

UNITED NATIONS

SIERRA LEONE

# UN AGENCIES WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

#### Monday–Friday 19th – 23rd May 2025

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### 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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#### UNIDO

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### RCO convenes three-day UNCT Annual Retreat 2025 at Bintumani Hotel.

Day One: Scaling upstream approaches, efficiencies and managing risks.

**The Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)** convened the 2025 UN Country Team (UNCT) Annual Retreat on 21 May at the Bintumani Hotel under the theme,

"Strategic Repositioning for Impact – Fostering Innovative Partnerships, Enhancing Internal Efficiency, and Promoting Staff Well-being to Accelerate SDG Delivery in Sierra Leone."





**The retreat opened at a** pivotal moment, as 2025 marks the first year of implementing the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF 2025–2030), aligned with the country's Medium-Term National Development Plan.

In her opening remarks, UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Seraphine Wakana underscored the urgency of strategic repositioning in light of shifting development financing and geopolitical realities.

She emphasised the importance of innovative partnerships, including private sector and South-South cooperation, as key to unlocking sustainable financing streams.

**Ms. Wakana also** reaffirmed the UNCT's role in strengthening joint programming, improving internal efficiencies, and advancing staff well-being within the broader UN 2.0 and UN80 reform agendas.

She called on the UN system to move forward not as isolated entities, but as one UN family, united in purpose, responsive to national priorities, and committed to delivering on the promises made through the Cooperation Framework.



### Day Two: Harnessing partnerships for innovative financing.

**Day Two of the retreat** shifted focus to the evolving role of the private sector in unlocking new streams of development financing. A panel discussion chaired by UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Frederick Ampiah brought together representatives from AfriMoney, Orange Foundation, Sierra Rutile, and UN agencies to explore innovative approaches to public-private collaboration.

The conversation moved beyond traditional notions of corporate social responsibility (CSR), emphasising the strategic potential of engaging the private sector as partners – not merely donors – in advancing national development priorities. The session fostered open dialogue on both the challenges and opportunities in forging meaningful, long-term partnerships.



**Sierra Rutile contributed insights** into its partnerships with NGOs such as Save the Children and Plan International, noting its non-monetary CSR contributions through volunteerism and technical expertise. Their initiatives are aligned with national priorities, including gender-based violence prevention and waste management.

UNFPA presented the Power of Data platform developed with MOPED, which supports data sharing and evidence-based decision-making. The platform offers an opportunity for the private sector to access and contribute to data ecosystems that benefit all stakeholders.

Resident Coordinator Ms. Seraphine Wakana concluded by emphasising the UN's role in fostering inclusive partnerships and urged ongoing collaboration and accountability for private sector engagement.



**AfriMoney's CEO** underscored the need to harness existing user data to inform national planning and policy, highlighting the gap between financial inclusion efforts and grassroots realities. He called for clear policy frameworks to protect diaspora contributions, promote transparency, and build trust between private actors and state institutions.

From a financial standpoint, he noted the difficulty private sector actors face due to high interest borrowing and short repayment windows, suggesting that tax reforms and strategic investment incentives are necessary to support their engagement in community development.

He also pointed to the UN's vital role in fostering trust among diverse stakeholders, particularly in strengthening the national data ecosystem and facilitating diaspora engagement.





Day Three: UN internal efficiency agenda and staff well-being.

**The final day of the retreat** addressed the UN's internal efficiency agenda and the well-being of personnel. Session Four focused on the implementation of the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) as a tool to streamline operations, reduce duplication, and improve overall system coherence.

This session also provided space for critical dialogue around staff morale, welfare, and the implications of funding pressures on workforce stability.





**Participants acknowledged** the growing need to create a workplace culture that prioritises psychological safety, fairness, and well-being especially in times of financial uncertainty. The session closed with a reaffirmation of the importance of staff engagement in reform processes and the role of leadership in building resilient and inclusive workplaces.

#### **Closing Reflections**

Over the course of three days, the UN Country Team reaffirmed its commitment to delivering as One UN, grounded in the principles of the Cooperation Framework and the values of the UN 2.0 agenda. The retreat provided an opportunity to take stock, align on shared goals, and chart a path forward for more innovative, efficient, and inclusive delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals in Sierra Leone. **The session was chaired** by Ms. Jane Kalweo, UNAIDS Country Director, and featured input from UN Staff Association representatives. The discussion addressed the impact of agency-level funding cuts, including reductions in staffing, and emphasised the need for coordinated, consultative approaches to workforce planning.

UNICEF shared its experience in navigating the process through a highly participatory approach led by its staff association, while highlighting the absence of timely regional guidance and the resulting challenges in managing expectations. The panel called for clearer interagency feedback mechanisms, stronger communication flows, and greater coherence in staff support systems across the UNCT.





