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UN AGENCIES WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Monday–Friday,
7th April–11th April 2025

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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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IFAD Associate VP visits Sierra Leone to deepen partnership with the Govt.

IFAD has invested approximately US\$171.25 million in 9 projects and programmes in Sierra Leone, benefiting 547,500 rural households. The Fund is committed to supporting the country's Feed Salone vision.

Last week, Associate VP Donal Brown visited Freetown from the 6th to the 9th of April 2025. His visit was to deepen IFAD's partnership with the government of Sierra Leone, facilitate the establishment of the IFAD-supported Agricultural Transformation Office (ATO) within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security.



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The aim to enhance the realisation of the Feed Salone programme, and expedite the start-up of the newly approved US\$ 105 million Livestock and Livelihood Project (LLDP).

He also met with the Resident Coordinator Seraphine Wakana to discuss about his visit, enhancing the data ecosystem, improving early warning systems, and dealing with the global funding situation.

Brown had fruitful engagements with the Minister of Agriculture. These discussions reaffirmed IFAD's commitment to ensuring the success of the ATO and clarified the role of the ATO as an auxiliary entity to support the traditional structures within the ministry.

The ATO will bring in highly qualified individuals with the requisite experience to provide the much-needed technical support to the Ministry.

In addition to his meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Brown also met with the Chief Minister at the Statehouse and the Minister of Finance respectively. During these meetings, he reaffirmed IFAD's commitment to the pledge of US\$ 90 million, which was made in Vienna in June 2024. In both engagements, the government was encouraged to increase its commitment by providing the counterpart funds to support current operational active projects.



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UN and ASF partner to expand credit access for women-led development projects.

On 9 April 2025, the UN Resident Coordinator, Seraphine Wakana, together with the Head of Office for UN Women, Setcheme Mongbo, and their respective teams, convened a high-level meeting with the African Solidarity Fund (ASF) at the Resident Coordinator's Office, UN House.

The goal, to explore innovative strategies for enhancing women's access to credit in Sierra Leone.



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ASF's Chief of Mission, Aly Guindo, and Senior Communications Officer, Mohammed Bada Diallo, introduced the Bank Loan Guarantee Mechanism, which is designed to support women-led development projects by increasing access to bank financing.

The discussion highlighted the importance of sustainable, gender-responsive financing in driving inclusive economic growth and empowering women as agents of change in Sierra Leone.

This engagement reinforces the UN's commitment to SDG 5 and financial inclusion as a cornerstone of national development priorities.



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UNDP, China, India & Govt. partner to position Salone as pilot for South-South & Triangular Cooperation.

This week, UNDP Sierra Leone, the High Commission of India, the Embassy of China, and the Ministry of Public Administration and Political Affairs took another step to strengthen collaboration on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTrC).



Co-created with key partners such as India and China, the session will explore how strategic partnerships and coordinated action can drive sustainable development by building national capacity in technology, human resources, and infrastructure.

The session, themed "Unlocking the Potential of Partnerships for Sustainable Development in Sierra Leone: A Strategic South-South Dialogue to Build National Capacities through Human Talent, Technology, and Infrastructure", will serve as a platform for aligning development priorities with global cooperation frameworks.

Organised by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the High-Level Forum will bring together policymakers, ministers, senior experts, youth, and civil society representatives. The forum aims to deepen understanding of the role and impact of SSTrC across Africa, share best practices, and foster stronger partnerships between African countries and the Global South.

The UN agency is involved in preparations for a flagship SSTrC session during the upcoming Third Africa High-Level Forum in Freetown, scheduled for 7–9 May and organized by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) with key stakeholders in the Global South.

The goal is to position Sierra Leone as a pilot country for sustained partnerships in key development areas, including human capital development, infrastructure, digital innovation, and public service delivery.



Children in hard-to-reach Falaba vaccinated against vaccine preventable diseases.

Rudolf Schwenk, UNICEF Representative in Sierra Leone together with the Director of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), have reaffirmed collective commitments to zero dose by reaching out to children in cattle rearing settlements in hard-to-reach Falaba District so that the last child in the last mile is vaccinated against vaccine preventable diseases.

unicef 
for every child



Additionally, six months old baby Mohamed received his first dose of the new malaria vaccine at the Falaba Community Health Centre.

“Even though the malaria vaccines offer protection against malaria, however, we must not forget to sleep under insecticide treated bed nets and take other preventive measures as additional actions to combat malaria.” Rudolf said.

This initiative underscores UNICEF’s unwavering commitment to equity in healthcare delivery—ensuring that no child is left behind, no matter how remote their location.

By combining life-saving vaccines with community engagement and sustained prevention efforts, Sierra Leone is taking vital steps toward eradicating vaccine-preventable diseases and malaria, one child at a time.



Community-Level Operation and Maintenance (CLOM) strategy launched.

The Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation and Unicef this week launched the Community-Level Operation and Maintenance (CLOM) strategy and validated the WASH Policy 2025 to strengthen sustainability and resilience of WASH services in Sierra Leone at a programme held at the New Brookfields Hotel in Freetown.



