and enhanced capacity in business and sustainable agriculture value chains.

UN Women's interventions have not only improved women's incomes and livelihoods but have also enhanced food security and built stronger, more resilient communities. Importantly, UN Women's support has helped women sustain their roles as economic actors and community leaders, even in times of crisis such as the Ebola outbreak and the COVID-19 pandemic. In parallel, UN Women has advocated for gender-responsive agricultural policies that recognize women as key drivers of rural transformation, ensuring their voices and priorities are integrated into national strategies and decision-making processes.

Women Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action: UN Women has supported Sierra Leone to make notable strides in advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda UNSCR 1325, particularly in the years following its civil war. A major milestone was the development and implementation of three National Action Plans (SiLNAP I in 2010, SiLNAP II from 2018 to 2023 and SiLNAP III 2024-2029)). Another significant achievement has been-

strengthened networking and movement building by establishing and supporting 150 women-led Civil Society Coalition. These Civil Society Organizations have been instrumental in championing localized advocacy efforts and jointly coordinating the Women Peace Security agenda across communities. Through this grassroots approach, local ownership and sustainability of the Women Peace Security agenda have been enhanced.

UN Women has also made notable strides in promoting gender mainstreaming and leadership within the Security Sector Institutions including securing representation for women in local court juries and as community headmen, roles traditionally dominated by men. Additionally, UN Women work has contributed to peaceful and inclusive electoral processes and increased voter registration, with a total of 3,374,258 registered voters (1,614,729 men and 1,759,529 women) during the 2023 general elections.

UN Partnership for Gender Mainstreaming (GiM)



The UN Partnership for Gender Mainstreaming (GiM), led by Sierra Leone's Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, has advanced gender equality by establishing Gender Units and Focal Points in over 28 government bodies. From 2024 to 2025, GiM expanded locally through a pilot in five coastal districts, training 44 officials from 22 councils. This led to five Gender Action Plans, gender budgeting in Moyamba and Kambia, and revitalized Gender Units across all participating councils.

The achievements have not come without challenges. Cultural resistance, systemic barriers and limited resources to name a few. However persistent advocacy, inclusive dialogue, and strategic partnerships, we have turned our challenges into opportunities.

Continued Commitment to Sierra Leone's Development

Looking ahead, UN Women remains deeply committed to supporting Sierra Leone's development aspirations, as outlined in the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024–2030), the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), and the UN Women Strategic Note (2025-2030).

Our future priorities include:

Strengthening Implementation of the GEWE Act: We will work with government, civil society, and communities to ensure the Act translates into real change—through capacity building, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms.

Expanding Economic Opportunities: We aim to scale up programs that promote women's entrepreneurship, access to land, and financial inclusion, especially in rural areas.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Our focus will be on prevention, response, legal reform and movement building. We will also advocate for increased funding to Ministry of Gender and Children's affairs which currently receive less than 1% of gender equality Government assistance.

These commitments are not just aspirations—they are grounded in the lived realities of Sierra Leonean women and girls, and shaped by their voices, experiences, and dreams.



UN@80: Reflections on Legacy and Evolution

As the United Nations celebrates its 80th anniversary, UN Women reflects on a legacy of hope, solidarity, and transformation. For us, UN@80 is more than a milestone it is a moment to reaffirm our purpose and reimagine our role. In Sierra Leone, the UN has been a steadfast partner through conflict, recovery, and reform.

UN Women's presence has grown from a supporting voice to a leading force in shaping gender-responsive policies and programs. The journey from the Beijing Platform for Action to the GEWE Act is a testament to what multilateralism can achieve when rooted in local realities.

UN@80 reminds us that peace, development, and human rights are not static goals— they are dynamic processes that require courage, collaboration, and constant renewal.

As we look to the future, we remain guided by the belief that when women and girls thrive, nations prosper.



Conclusion

UN Women's journey in Sierra Leone is far from over. It is a living story—written in the aspirations of young leaders, the resilience of rural women, and the courage of survivors who speak out. As we move forward, we continue to embrace all partners— government, civil society, private sector, and communities—to walk with us.

Together, we can build a Sierra Leone where gender equality is not just a goal, but a lived reality.

And that, we believe, is the true spirit of UN@80.



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