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SIERRA LEONE



UN AGENCIES WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS



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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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Japan boosts school meals programme in Pujehun District.

The World Food Programme (WFP) and the Government of Japan have reaffirmed their partnership to support food security and education in Sierra Leone with the signing of the 2025 Kennedy Round (KR) Food Assistance Grant. The ceremony, held at Country Lodge Hotel in Freetown, formalized a grant of JPY 200 million (approximately USD 1.3 million) to be implemented over two years in Pujehun District.



The new programme, titled **“Improving educational outcomes and food systems resilience through school feeding in Pujehun,”** aims to provide reliable school meals to over 27,000 primary and pre-primary schoolchildren across the district’s most food-insecure chiefdoms. The grant will finance the procurement and delivery of school meals, including locally sourced rice, and support activities to strengthen food system resilience.

Speaking at the ceremony, Aminata Tall, WFP Representative and Country Director a.i., thanked Japan for its continued generosity. She said that the Kenney Round Grant is more than a donation. **“It’s a powerful act of solidarity with Sierra Leone children,”** she said.

Aminata said that school meals are no longer just about feeding schoolchildren, but they are about growing local economies, supporting food sovereignty, advancing the Feed Salone Strategy in a way that links national policy to household incomes. **“We are grateful for this new support which arrives at a time of economic pressures for many families,”** she added.

Japan’s sustained support has been crucial to WFP’s school feeding initiatives in Sierra Leone. In 2024, a similar KR grant enabled meals for nearly 28,800 pupils in the same district. Over the past decade, Japan has contributed USD 37 million to WFP Sierra Leone, making it the largest donor to the country’s school feeding portfolio.

“This new grant reaffirms our shared commitment to pursuing inclusive education for the children of Sierra Leone,” H.E. Ambassador Yoshimoto Hiroshi of Japan to Sierra Leone stated. He expressed that Japan believes in empowering countries to lead their own development, adding that in line with this belief, Japan is pleased to provide food assistance that supports the government’s vision of increasing enrolment and retention rates by ensuring children receive timely and adequate nutritious meals to meet their basic food and nutrition requirements.



The event also marked the closure of a previous project that provided school meals to children in Kambia and Pujehun districts during the 2022/23 academic year, valued at USD 1.61 million.

Hon. Conrad Sackey, Minister of Basic Senior and Secondary Education, welcomed the signing of another new grant which he said would directly support over 27,000 primary and pre-primary learners in Pujehun district, ensuring that no child chooses between hunger and hope.

He said that the programme resonated with the government’s big five game changers especially the human capital development.

This latest KR grant underscores the ongoing commitment of Japan and WFP to improving educational outcomes and strengthening food systems for Sierra Leone’s most vulnerable children.

Sierra Leone concludes inaugural workshop on institutionalizing cause-of-death reporting and icd-11.

The Ministry of Health, the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA), and WHO have concluded a two-day inaugural workshop to establish death reporting sub-committees and lay the groundwork for institutionalizing the Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD) and implementing ICD-11 in Sierra Leone.



The workshop validated terms of reference, explored enabling legal and policy frameworks, and set the stage for phased implementation of the adapted WHO MCCD tool and ICD-11 in the country.

Next steps will include a multi-sectoral roll-out of the MCCD, transition to and scale-up of ICD-11, and institutionalization of the same at academic levels.

Speaking during the sessions, Dr. George Ameh, WHO Country Representative, stressed: **“Every life matters, and every death must be counted. Accurate and timely reporting of deaths is a moral imperative.”**

NCRA Director General highlighted the importance of inter-agency collaboration, while Emmanuella Anderson, Universal Health Coverage and Gender Representative at the Ministry of Health, underscored inclusivity: **“Behind every statistic is a human story. Strengthening death reporting ensures every life is valued and used to shape policies that protect the most vulnerable.”**

Through these efforts, Sierra Leone is advancing toward a reliable and standardized national mortality reporting system that will strengthen both health and civil registration systems.



Supporting Sierra Leone's Ministry of Health to deliver vaccines to remote communities.

With UNICEF support and funding from Gavi, the Direct Delivery of Routine Immunisation Vaccines for Equity (DRIVE) programme is ensuring that even the most remote communities in Sierra Leone receive essential immunisation services. For hard-to-reach areas, this service is a lifeline. Without DRIVE, vaccines could take days or even weeks to arrive, risking their potency and delaying critical immunisation for children.

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Beyond routine vaccines, DRIVE also delivers essential medicines and nutrition supplies, both for regular services and during integrated campaigns. The programme has grown from six to eight districts, deploying 80 trained delivery partners equipped with motorbikes, Android phones, and rain gear. Their work has reduced stockouts, improved availability at health facilities, and enabled health workers to focus more on patient care.

Digital tools are strengthening impact. The Electronic Stock Management Tool (eSMT) now provides real-time visibility in 84 facilities, while Thrive360, linked to the national health information system, improves tracking of stocks, utilization, and wastage. Expanded cold chain capacity, solarized facilities, and new district vaccine stores are also ensuring a safe and reliable supply.

