



Wednesday–Friday, 30th
April–2nd May 2025

Impact in Action: Stories That Matter

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Table of Contents



01

RCO

- **Conserving Gola Forest: Sierra Leone and Liberia unite for peace and sustainability.**
- **Annual Results Report feature story: Building peace through farming: Fatmata's story from Yendeya Village.**

03

WFP

- **Sierra Leone's home-grown school feeding programme expands with local rice and pulses.**

05

UN Women

- **UN Women unveils interactive platform to boost women's leadership in peacebuilding.**

02

WHO

- **Sierra Leone Strengthens Mpox Response Through Joint Mission Led by WHO and Partners.**
- **Sierra Leone Launches SafeStart Project to Boost Child Survival and Malaria Vaccine Uptake.**
- **Dialogue to mobilize youth engagement in immunization advocacy and community outreach organized by MOH & partners.**

04

UNICEF

- **UNICEF and Peter Krämer Foundation enhance digital learning for Sierra Leone youth.**
- **Over 3,200 girls in Pujehun receive safe reusable sanitary pads.**



Conserving Gola Forest: Sierra Leone and Liberia unite for peace and sustainability.

As part of ongoing efforts to promote environmental protection, sustainable development, and peacebuilding, the UN Resident Coordinator in Sierra Leone, Seraphine Wakana, highlights the collaborative conservation efforts between Sierra Leone and Liberia in the Gola Rainforest.

The Gola Rainforest, a rich and biodiverse tropical forest that spans the border of the two countries, represents a beacon of hope for regional peace and ecological resilience. The forest's protection is an example of how cross-border collaboration can yield lasting benefits for both people and the planet.



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Photo: © Gola Rainforest National Park

This story was published following the launch of the Gola ReAP (Gola Rainforest Environmental and Agricultural Partnership) initiative in March 2025, which brings together local communities, governments, and international partners to safeguard this critical natural asset.

“The Gola Forest is more than just trees – it is a symbol of unity, shared heritage, and our joint responsibility to protect the environment for future generations,” says RC Ms. Seraphine Wakana.

The initiative is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goals 13 (Climate Action), 15 (Life on Land), and 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), underscoring the UN's commitment to integrated solutions for climate, biodiversity, and regional peace.

The Gola ReAP initiative reinforces cross-border cooperation, supports sustainable livelihoods, empowers local communities, and enhances biodiversity conservation and climate resilience. It also strengthens the role of peacebuilding through environmental action, demonstrating how shared ecosystems can serve as a foundation for lasting peace.

[Read the full article on Africa Renewal](#)



Annual Results Report feature story: Building peace through farming: Fatmata's story from Yendeya Village.

In **Yendeya Village**, 23-year-old Fatmata Samura carefully plants rice seedlings in a 4.5-hectare swamp. As a mother of three and a member of the Lanaya Farmers Association, she embodies the resilience emerging in rural Sierra Leone amidst past hardships and conflicts.



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Thanks to a peacebuilding initiative led by the World Food Programme (WFP) and funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, Fatmata and 500 other farmers have gained renewed hope.

The programme introduced farming tools, cash-for-labour incentives, machinery, and a village savings and loan scheme – easing labour constraints and empowering community members to start small businesses and improve their livelihoods.

The initiative promotes cooperation between farming groups and cattle herders by creating shared spaces and supporting inclusive income-generating activities. Alongside Fatmata, Tenneh Kamara – a widowed mother of seven – also shares how the programme has reduced household burdens, enhanced food security, and brought peace to their village.

Since its launch, the project has transformed farming in Yendeya, improving productivity and social cohesion. WFP aims to expand the programme's reach, building self-reliant communities across Sierra Leone.

Read more in the UN Sierra Leone 2024 Annual Results Report

ANNUAL RESULTS Sierra Leone REPORT 2024



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Sierra Leone strengthens Mpox response through joint mission led by WHO and partners.

In response to the recent upsurge of mpox cases in the country, WHO Country Office received a joint mission of the Continental Mpox Incident Management Support Team (IMST) from 28 April to 2 May 2025.



This mission brought together experts from WHO AFRO, Africa CDC, and key partners, working closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the National Public Health Agency (NPHA) to assess and enhance the country's national Mpox response operations.