“The importance of water and sanitation services to Sierra Leone’s socioeconomic development cannot be overstated. Reliable WASH services directly contribute to reduced child morbidity and mortality; improved school attendance and learning outcomes; economic growth and productivity; and environmental sustainability,” said Rudolf Schwenk, UNICEF Representative to Sierra Leone.



By prioritising preventive maintenance, reducing infrastructure downtime, and fostering collaboration between government, local communities, private sector actors, and development partners, this strategy marks an important step towards ensuring the resilience and sustainability of WASH services.

Min. of Health receives \$432,000 boost to strengthen Salone's health system.

With funding from the Global Fund, the World Health Organization (WHO) has donated medical equipment and two new Toyota minibuses valued at USD 432,000 to the Ministry of Health, Sierra Leone.



World Health Organization



The donation, part of WHO's year-long World Health Day celebrations, aims to boost the country's health system capacity.

The medical supplies include advanced laboratory equipment such as a digital polarimeter, infrared spectroscopy tools, Lambda 365 PC Version, Agilent HPLC, and an advanced dissolution system (Sotax), among others. These will support the Pharmacy Board of Sierra Leone in enhancing drug and food quality control.

The vehicles, handed to the National Public Health Agency (NPHA), will strengthen emergency response and outreach services across the country.

Speaking at the handover, WHO Country Representative Dr. George Ameh reaffirmed WHO's commitment to building resilient health systems and promoting universal health coverage in Sierra Leone.

"By strengthening regulatory and operational capacity, we are contributing to a more robust and responsive health system," he said.

Deputy Minister of Health, Professor Charles Senessie, expressed gratitude on behalf of the government, noting the donation's impact on improving public safety and regulatory oversight.

WHO acknowledged the Global Fund for its continued support in strengthening health systems and ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare in Sierra Leone.



WHO Sierra Leone celebrates World Physical Activity Day 2025!

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Sport, and partners, WHO marks this global day with a symbolic walk, sporting activities, health screenings, and community awareness campaigns.

Physical inactivity is a major contributor to noncommunicable diseases (NCDs)—including heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and stroke—which remain the leading causes of death and disability globally.



World Health
Organization

An active lifestyle can significantly reduce these risks, improving both physical and mental health across all age groups.

Minister of Sport, Augusta James-Tema, emphasised the importance of movement for health, stating:

“Today, we are gathered to celebrate the International Day of Sport, which is recognized globally every year on April 6. This day holds international significance because sport contributes greatly to the physical health and well-being of everyone—regardless of age, gender, or ability. Sport is no longer viewed as a path for dropouts; it is a vital aspect of life that fosters social change, builds cooperation, and strengthens healthy communities.”

Dr. George Ameh, WHO Representative in Sierra Leone, stated:

“Physical activity is essential for a healthy life. We are proud to partner with the Government and stakeholders to promote active lifestyles and prevent noncommunicable diseases. Together, we can build a healthier and more active Sierra Leone.”

Theme: Levelling the Playing Field: Promoting Physical Activity for Health

Let's commit to moving more, sitting less, and investing in healthier communities—for today and future generations.



"Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures"- Sierra Leone joins the global community to commemorate 2025 World Health Day.

WHO and the Ministry of Health, Sierra Leone, commemorated World Health Day 2025 under the theme "Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures" with a national call to action to strengthen systems and partnerships that ensure every woman and newborn survives and thrives.



Minister of Health Dr. Austin Demby unveiled the latest maternal mortality estimates, showing a drop from 443 to 354 per 100,000 live births between 2020 and 2023. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to further reducing this figure below 300 by 2025.

Dr. Demby highlighted new accountability mechanisms such as the Pretrack system to monitor pregnancies and improve maternal outcomes.

Throughout the year, WHO and partners will support health worker training, community outreach, policy advocacy, and critical services like blood donation to reduce preventable maternal deaths.

The event brought together government officials, health partners, and the donor community to launch a year-long Maternal and Newborn Health Campaign under Sierra Leone's sub-theme: ***"Tackling the Public Health Emergency of Preventable Maternal and Child Mortality."***

WHO Country Representative Dr. George Ameh commended the country's significant strides, noting a 78% decline in maternal mortality since 2000. ***"Sierra Leone's bold steps, including declaring maternal and newborn deaths a national emergency, are saving lives. But we must go further—no woman or newborn should be left behind,"*** he stated.



WFP donates vehicle to Sierra Leone Standards Bureau to strengthen food quality control.

As the government agency responsible for developing and enforcing national standards, the SLSB plays a critical role in testing, inspecting, and certifying goods to ensure they meet safety and quality requirements for local consumption and export.



In this regard, this week, WFP supported the entity by providing a hardtop Toyota Land Cruiser to enhance the SLSB's capacity to conduct essential activities such as food testing, product certification, and calibration of weighing instruments.

