



Monday–Friday,
24th – 28th February 2025

Impact in Action: Stories That Matter

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Welcome to the **UN Agencies Weekly Highlights** – your trusted source for dynamic updates, impactful stories, and transformative work shaping Sierra Leone and beyond. Dive into powerful narratives of resilience, partnerships driving sustainable development, and the vibrant faces behind the initiatives. Stay informed, inspired, and ready to act. This is where stories meet solutions – because together, we can drive the change the world needs.

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US\$4 million GOLA-REAP Project launched at Bo Waterside, Liberia .

On Thursday, 27 February, the Resident Coordinator Seraphine Wakana, together with her Liberian counterpart, Christine Umutoni, joined the Minister of Internal Affairs from Sierra Leone, the Deputy Internal Affairs from Liberia, the MRU Secretary-General, UN colleagues from IOM and WFP from both countries and other stakeholders for the launch of the GOLA- REAP (Resilience, Empowerment, Access and Peacebuilding) project.

The ceremony for the US\$4 million funding from the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) took place at Bo-Waterside on the Liberian side of the border.



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It aims to enhance cross-border collaboration, resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and peacebuilding among communities, law enforcement, and government agencies in Liberia and Sierra Leone. PBF supports joint UN responses to address critical peacebuilding opportunities and connect development, humanitarian, human rights, and peacebuilding initiatives.

At the launch, the RC from Sierra Leone said the project, which is aligned with the national priorities of the two countries, the MRU, ECOWAS and AU visions, as well as the UN Pact for the Future, builds on the past and ongoing peacebuilding efforts of the governments, communities and other stakeholders in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Her Liberian counterpart said that the initiative builds on the historic ties between Liberia and Sierra Leone, reaffirmed during the November 2024 meeting between President Joseph Boakai and President Julius Maada Bio in Freetown, where both leaders emphasized regional stability, economic integration, and environmental conservation.

The launch event was a key milestone in officially presenting the project to stakeholders, highlighting its objectives and intended outcomes. These outcomes include strengthening peace, security, and resilience along the borders of the two countries, strengthening social cohesion, improving border management, enhancing local governance, and promoting climate-smart agriculture to mitigate conflict risks and foster economic resilience.



The **GOLA-REAP** project is a joint effort led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The IOM will provide its expertise in migration and border management.

At the same time, the WFP will contribute its experience in food security and nutrition in collaboration with national governments, local authorities, civil society organizations, and regional institutions such as the Mano River Union (MRU).



Res. Coord, Seraphine Wakaña and PBF Specialist, Irene Limo receiving traditional garments from PBF Field Visit in Tikonko.

The RC and her team also had engagements in Bo and Tikonko with young people working on skills training and with bike-riders.

UNICEF delivers 61, 000 doses of Mpox vaccine to Sierra Leone.

To support Sierra Leone's Mpox response, UNICEF has procured and delivered more than 61,000 doses of vaccine with generous funding from GAVI and the Republic of Ireland and technical support from the African CDC and WHO to the Government of Sierra Leone.



The Ministry of Health, the National Public Health Agency, and the leadership of the National Immunisation Programme, ensured that the Mpox vaccine arrived in the country at such an astonishing speed.

The introduction of the Mpox vaccine to all target groups aged 12 years and older, especially frontline health workers and contacts, will help ensure that people are protected and prevented from further transmission of the disease.

In addition, UNICEF supported the distribution of donated Personal Protective Equipment to six districts of the country to help healthcare workers stay safe in their course of duty.



UNICEF is also supporting education, sensitization, and social listening efforts to curtail the spread of the disease. The UNICEF-supported social listening report is based on data insights and trends gathered by monitoring online conversations related to public perceptions and sentiments regarding Mpox to strengthen GOSL and partners' preparedness and response efforts.



Reducing teenage pregnancy and ending child marriage National strategy launched.

UNICEF joined the Government of Sierra Leone, Irish Aid, UNFPA Sierra Leone, and key partners to launch the National Strategy for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy & Ending Child Marriage (2025-2030) alongside the Formative Research Study on Adolescent Health, Nutrition & Support Systems (2023).