# UNITE NATIC

## **Annual Results Report** feature story: Water points and VIP latrines bring hope to rural communities.

In the village of Giema Gpala, Kailahun district, a transformative change has brought smiles to the faces of many farmers, especially women like Baindu Amara. For years, Baindu endured the daily struggle of trekking down to her swamp to fetch water, often sacrificing the valuable time needed for her rice farming. Her family's health and productivity suffered as they utilize unsafe water sources that lacked proper hygiene and sanitation facilities.





Today, thanks to the Agricultural Value Chain **Development Project** (AVDP), supported by the UN and the government of Sierra Leone through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS).

Fatmata and members of her community no longer face these life-threatening challenges. The construction of solar-powered borehole water points and Ventilated Improved Pit latrines have provided access to clean drinking water and improved sanitation significantly improving their quality of life.

Fatmata explains with gratitude that "these boreholes have saved our lives. We no longer depend on polluted drinking water. With these facilities, I do not have to bother my children in helping me to fetch water from the streams," Baindu laments.

Giema Gpala is one of 10 communities benefiting from the AVDP water and sanitation support. At the same time, 20 additional communities await the completion of theirs this year, which supports farming households involved in cultivating cocoa, oil palm, inland valley swamp rice, and vegetables.

### **ANNUAL RESULTS** Sierra REPORT 2024 eone



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### Solar-Powered cold storage set to transform lives of women farmers in Sierra Leone.

**On 14 May 2025** in Newton, Western Area Rural district, The Embassy of Japan joined the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) to launch a solar-powered cold storage facility, the first of its kind in Sierra Leone which is set to revolutionize post-harvest storage for women vegetable farmers in the country, reducing spoilage and unlocking new market opportunities.





"Before this, we lost almost half of our vegetables to heat, transport and poor storage," said Haja Sondu Marah, a member of the cooperative. "Now, we can keep our vegetables fresh for days, even weeks, and sell them when demand is high. This changes everything for us."

The cold storage facility is expected to reduce post-harvest losses by up to 50 percent, ensuring that more produce reaches the market. It will also increase earnings for women farmers by allowing them to sell at peak prices rather than rushing to offload produce before it spoils. **The innovative facility,** funded by the Government of Japan and implemented by WFP in partnership with MAFS, was officially launched today as part of the closing ceremony for the Japan International Organisation (IO) Grant project.

For years, smallholder women farmers in Koinadugu and indeed the country have struggled with massive post-harvest losses due to a lack of proper storage. Vegetables often spoil before reaching markets, cutting into their already thin profits. The new solar-powered cold storage unit, piloted with the Koinadugu Women Vegetable Farmers' Cooperative, will help preserve perishable produce, allowing farmers to store their goods longer and sell at better prices.

Additionally, the facility will expand market access, enabling the cooperative to supply fresh produce to supermarkets, schools, and hospitals.

At the launch event, WFP Country Director Yvonne Forsén highlighted the project's focus on empowering women farmers:

"They do not ask for handouts. They ask for opportunities – for tools, training, and access to markets. This cold storage facility is more than technology; it's a step toward economic justice for women who feed their families and communities."



**H.E. Ambassador Yoshimoto Hiroshi** of Japan reaffirmed Japan's commitment to sustainable development in Sierra Leone:

"This solar-powered storage facility is a game-changer. Smallholder farmers, especially women, are the backbone of Sierra Leone's food system. Japan is proud to support innovations that bring real hope and transformation."



**Hon. Dr. Theresa Tenneh-Dick,** Deputy Minister of Agriculture\*\*, praised the initiative, calling for more investments in agricultural technology:

"This project goes beyond short-term aid – it builds long-term resilience. We must continue to support such innovations to strengthen food security and rural economies."

The Japan IO Grant project has already benefited 8,100 smallholder households across six districts (Kambia, Kenema, Koinadugu, Moyamba, Pujehun, and Tonkolili) through rice milling machines, training, and fertilizer distribution. The solar cold storage stands out as another milestone in reducing food waste and empowering women farmers.

As Sierra Leone pushes toward its Feed Salone goals, this innovation proves that with the right technology and partnerships, rural communities can thrive – one harvest at a time.



### IOM Sierra Leone Chief holds high-level talks to strengthen migration governance and partnerships.

This week, Madame Aissata Kane, IOM Sierra Leone Chief of Mission with Coordinating Functions based in Dakar, held high-level bilateral meetings with key partners including the Government of Sierra Leone, the European Union, and the UN Resident Coordinator a.i. Discussions focused on deepening collaboration on migration governance, aligning priorities, and identifying joint initiatives.

Meetings with senior officials from the Ministries of Youth and Foreign Affairs reinforced commitment to a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to migration management.





