



Monday–Friday,
5th–9th May 2025

Impact in Action: Stories That Matter

[READ MORE](#)

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.

01

UNDP

- Sierra Leone and India launches Inclusive Development Project for Persons with Disabilities.

02

UNICEF

- Govt of Sierra Leone, AU, UNICEF, WHO & partners commemorate African Vaccination Week

03

UNFPA

- UNFPA Joins Sierra Leone Midwives Association and Partners to mark International Day of the Midwife.

04

WHO

- Sierra Leone advances toward Universal Health Coverage with SLAUHC Bill
- Sierra Leone leads Africa's Immunisation drive during African Vaccination Week 2025
- Sierra Leone validates first-ever National Hospital Strategy to strengthen care delivery

05

IOM

- IOM receives 2025 Development Partner Excellence Award for strengthening labour systems.
- IOM and UNIDO launch Automotive Skills program to empower returned migrants.
- IOM facilitates safe return of stranded Sierra Leonean women from Iran-Iraq Border.
- IOM Participates in Sierra Leone's First National Labour Conference.

06

RCO

- Annual Results Report feature story: Breaking Barriers: Aminata Bangura's path to leadership.

Table of Contents



Sierra Leone and India launches Inclusive Development Project for Persons with Disabilities.

On the sidelines of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) South-South and Triangular Cooperation Forum, the Government of Sierra Leone and the Government of India, in partnership with the United Nations, launched a landmark initiative aimed at empowering persons with disabilities.



The project, “Enabling Economic Independence for Specially Aabled Persons in Sierra Leone,” was officially signed by Hon. Melrose Karminty, Minister of Social Welfare; Mr. Fredrick Ampiah, UNDP Resident Representative; and Ms. Seraphine Wakana, UN Resident Coordinator. The ceremony was witnessed by India’s High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Shri Baisnab Charan Pradhan, and presented to H.E. Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, Vice President of Sierra Leone.

Funded by the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, the \$1 million project will provide vocational training, assistive devices, and entrepreneurship support to enhance economic opportunities for persons with disabilities. The project will be executed by UNDP in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare.



This initiative exemplifies effective South-South cooperation, aligning with Sierra Leone's inclusive development priorities and India's commitment to sustainable, people-centred growth across the Global South.



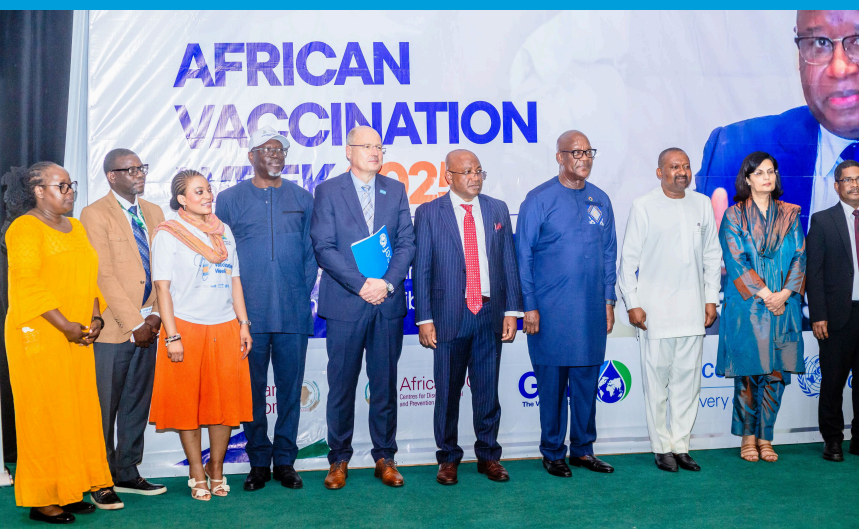
UNDP continues to champion disability inclusion in Sierra Leone through rehabilitation of centres, support for legislative reforms, and integration of persons with disabilities across youth, environmental, and economic empowerment programmes – ensuring that no one is left behind.