The strategy developed with support from UNICEF, UNFPA, and Irish Aid builds on past progress and takes a holistic, multi-sectoral approach to tackling child marriage and adolescent pregnancy.

Landscape mapping on Agricultural Finance Regulatory Policies In Sierra Leone conducted strategy launched.

UNCDF in partnership with the Bank of Sierra Leone (BSL) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) has conducted a 'landscape mapping on Agricultural Finance Regulatory Policies In Sierra Leone'.



This was preceded with consultation workshops and one-on-one meetings with 200+ stakeholders from the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA,) Government MDAs, Agri SMEs, Commercial Banks, Community banks, and Microfinance institutions.

The stakeholder engagements focused on (among others), the report's findings and recommendations with the objective of coming up with Agri finance specific policies that can play a catalytic role to crowd in funding whilst providing Access to credit for Agri SMEs.

The agriculture sector receives about 6% of the total credit from formal financial institutions yet contributes an estimated 60% of the country's GDP and employs a sizeable population in Sierra Leone.

UNCDF will be supporting the Ministry of Agriculture in the drafting of the 'National Agriculture Finance Policy', courtesy of the EU Funded 'Salone Access to Finance' Project.



Empowering Informal Enterprises: UNDP's Blended Finance Match-Making Event.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) hosted a Blended Finance Match-Making Event with 74 stakeholders, including government officials, fund providers, financial institutions, development partners, media, and informal sector businesses.

The event, part of the Informal Economy Project funded by the EU and OACP, aims to support informal enterprises in transitioning to sustainable growth and formalization.

Participants discussed how blended finance, which combines public and private funds, can help small businesses access capital through innovative financing solutions.



Key topics included the use of digital technology and strengthening synergies between formal and informal financial institutions and small businesses.

The event highlighted the potential of blended finance to unlock economic opportunities for micro and small enterprises, which make up 92% of Sierra Leone's workforce but face challenges like limited access to finance and technological support.

Dr. Ibrahim Stevens, Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone, emphasized the importance of bridging the gap between informal enterprises and the formal economy for financial stability and growth.

The EU and UNDP are committed to supporting financial inclusion through various initiatives. The UNDP's Growth Accelerator Programme has created 177 permanent jobs, 3,928 temporary jobs, and opened 125 new markets in the past year.

Additionally, the Timbuktoo-UniPod Pan-African initiative aims to support 1,000 African tech startups over the next decade, with a hub at Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone. Financial literacy projects are also being implemented to empower youth and informal sector workers.



Fredrick Ampiah, UNDP Resident Representative, reiterated UNDP's commitment to financial inclusion and innovation.

Emmanuel Konjoh, Chief Director at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, stressed the need for women's economic empowerment, noting that only 20% of businesses are female-owned despite women making up 50% of the population. He also highlighted the role of digital technology in modern trade.

Sierra Leone Bolsters Mpox Response with 61,300 Vaccine Doses.

Sierra Leone reinforced its combat against mpox with the arrival of 61,300 vaccine doses on February 25, 2025.



World Health Organization



This shipment, secured through the collaborative efforts of the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, GAVI, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), and other partners, following a total of 29 confirmed mpox cases nationwide since the onset of this outbreak.



The arrival of these vaccines is a crucial step in protecting vulnerable communities and curbing the spread of the virus. WHO contributed to this achievement, working closely with the Ministry of Health's Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) to develop a compelling proposal for vaccine acquisition. WHO's technical expertise supported the review of the proposal with partners, ensuring its alignment with international standards and best practices, ultimately leading to the approval and delivery of the vaccines.

"We are committed to supporting Sierra Leone in its efforts to control the mpox outbreak and protect its citizens. Our partnership with the Ministry of Health and other stakeholders has been essential in making the acquisition of the vaccine a reality." Remarked WHO Country Representative Dr. George Ameh.

The Ministry of Health, with support from its partners, will now focus on implementing a targeted vaccination campaign to reach high-risk populations and prevent further transmission. The vaccines will be administered according to established guidelines, prioritizing those most vulnerable to infection.