Throughout the week, the joint team conducted comprehensive field assessments, evaluated technical capacities across key response pillars, and convened strategic stakeholder workshops. These activities provided critical insights that informed the updating of a Joint Incident Action Plan, aligned with the Continental Mpox Response Strategy.

The mission focused on strengthening core response areas, including coordination and logistics, surveillance, laboratory diagnostics, case management, infection prevention and control (IPC), vaccination, and risk communication and community engagement (RCCE).

This collaborative effort marked a significant step in reinforcing a coordinated, intensified, and sustainable response to Mpox in Sierra Leone. By addressing key operational gaps and fostering stronger partnerships, the mission contributed to building greater national health security and resilience against future public health threats.



Sierra Leone launches SafeStart project to boost child survival and malaria vaccine uptake.

The Ministry of Health, through its Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) and the Malaria and Child Health Programme, in collaboration with WHO, the College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences (COMAHS), the University of Sierra Leone, and ISGlobal, and with funding from the la Caixa Foundation, has officially launched the SafeStart Project.



The SafeStart Project represents a significant step towards reducing preventable childhood illness and death and improving equitable access to life-saving vaccines in underserved communities.



This initiative aims to improve child survival in Sierra Leone by conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the national immunization programme, with particular focus on the rollout and impact of the RTS, S malaria vaccine and other essential routine health interventions.

Targeting Port Loko, Bombali, and Tonkolili districts, the project will assess vaccine coverage, uptake of the RTS, S malaria vaccine, and its effect on malaria burden and child morbidity. The findings will help strengthen immunization systems and inform policies to enhance health outcomes for children in Sierra Leone. Evaluation results are expected to be shared by September 2026.



Dialogue to mobilize youth engagement in immunization advocacy and community outreach organised by MOH & partners.

As part of the **2025** World Immunization Week and African Vaccination Week celebrations, the Ministry of Health of Sierra Leone, in collaboration with WHO, UNICEF, Gavi, Africa CDC, CHAI, and other partners, hosted a dynamic National Youth Dialogue on Immunization at Milton Margai University of Technology, Brookfields Campus.

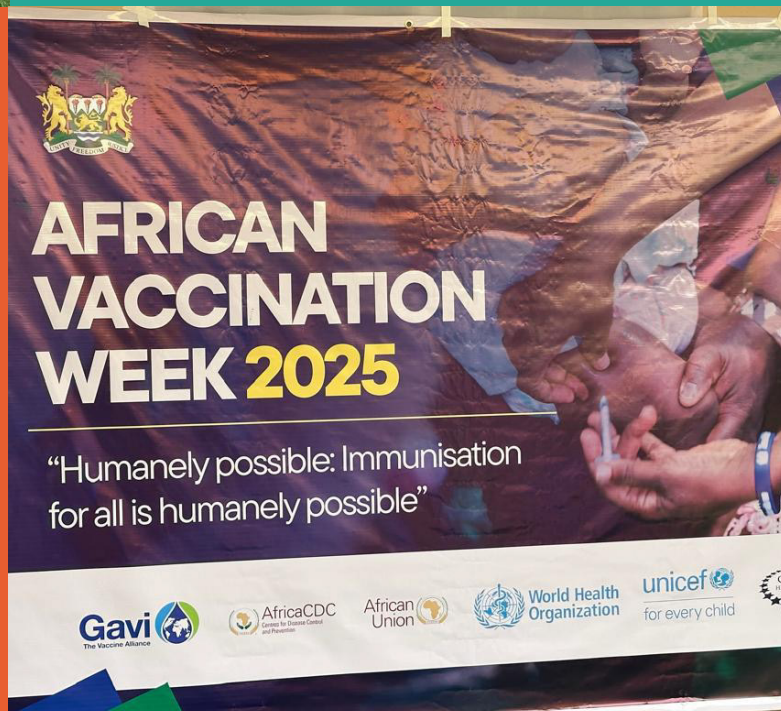


The event brought together over 200 young people from diverse backgrounds and professional sectors under the theme: “Immunization for All is Humanly Possible.” The dialogue served as a powerful platform to mobilize youth engagement in immunization advocacy and community outreach.