By integrating COVID-19, HPV, and malaria vaccines, DRIVE is helping close the gap for zero-dose and under-immunized children.



Working with communities to tackle malnutrition in Sierra Leone.

In Moyamba District, families are transforming how they care for children under five with support from UNICEF, funded by Latter-day Saint Charities. Health facilities, community health workers, Mother Support Groups, and caregivers have joined forces to deliver a comprehensive nutrition package that includes growth monitoring, counselling, cooking demonstrations, and the use of therapeutic foods.

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This coordinated approach is helping parents recognize early signs of malnutrition, adopt healthier feeding practices, and access treatment services when needed.

Between March and August 2025, the programme delivered impressive results: 37% of young children (aged 6–59 months) are now being screened quarterly for malnutrition—a rate more than double the previous record. Treatment outcomes have also exceeded global standards, with a remarkable 99% cure rate for children admitted with severe acute malnutrition.

Many households continue to face food insecurity and limited dietary diversity, putting children at risk of missing vital nutrients. By strengthening local systems, equipping caregivers with knowledge, and building community resilience through the promotion of affordable, local food choices, this programme is enabling families to take sustainable steps toward ensuring every child has the nutrition they need to grow and thrive.



Sierra Leone begins process for Fifth National Human Development Report.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Sierra Leone has partnered with the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development to launch the preparation of the country's Fifth National Human Development Report (NHDR), set for publication in 2026.



UNDP Representative, Mr. George Baratashvili, reaffirmed the organization's support, describing the NHDR as a crucial "knowledge instrument" for policy. He stressed the importance of domestic leadership in the process.

"This development process must be nationally owned, rooted in evidence, and guided by the voices of Sierra Leone's communities," Mr. Baratashvili stated.

The final report is expected to strengthen data generation capacity and introduce localized measures of human development to better identify disparities across regions and social groups. The workshop's goal is to finalize a theme that tackles the country's most pressing development challenges and inspires actionable solutions.

The process officially began with a three-day inception workshop on September 23, 2025, in Freetown. The workshop gathered key leaders from government, civil society, academia, and the private sector to determine the scope and theme of the vital national document. The NHDR aims to look beyond standard economic metrics to evaluate progress through the lens of human potential, focusing on health, education, livelihoods, and fundamental freedoms.

Deputy Minister of Planning, Rev. Dr. Jonathan Titus-Williams, opened the event, urging stakeholders to ensure the process reflects true national priorities. He emphasized that the report must assess progress against the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024–2030) and address current realities.



5th Project Steering Committee meeting strengthens migrant protection and reintegration efforts in Sierra Leone.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Sierra Leone and with funding from the European Union, convened the 5th Project Steering Committee Meeting of the Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programme in Freetown.



The brought together key national stakeholders, development partners, and technical experts to assess the progress of the programme, which aims to support migrants in vulnerable situations through protection, safe return, and sustainable reintegration. During the meeting, IOM presented comprehensive updates on the implementation of programme activities, highlighting achievements, challenges in migrant assistance, reintegration, and capacity-building for national institutions.

Participants also engaged in open discussions on operational challenges, including coordination gaps, resource constraints, and data management issues etc.

The committee also explored actionable solutions to enhance programme delivery, emphasizing the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration, improved referral mechanisms, and stronger community engagement. Stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that returning migrants are supported with dignity and empowered to rebuild their lives.

IOM and its partners reiterated their dedication to working closely with the Government of Sierra Leone and other actors to strengthen national systems for migrant protection and reintegration. The meeting concluded with a shared vision to scale up efforts and ensure that no migrant is left behind.



IOM and NCRA sign service agreement to strengthen civil registration access for returnees in Sierra Leone.



In a major step toward promoting inclusive reintegration, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) have signed a Service Agreement to enhance access to civil registration services for returnees across Sierra Leone.



The agreement, signed in Freetown, formalizes a strategic partnership between IOM and NCRA aimed at ensuring that returnees—many of whom return without valid identity documents—can obtain essential civil registration such as birth certificates and national identity cards. These documents are critical for accessing public services, securing employment, enrolling in education, and participating fully in civic life.

This collaboration is part of IOM's Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programme, funded by the European Union, which supports the safe and dignified return and reintegration of migrants. By facilitating access to legal identity, the initiative addresses one of the most pressing challenges faced by returnees and lays the groundwork for long-term social and economic inclusion.

Under the Service Agreement, IOM and NCRA will work together to streamline registration processes and deliver services to over **1,000 beneficiaries** across the country.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, officials from both organisations emphasized that legal identity is more than a document—it is a gateway to opportunity, protection, and dignity.

This agreement reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that every returnee is recognized, supported, and empowered to rebuild their life. The signing marks a significant milestone in Sierra Leone's efforts to uphold the rights of migrants and foster inclusive development, reinforcing the principle that no one should be left behind.





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