Govt of Sierra Leone, AU, UNICEF, WHO & partners commemorate African Vaccination Week.

The Government of Sierra Leone, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, WHO, UNICEF, Gavi, the African Union, and a broad coalition of national and international health partners, has commemorated the African Vaccination Week in Freetown.

unicef 
for every child



Sierra Leone has made significant strides in expanding immunization coverage, reducing child mortality, and preventing outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. The theme of the programme was: “Immunisation for All is Humanly Possible.”

Dr. Austin Demby, Minister of Health, said immunisation is a cornerstone of our public health system and committed not to leave any child behind.

“Vaccines are one of the most effective ways to give every child a fair chance at a healthy future,” said Rudolf Schwenk, UNICEF Representative to Sierra Leone.

“UNICEF is proud to work with the Government of Sierra Leone and partners to ensure no child is left behind.”



UNFPA Joins Sierra Leone Midwives Association and Partners to mark International Day of the Midwife.

In commemoration of this year's **International Day of the Midwife (IDM)**, UNFPA supported a series of national activities spearheaded by the Sierra Leone Midwives Association (SLMA) in collaboration in partnership with the Ministry of Health and other stakeholders, were held under the global theme “**Midwives: Critical in Every Crisis.**”



Scientific Symposium: Elevating Knowledge and Evidence

Kicking off the week, a National Scientific Symposium was held at the Miatta Conference Centre in Freetown on 2 May. With support from UNFPA, the symposium brought together midwives, educators, clinicians, and partners to exchange knowledge and innovations in maternal health.

Key themes included innovations in community outreach and service delivery, midwifery-led care, obstetric fistula management, maternal mental health, and integrating the Maternal and Child Health Handbook.

Walk for Inclusion

On 3 May, midwives across Freetown participated in a “Walk for Inclusion,” engaging community members on the importance of antenatal care, skilled birth attendance, and respectful maternity services.

The event emphasised the connection between midwives and the communities they serve, and the need to strengthen that bond through trust and education.



Media Engagements: Amplifying Midwives' Voices

Throughout the week, UNFPA supported strategic media engagements to raise awareness about the role of midwives in advancing maternal health.

Midwives shared firsthand stories across radio and television, while technical experts from UNFPA and SLMA highlighted the progress, opportunities and challenges in advancing the role of midwives in maternal and newborn health.



RADIO DEMOCRACY

Thursday 1st May 2025
Time: 7:30 AM

98.1 FM

GOOD MORNING SALONE

Guest



EDWINA CONTEH
President Sierra Leone
Midwives Association

Guest



YATTA MUSA
Maternal and
Reproductive Health
Specialist - UNFPA

TOPIC

AS MAY 5TH MARKS THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE MIDWIFE, RADIO DEMOCRACY LOOKS AT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MIDWIVES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COUNTRY'S HEALTH SECTOR

   @radiodemocracy98.1fm +23277981981



Youth Empowerment: Midwifery Student Essay Competition

To foster youth leadership and academic engagement within Sierra Leone's midwifery programs, a national essay competition was held across all four training institutions.

The competition's theme aligned with this year's IDM, and winners were recognized during the official celebration on 5 May.

National IDM commemoration

The national commemoration on 5 May brought together midwives, experts, and the key stakeholders to discuss the importance of midwives in crisis settings and acknowledge the pivotal role midwives play, especially in the most challenging of circumstances.

During the event, 60 pregnant and lactating women were presented with baby packs comprising baby clothes, sanitary pads, towels, and soap to support them with basic hygiene and newborn care needs.



Driving Systemic Change: Strengthening Midwifery Systems

UNFPA continues to play a key role in strengthening the midwifery profession in Sierra Leone. This includes investment in school infrastructure, continuous professional development, and regulatory support.