Participants were equipped with accurate and relevant information to counter vaccine misinformation, raise awareness, and champion equitable access to immunization services. They were also encouraged to reflect on their pivotal role in safeguarding public health and advancing immunization goals within their communities.

The dialogue underscored vaccines as one of humanity’s most significant public health achievements – having saved more than 154 million lives over the past 50 years. It reinforced the right of every individual, regardless of age or background, to benefit from life-saving immunization.

The event concluded with a strong call to action: achieving less disease and more life is humanly possible when governments invest in strong immunization programmes and communities – including youth – work together to turn vaccines into vaccinations.



Sierra Leone's home-grown school feeding programme expands with local rice and pulses.

WFP in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MBSSE) held a flagging off ceremony at the WFP Kissy warehouse, to mark the dispatch of locally produced rice and pulses procured with support from MBSSE and MAFS for the Term 3 2025/2026 school year. The event celebrated the collaboration between WFP and the Government of Sierra Leone, while recognizing the critical role of smallholder farmers in sustaining the Feed Salone strategy.



In 2025, with support from donors, including Germany, Iceland, Japan and the World Bank Funded Food Systems Resilience Programme (FSRP), WFP will procure over 40,000 (50kg) bags of locally produced rice and pulses from 8,355 smallholder farmers across seven districts, feeding of 270,000 school children.

The Home-Grown School Feeding programme not only ensures that children receive nutritious and diversified meals but also supports local farmers by creating a stable market for their produce. In addition, selected schools are purchasing vegetables and Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes directly from women farmers groups, using funds transferred from WFP.



In her remarks, WFP Representative and Country Director, Ms. Yvonne Forsén emphasised the paradigm shift from imported to local rice. **“More than 30 percent of the food we serve in schools today is grown right here in Sierra Leone. This represents a meaningful shift to empowering local farmers and strengthening the rural economy. And it’s a shift we are committed to accelerate.”** she said.

On behalf of the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, Deputy Minister Mrs. Emile Gogra called for increasing the capacity of smallholder farmers to produce more local rice for the home-grown school feeding programme, while the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Hon. Dr. Henry Musa Kpaka praised the Feed Salone strategy for enhancing food security and farmer livelihoods.”

We had envisioned under the Feed Salone Strategy that the country can feed itself; WFP is showing us today that it can be done and that our farmers are ready. So, MAFS supported WFP this year to purchase rice and pulses, to feed the children in supported schools,” he said.

With this expansion, Sierra Leone continues to demonstrate how local solutions can drive national development, ensuring a brighter future for its children and farmers alike.

UNICEF and Peter Krämer Foundation enhance digital learning for Sierra Leone youth.

UNICEF facilitated Peter Krämer Foundation @Schools4africa initiative to Sierra Leone to engage young people in digital labs as they continue to leverage technology to amplify their voices. With access to teaching materials and schools, educational opportunities for children and young people could improve.

The Foundation endeavours to improve educational opportunities for children and young people in various African countries through projects such as 'Schools for Africa' since 2004.



Over 3,200 girls in Pujehun receive safe reusable sanitary pads.

UNICEF and the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) have started distributing safe, reusable sanitary pads to over 3,200 girls in Pujehun District's junior and senior secondary schools. As a vulnerable district, Pujehun is the first to gain from this transformative initiative.

Collaborating with local authorities and civil society, this project aims to dismantle taboos, enhance awareness, and foster health, confidence, and equal opportunities for girls.



UN Women Unveils Interactive platform to boost women's leadership in peacebuilding.

UN Women has launched the first ever Women Peace and Security Information Hub a one stop space for knowledge, data, resources and real-time interactive platform for CSOs' capacity to access, interpret & apply data for strategic advocacy, community programming, leadership and governance.



“The Information Hub represents a beacon of knowledge and connectivity. The interactive information hub and the mentorship programme present a strategic opportunity to advance local leadership in peace and security.” Said Hon. Dr. Isata Mahoi, Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs.

Thanking all and the donor the UN Peacebuilding Fund, UN Women Head of Office, Setcheme Jeronime Mongbo called on partners to work together to achieve the Women Peace and Security Agenda in Sierra Leone emphasising that the project has brought together 150 women-focused Civil Society Organisations working together on peacebuilding, governance and contributing to conflict prevention and dispute resolution in Sierra Leone.





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