#### **IOM and the National Commission for Social Action**

(NaCSA) conducted stakeholder engagements and beneficiary orientations under the project "Combating Irregular Migration through Youth Empowerment and Community Engagements." Participants were briefed on the beneficiary selection process and key findings from the Income Generating Activities (IGA) Assessment Report, while beneficiaries received guidance on aligning project support with their livelihoods.

Funded by the IOM Development Fund, these efforts aim to promote sustainable youth empowerment and build community resilience against irregular migration.





### **UNDP** brings solar light to over 2,000 rural households in Sierra Leone.

In a significant stride toward expanding clean energy access, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has launched the installation of solar lighting systems for 2,183 rural households across six districts in Sierra Leone: Falaba, Kambia, Moyamba, Pujehun, Bonthe, and the Western Area (Rural) Districts.





The solar installations align with UNDP's broader strategy for inclusive energy access and climate resilience, directly contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

Selected communities were chosen based on existing or planned UNDP interventions, enabling the programme to build on established infrastructure and partnerships. This area-based approach ensures more efficient delivery and deeper impact.

With solar installations underway in Tombo, residents are hopeful, seeing not just light, but new opportunities and a brighter future.

Each household will receive a 12-watt solar home system equipped with lighting units and mobile phone charging ports. This initiative aims to improve the quality of life, particularly for women and their families, in communities with limited or no electricity.

The systems are expected to enhance household safety, extend study hours for children, and increase productivity for women-led small businesses.

"This intervention is about more than just light, it's about empowerment, dignity, and opportunity," said Mr. Fredrick Ampiah, UNDP Resident Representative. "By targeting female-led households, we are advancing gender equality and supporting resilient communities."





### UNDP and NRA partner to strengthen sustainable development financing in Sierra Leone.

#### Freetown – The United Nations Development

**Programme (UNDP)** and the National Revenue Authority (NRA) of Sierra Leone is deepening their collaboration to advance financing strategies that support the country's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Fredrick Ampiah, met with NRA Commissioner General, Mrs. Jeneba Bangura, for high-level discussions aimed at enhancing domestic resource mobilization and aligning national tax systems with the SDGs.





**Central to the dialogue** were opportunities for tax reform that promotes sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The discussions explored options such as carbon pricing and green fiscal policies, tools that can simultaneously enhance public revenue while encouraging environmentally responsible practices.

A key highlight was the NRA's Block Management System, an innovative initiative that brings tax services closer to underserved communities and small businesses implemented with UNDP's support in Waterloo Tax district.

**Designed to improve** compliance and trust in tax administration, the system represents a major step toward inclusive economic participation.

Mr. Ampiah reaffirmed UNDP's commitment to providing technical assistance, capacity support, and policy guidance in strengthening Sierra Leone's public finance systems.

Commissioner General Bangura expressed appreciation for UNDP's continued support and reiterated the NRA's commitment to modernizing tax administration in ways that also promote environmental sustainability and social equity.

**UNFPA** partners with **Statistics Sierra Leone on** cartographic mapping training for upcoming census.

In preparation for the upcoming Population and Housing Census, Statistics Sierra Leone, in partnership with UNFPA, conducted a cartographic mapping training in Bo District aimed at equipping Master Trainers with advanced cartographic techniques crucial for accurate administrative boundary delineation nationwide.





Cartographic mapping is a critical pre-census activity that ensures all geographic areas are clearly defined, facilitating systematic data collection and minimizing the risk of undercounting or duplication.

### Sierra Leone launches national Nursing and **Midwifery strategy with UNFPA** support.

The Ministry of Health in collaboration with UNFPA and other partners, launched the National Nursing and Midwifery Strategy (2025-2030), along with two landmark reports: the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Aide Assessment and the Midwifery Schools Capacity Assessment.





**The strategy sets out** to enhance leadership and governance, upgrade education and regulatory frameworks, improve service delivery, foster innovation, and support workforce development. The vision is to achieve universal access to quality reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health services.

UNFPA's Officer-in-Charge, Sibeso Mululuma, reaffirmed the agency's commitment, calling the documents "policy enablers for broader health system reform" and aligning them with Sierra Leone's decentralization agenda and goals for Universal Health Coverage. She also highlighted UNFPA's continued investment through initiatives like the Midwifery Accelerator Programme, where Sierra Leone is recognized as a champion country.





Joining Hands to End Obstetric Fistula in Sierra Leone

Obstetric fistula is a devastating childbirth injury that results in incontinence and is often accompanied by isolation and stigma. On 22 May 2025, ahead of the International Day to End Obstetric Fistula, UNFPA joined MOH in raising awareness in health facilities in Freetown.