In collaboration with the Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI), UNFPA is supporting the digital transformation of the Sierra Leone Nursing and Midwifery Council (SLNMC) to improve data management and ensure that only certified professionals are licensed to practice.



Sierra Leone advances toward Universal Health Coverage with SLAUHC Bill.

Sierra Leone has taken a significant step toward Universal Health Coverage (UHC) with a high-level policy dialogue on the draft Sierra Leone Agency for Universal Health Coverage (SLAUHC) Bill.

Held in Freetown and supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), the event brought together over 60 senior health leaders, including the Senior Permanent Secretary, Chief Medical Officer and technical heads.



WHO acting cluster lead, Universal Life-course, Dr. Ibrahim Franklyn Kamara, described the bill as a **“transformative step toward equitable and sustainable health financing,”** adding that **“and reaffirmed WHO’s fully committed to supporting the government in building a resilient health financing system that ensures access for all, especially the most vulnerable.”**

The engagement sets the stage for the bill’s review by the Inter-Ministerial Committee and towards its enactment. This will enable the commencement of SLeSHI and the reformation of the FHCI.



The proposed bill aims to establish an agency to integrate and manage the Free Healthcare Initiative (FHCI) and the Sierra Leone Social Health Insurance Scheme (SLeSHI), enhancing efficiency, coordination, and sustainability in health financing.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Sartie Kenneh emphasised the importance of addressing broader health system needs alongside health financing, in achieving UHC. **“No healthcare service is truly free – someone bears the cost. We must develop a sustainable financing model that ensures long-term viability,”** he said.



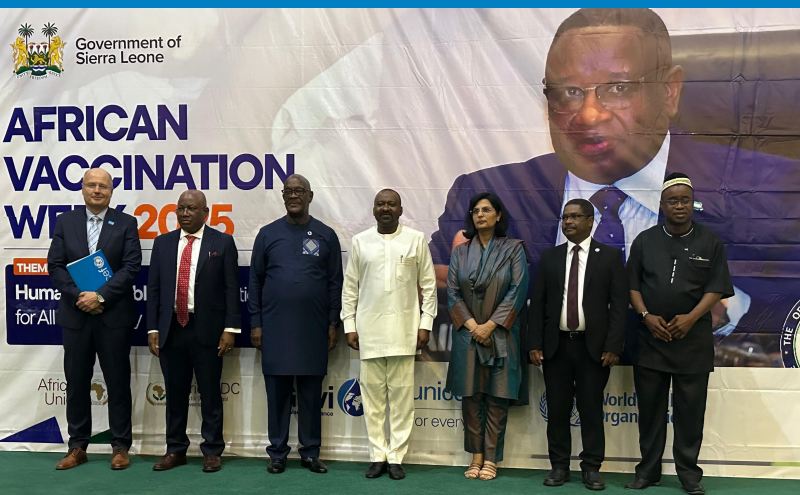
Sierra Leone leads Africa's Immunisation drive during African Vaccination Week 2025.

Sierra Leone hosted the high-level commemoration of African Vaccination Week (AVW) 2025 in Freetown, bringing together global and regional health leaders. Distinguished guests included the Chief Executive Officer of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, as well as senior representatives from the African Union, Africa CDC, WHO, UNICEF, Ministry of Health, and the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS).



National stakeholders, including nurses, mothers, and pregnant women, school pupils also participated – reaffirming a united commitment to vaccine equity and the shared goal of leaving no one behind.

Delivering the keynote address, Vice President Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh hailed the event as “**a fitting tribute to 51 years of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation,**” reaffirming Sierra Leone’s leadership in advancing vaccine equity. “**If we work together – governments, partners, health workers, and communities – universal immunisation is indeed humanly possible,**” he declared.