This collaboration is vital in promoting food security and nutrition, including developing standardized, enriched local complementary foods and support for smallholder farmers.

The donated vehicle will enhance the Bureau's mobility, enabling more efficient inspections, field testing, and regulatory enforcement across Sierra Leone. This contribution highlights WFP's commitment to strengthening institutions that protect food quality, benefit consumers, and promote agricultural trade.



FAO holds capacity-building training on AMR susceptibility for microbiologists/laboratory scientists.

The West Africa Antimicrobial Resistance One Health Grant (WA AMROH) is a UK development assistance program. It is delivered through the Fleming Fund to help developing countries tackle Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) across humans, animals, plant health, and the environment. The program receives technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organization.



On Tuesday, April 8, 2025, WA AMROH started a five-day Antimicrobial Susceptibility Training. This training is for Laboratory Technicians, Fleming Fellows, Laboratory Superintendents, Medical Laboratory and Scientific Officers, and Laboratory Analysts. Participants were selected from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS), Central Veterinary Laboratory (CVL), Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR), Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), and the Environment Protection Agency Sierra Leone.

The workshop, which was held at the Wusum Hotel in Makeni, Bombali District, Northern Sierra Leone, aims to train microbiologists/Laboratory scientists in performing Antimicrobial Susceptibility Tests and interpretation of results to generate quality data for monitoring AMR trends.

During the training, participants were taken through topics including - Introduction to CVL, and FAO AMR Reference Centre; AMR in Animal Health Sector, and National Action Plan for AMR in Sierra Leone; One Health Approach to AMR, Good Laboratory Practices, and Introduction to Bacterial Identification Techniques.



UNFPA aids Sierra Leone's CRVS & identity management strategy.

During the week in review, the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) convened a national stakeholder consultation in partnership with UNFPA and the Global Financing Facility -World Bank, to review the country's Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Strategic Plan (2021–2024) and develop the new Strategic Plan (2025–2030).



The consultation, which brought together stakeholders from government ministries, private sector, development partners, civil society, and traditional leaders, was designed to co-create a forward-looking strategy for a stronger, inclusive, and digital civil registration and identity system—one where every vital event is registered, and every right is protected.

Speaking at the consultation, UNFPA Officer-in-Charge, Ms. Sibeso Mululuma indicated that a well-functioning and inclusive CRVS system protects human rights, empowers individuals, and promotes sustainable development and therefore investments aimed at improving CRVS systems constituted a meaningful step towards achieving national development.

NCRA Director General, Mr. Mohamed Massaquoi highlighted key milestones in the implementation of the last strategic plan which included the establishment of an integrated CRVS platform, a national data centre, and the publication of the country's first Vital Statistics Report in 2022.

The new Strategic Plan is expected to serve as a critical framework for building a modern, inclusive CRVS and Identity Management system that leaves no one behind.



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New maternal mortality estimates unveiled at 58th Session of the CPD58.

UNFPA, in collaboration with UNICEF, WHO and other partners, hosted a high-level Side Event at the CPD58 in New York on April 7, to unveil new maternal mortality estimates providing an updated and comprehensive picture of the global situation.

These estimates, coupled with the updated systematic analysis of cause of maternal death data, illuminate the specific drivers of maternal mortality, allowing for tailored strategies for maximum impact. The event also featured the launch of the Global Midwifery Accelerator, an initiative aimed at enhancing midwifery care globally as part of efforts to accelerate progress towards the reduction of maternal mortality.



Minister for Planning and Economic Development, Hon. Kenyeh Barlay was a key speaker at the event and shared insights on the progress made in improving maternal health in Sierra Leone, reaffirming the country's commitment to strengthening maternal health systems and ensuring better health outcomes for women and newborns.



The ICPD's Programme of Action has guided countries toward inclusive, equitable policies advancing health and gender equality. By strengthening health systems and addressing inequalities, we can work toward a world where all people can live healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives."

Ms. Kenyeh Barlay, Sierra Leone Minister of Planning and Economic Development, on behalf of 78 countries at CPD58



Government, UNFPA evaluate programme to eliminate obstetric fistula.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, UNFPA convened strategic partners to discuss the findings and recommendations from the midterm evaluation of the Programme to eliminate obstetric fistula in Sierra Leone, funded by the Government of Iceland.



It provided an opportunity to reflect on the progress made, the lessons learned, and the challenges and opportunities encountered throughout the program's implementation.

Partners reaffirmed their collective commitment to ending fistula in Sierra Leone by 2030, emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration and strategic action to achieve this critical goal.



Sierra Leone records 79% reduction in maternal mortality within two decades.

As part of the World Health Day commemoration, the Minister of Health Dr. Austin Demby, announced that Sierra Leone has achieved a remarkable 79% reduction in the maternal mortality ratio over the last two decades.



A milestone which mirrors the country's strategic investments and strong political commitment to reduce preventable maternal mortality.

UNFPA commends the Government and the Ministry of Health on sustaining progress towards the prevention of maternal mortality in Sierra Leone.





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