**These efforts focus on** prevention and treatment, encouraging women living with the condition to seek care.

Through the financial support of the Government of Iceland, UNFPA is supporting national efforts to end fistula and restore dignity and hope to affected women across Sierra Leone.





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## Sierra Leone's 2025 National **Health Summit & Performance Awards closes** with renewed commitment to health equity.

Freetown, May 2025 - The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with WHO and development partners, concluded the three-day National Health Summit & Performance Awards 2025 with a strong call for action to improve health outcomes for every Sierra Leonean.





Dr. Austin Demby, Minister of Health, emphasised the President's vision of a future where every citizen has access to quality care:

"This summit is more than dialogue, it's a homecoming. We're aligning around a shared mission to make healthcare not just a right, but a lived reality. Health is the backbone of human capital development. and this is our moment to act."

WHO Country Representative, Dr. George Ameh, who served as a panelist on health governance, added:

"Strengthening governance is central to building trust in our systems. Transparent leadership, aligned planning, and accountability across all levels are vital for sustainable health reform."

The summit also celebrated outstanding health performers, inspiring renewed momentum in the sector. The "One Plan, One Budget, One Report" model drawing lessons from Rwanda and Malawi – was spotlighted as a roadmap for cohesive, resilient health system strengthening in Sierra Leone.

Held under the theme "Improving Health **Outcomes for All: Every Sierra Leonean Life** Matters", the summit brought together government leaders, health professionals, civil society, and communities to chart a path towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

WHO provided technical support throughout, guiding discussions on key priorities such as Mpox response, climate and environmental health, digital innovation, PHC reform, and health governance.





### The Ministry of Health and WHO assessed antibiotic use to fight resistance.

Makeni, 22 May 2025 - The Ministry of Health and WHO conducted a joint assessment on the use of antibiotics and other antimicrobial medicines at Makeni Regional Hospital from 19 to 22 May 2025. The assessment marked a key step toward establishing an Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) programme at the hospital.





Pharmacist Nathaniel Goba of Makeni Regional Hospital noted:

#### "AMS will help to strengthen our systems, ensuring we give the best care to our patients and achieve better outcomes for them."

WHO remains committed to supporting national efforts to protect the effectiveness of antimicrobial medicines. This assessment will help lay the foundation for improved antibiotic use and a stronger response to the growing threat of AMR in Sierra Leone.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which occurs when bacteria and other germs stop responding to medicines, is mainly driven by the misuse or overuse of antibiotics. AMR makes infections harder to treat and increases the risk of disease spread, severe illness, and death.

The findings from the assessment is to determine Antimicrobial stewardship capabilities and Infection Prevention and Control status at the hospital. This will help ensure patients receive the right treatment while reducing the spread of resistant infections.





### **District surveillance leads** meet to strengthen Mpox response.

Freetown, May 2025 - In response to the evolving mpox outbreak, the National Surveillance Pillar convened a key meeting with surveillance leads from all 16 districts. The gathering aimed to review progress, address pressing challenges, and strengthen coordination for a more effective response.





The meeting provided a platform for dialogue, shared learning, and joint planning, ensuring that all districts are aligned in their surveillance and response efforts. Key discussions focused on improving case detection, data reporting, and follow-up, especially in hard-to-reach areas.

With continued technical leadership from the World Health Organization (WHO), partners are working closely with the Ministry of Health to identify and close gaps in the current surveillance system.

The goal is to enhance early warning and response capacities at all levels. WHO remains committed to supporting national and district-level efforts to detect, report, and respond to mpox and other health threats.







## **UNIDO joined the Sierra** Leone Standards Bureau and the Ministry of Trade and Industry to commemorate World Metrology Day 2025.

World Metrology Day commemorates the anniversary of the signing of the Metre Convention in Paris, in 1875. This treaty provides the basis for a worldwide coherent measurement system that underpins scientific discovery and innovation, industrial manufacturing, and international trade, as well as improving the quality of life and protecting the global environment.





The 2025 theme 'Measurement for all times, for all people' is a call to action to ensure that the benefits of metrology reach every community, regardless of geography or wealth, every industry from informal markets to high-tech labs, and every generation, by educating youth on measurement's role in a digital world.

The theme for 2025, Measurements for all times, for all people highlights the importance of measurements in shaping our past, present, and future. In her statement, the UNIDO Country Representative reaffirms UNIDO's commitment to metrology, which has been humanity's constant companion and the invisible engine behind industrial growth, innovation, fair trade, and quality of life.

She highlighted UNIDO's support to the Sierra Leone Standards Bureau in strengthening its metrology infrastructure and upgrading calibration services for mass, volume, and length, which are crucial for trade and consumer protection. UNIDO is now working to ensure all the labs are accredited.









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