Health Minister Dr. Austin Demby highlighted Sierra Leone’s progress: “**We have reached the 70% target for HPV vaccination, introduced the malaria vaccine, and strengthened delivery systems. Our goal is zero – zero children left behind zero communities unreachable.**”

Dr. George Ameh, WHO Country Representative, praised the country’s achievements: “**Sierra Leone stands as a shining example of what is possible when leadership, resilience, and partnership align for public health.**”

Gavi CEO Dr. Sania Nishtar announced \$11.4 million in new support for Sierra Leone’s immunisation programme, saying: “**Sierra Leone is a testament to what is humanly possible. Vaccines are helping the country write a new chapter in its proud history.**”

The event concluded with a strong call for increased investment in local vaccine manufacturing, health system strengthening, and last-mile immunisation, as Sierra Leone reaffirmed its commitment to achieving the Immunisation Agenda 2030.



Sierra Leone validates first-ever National Hospital Strategy to strengthen care delivery.

Sierra Leone has officially validated its National Hospital Strategy for Services Delivery Transformation, marking a historic move toward improving the quality, accessibility, and efficiency of hospital care nationwide.



The comprehensive strategy addresses long-standing challenges in hospital infrastructure, workforce, governance, and service delivery, and is structured around 10 key strategic objectives. It aims to make hospitals “fit-for-purpose” and aligned with the Ministry of Health’s life stages approach to healthcare.

Dr. George Ameh, WHO Country Representative, stated, **“Hospitals should be a place that provides of quality care and comfort. To achieve this, we should consider performance-based financing across all levels of healthcare and explore opportunities to strengthen public-private partnerships – while establishing robust quality benchmarks and control systems.”**

Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sartie Kenneh welcomed the strategy’s comprehensive design and its potential to improve health outcomes across the nation, with strong support from the WHO and other partners.

The strategy will cover key areas such as hospital governance, health infrastructure, human resources for health, and service delivery across the life stages.

With this validation, Sierra Leone takes a giant step toward ensuring universal health coverage and improving patient outcomes by transforming hospital care nationwide.

Consolidating public private partnerships.



IOM receives 2025 Development Partner Excellence Award for strengthening labour systems.

IOM Sierra Leone was honored to receive the 2025 Development Partner Excellence Award, in recognition of IOM's commitment to strengthening labour administration systems and frameworks in Sierra Leone.



Robust labour mobility instruments are key to safe, orderly, and regular migration. IOM is proud to support national frameworks that protect workers and promote labor mobility through Facilitating Pathways for Regular Migration.

IOM and UNIDO launch Automotive Skills program to empower returned migrants.

IOM and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) joined forces to launch an innovative Automotive Maintenance Skills Development Program, to equip returned migrants with essential skills that foster economic reintegration and self-sufficiency.

This initiative showcases the strength of partnership in developing lasting solutions for returned migrants, enabling them to reconstruct their lives and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

IOM facilitates safe return of stranded Sierra Leonean women from Iran-Iraq Border.

IOM voluntarily returned home 3 Sierra Leonean women who were stranded at the Iran-Iraq border after a failed attempt to migrate to Europe. The women, who departed Sierra Leone in 2021 and 2022, had travelled to the Kurdistan region of Iraq seeking employment and passage to Europe via Turkey. They worked as domestic workers for two to three years, hoping to save enough money to fund the next stage of their journey.

IOM Participates in Sierra Leone's First National Labour Conference.

IOM was pleased to take part in Sierra Leone's inaugural National Labour Conference, hosted by the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security.



The National Labour Conference provided a platform for employers, employees, government policymakers, unions, and other actors.

To openly discuss labour-related and social issues that contribute to rights-based human mobility and sustainable national development in Sierra Leone.

IOM was honoured to join a panel on "Labour Laws & Decent Work" on the final day of the conference.

Annual Results Report feature story: Breaking Barriers: Aminata Bangura's path to leadership.

At 36, Councilor Aminata S. Bangura, a devoted mother of four and expecting her fifth child, is transforming Sierra Leone's political landscape. Studying Development Studies at the University of Makeni while serving Ward 127 in Bombali district, she epitomizes resilience.