"We are grateful for the support of WHO, UNICEF, GAVI, Africa CDC, and all our partners in securing these vaccines," said Dr. Austin Demby, Minister of Health. "This shipment is a major arsenal in our fight against the mpox outbreak."

WHO supports Ministry of Health to empower Moyamba with quality improvement training.

The WHO supports the Ministry of Health in conducting a crucial Quality Improvement (QI) training workshop in Moyamba District, Sierra Leone. This initiative, funded by Susan Thompson Buffet Foundation (STBF), aimed to strengthen healthcare delivery through the Life Stages Approach, prioritizing holistic care from preconception to geriatrics.



World Health Organization



Forty healthcare workers, including DHMT members, received training on QI tools, root cause analysis, data management, and child death audits. Moyamba, identified as a potential demonstration site, benefited from hands-on exercises where participants developed QI projects tailored to their departments, addressing service delivery gaps.

The training enhanced understanding of QI principles, supported sustainable QI systems, strengthened Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health (MNCAH) services, and equipped participants for effective child death audits.

Umaru Lawundeh, Quality of Care Officer, emphasized the training's relevance, stating it empowered him to identify gaps and improve care.

This initiative marks a significant step in operationalizing the Life Stages Approach, laying the foundation for improved health outcomes and nationwide scale-up of person-centered healthcare.



FAO Inaugurates Training on Pest Control & Management for Crop Protection and Phytosanitary officers.

On Tuesday, 25th February 2025, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Representative in Sierra Leone, Saeed A. Bantie, inaugurated a four-day training program for Crop protection and Phytosanitary officers from Sierra Leone's Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS).



The training was held at the Sierra Palms Hotel in Freetown and aimed to equip participants with essential knowledge and skills on the Biological, Ecology, Host Plants, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Practices for Achaea, Catocaloides control in Sierra Leone.

The Training of Trainers program was organized by the FAO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS), as part of the joint effort towards promoting sustainable and effective pest management practices in the country. In his opening remark, Bantie emphasized the significance of this training of trainers on the Biological, Ecology, Host Plants, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Practices.

He stressed the need for a strategic approach to addressing these pests to ensure food security and sustainable agriculture in Sierra Leone in addressing the challenges faced by farmers in pest management.

The Director of Crops at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, John Kamara, admonished participants to apply the knowledge gained to develop effective control methods and protect the agricultural sector of Sierra Leone.



FAO targeting 8 Districts and 21 Chiefdoms to improve livelihoods in Sierra Leone.

Through the Food Systems Resilience Program (FSRP), FAO is actively working to improve livelihoods in Sierra Leone! The initiative is reaching across 8 districts and 21 chiefdoms. Currently, a distribution of small ruminants to 1,155 small-scale livestock farmers across Sierra Leone is taking place.



This initiative is a collaborative effort by the Government of Sierra Leone, implemented through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS), with crucial funding from The World Bank and technical expertise from the FAO.



ILO, Opportunity Salone Programme support Sierra Agrobased Industries equipment .



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With funding from the European Union, the International Labour Organization (ILO) implementers of the Opportunity Salone Programme have provided Sierra Agro-based Industries in Bo District with a range of essential machinery. These include dryers, steamers, processing tables, processors, and cool systems, all of which are crucial for developing and scaling Attieke, a cassava product.



This support is not just about increasing consumption and access to the product but also about providing consumers with the best value for money and ensuring quality and volumes at all times. The project has supported SME businesses like Sierra Agro-based Industries based in Bo districts and others in Makeni, Kenema, and Port Loko to scale up production levels with technical and financial resources to be better placed in meeting market demands and compete internationally.

Receiving the machines, Rashid Conteh, CEO of Sierra Agro-based Industries, thanked the EU and ILO for the timely intervention to contribute to the cassava value chain in ensuring multiple products are being processed.

They promised to utilise the machinery efficiently and ensure knowledge is passed on to the younger processors in the cassava value chain. Present at the handing over are Fedrico Cappuro, Food Systems Programme Manager, EU, Commissioner of Labour Chiblee F.Kamara from MELSS and the Youth Commissioner Atata Manassarry, amongst others.





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