UNITED NATIONS
SIERRA LEONE



Known as Councilor Amzo P, Aminata challenges the male-dominated political sphere, inspired by the Krio saying, "Gal pikin lapa nor dae lef na road," meaning "A girl or woman will not break."

Her journey from uncertainty to leadership began with the UN Women and UNDP-led Promoting Women's Political Participation project, supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund through Localizing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and Working Together for Peace.

Initially lacking confidence, she joined capacity-building workshops on public speaking, leadership, and communication, which empowered her to campaign assertively. Venturing into male spaces like 'Ataya Bases,' she overcame skepticism and secured a seat, now chairing the district development committee.

Beyond politics, the project inspired her to pursue higher education, strengthen her family role, and foster mutual respect. Her story mirrors that of over 100 women who, with Peacebuilding Fund support, have won council and parliamentary seats, breaking gender barriers nationwide.

Read more in the UN Sierra Leone 2024 Annual Results Report

ANNUAL RESULTS Sierra Leone REPORT 2024



Scan to read the
full report online



UNITED NATIONS
SIERRA LEONE





Get in Touch with the UN Media.



The "Get in Touch with the Media." section serves as a direct line for journalists and media professionals to connect with the UN communications and media team. Whether you're seeking in-depth information, or high-quality visuals to enhance your stories, our team is here to assist. For inquiries or media requests, reach out to our dedicated communications staff at the UN.

Media Contacts



International
Labour
Organization



Moses **KALOKOH**, Communications Officer
Email: mokalokoh@iom.int | Phone: +232 77 774294



Janet Alamisi **DABIRE**, Communications Specialist
Email: janet.dabire@undp.org | Phone: +232 309 68950



Mohamed Lamarana **JALLOH**, Communications Specialist
Email: Jalloh.Mohamed@fao.org | Phone: +232 79244233



Suzanne Wooster –
PREMATILAKE, Chief Communication and Advocacy
Phone: +232 759 86567



Mohamed **KANU**, Communication and Knowledge Management Specialist,
UNCDF Email:
mohamed.kanu@undp.org | Phone: +232 77 245031



Islander **KABIA**,
Communication Officer
-OIC Email:
ikabia@unfpa.org



John Duguba **KAMARA**,
UNESCO National Project Officer
Email: jd.kamara@unesco.org |
Phone: +232 772 27137



Mohamed **KARGBO**,
Communications Officer
Email:
mohamed.kargbo@unwomen.org
| Phone: +232 76 493 310



Osman **SANKOH**, Programme
Communication
and Advocacy Officer
Email: sankoh0@un.org
| Phone: +232 309 68909



Paul **JATALIAN**, Project
Coordinator
Email:
p.jatalian@unido.org



Anthony Musyoka **MAKAU**, Country
Focal Point
Email: anthony.makau@un.org



Selamawit Mussie **MEKONNEN**,
Economic Adviser Officer
Email:
selamawit.mekonnen@un.org



Shiaka **KAWA**, National
Coordinator
Email: skawa@intracen.org
| Phone: +232 76 60 3665



Semion Saffa-**TURAY**,
Strategic Information
Adviser
Email:
SaffaturayS@unaids.org
| Phone: +232 78 882 900



Francis **BOIMA**,
Communication Associate
Email: Francis.boima@wfp.org
| Phone: +232 76 750 587



Victoria **CHENDEKA**, Communications Senior
Analyst Officer Email: victoriak@unops.org |
Phone: +232 30 882151 | 030 30 7839



Madlyn **SHARCAH**,
National Communication
Officer
Email: sharkahm@who.int |
Phone: +232 73 62 3665



Tanya **HONNAH**, Communication
Officer (Graphic Design and
Social Media)
Email: tanya.honnah@un.org
| Phone: +232 78 751 325



UNITED NATIONS
SIERRA LEONE

