



UNITED NATIONS
SIERRA LEONE



UN AGENCIES WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS



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Monday–Friday,
13th October - 25th October 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.

Table of Contents



01

RCO

UN Sierra Leone marks UN@80 with solemn tribute to peacekeepers & youth-led celebrations.

03

WFP

WFP and MBSSE welcome Korean rice donation to strengthen school feeding in Sierra Leone.

02

UNICEF

Sierra Leonean girls join regional summit to champion equality and leadership.

UNICEF strengthens efforts to improve hand hygiene and WASH Systems across Sierra Leone.

Advancing foundational learning for every child in Sierra Leone.

UNICEF showcases impact for children and families at UN@80 celebrations.

UN Sierra Leone marks UN@80 with solemn tribute to peacekeepers & youth-led celebrations.

Peace comes at a price, and that service to humanity is the highest form of patriotism.

The United Nations Country Team in Sierra Leone commemorated the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations with a series of vibrant and inclusive public events, culminating in a Flag Raising and Wreath Laying Ceremony held at the Julius Maada Bio Parade Grounds in Wilberforce.



President Bio also celebrated the active involvement of young people in the UN@80 festivities, highlighting their role in debating ideas, showcasing innovation, and celebrating Sierra Leonean creativity. A nationwide Inter-Secondary School Quiz and Inter-Varsity Debate competition brought together bright minds from across the country.

The finals, held at the Miatta Conference Centre, featured five secondary schools—The Albert Academy, Milton Margai College for the Blind, St. Francis Makeni, Sierra Leone Grammar School, and Queen of the Rosary Secondary School (QRS) from Bo District.

QRS emerged victorious in the quiz, led by a team of three confident young women: Samuella Y. Tommy, Francess Rogers, and Isata M. Bangura. **“This win is not just for our school, but for every girl who dreams of making a difference,”** said Samuella, beaming with pride.

The ceremony was graced by His Excellency, Brigadier (Rtd) Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, who paid heartfelt tribute to the men and women of UNAMSIL for their service during the country’s most challenging times.

Delivering the keynote address, President Bio reflected on the sacrifices made by peacekeepers, stating, **“Many of them - from distant lands - made the ultimate sacrifice so that our children could know freedom and our people could live without fear.”** He honored their courage, humanity, and enduring legacy of peace, while also recognizing Sierra Leonean peacekeepers who have served under the UN flag. **“Those who have served and those who fell in faraway lands carried the spirit of Sierra Leone to the world,”** he said, emphasising that peace comes at a price and that service to humanity is the highest form of patriotism.



Madam Wakana also highlighted the 64-year partnership between the United Nations and Sierra Leone, noting that collaboration has strengthened institutions, improved public services, and advanced progress in health, education, climate resilience, gender empowerment, and livelihoods. Before concluding with the reading of the UN Secretary-General’s message, she solemnly acknowledged the 42 Sierra Leoneans who have lost their lives while serving under the UN flag since 1948.

Wreaths were laid in their memory by President Bio, the First Lady, the Resident Coordinator, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps (China’s Ambassador to Sierra Leone), the Chief of Defence Staff, and the Inspector General of Police. The ceremony concluded with the symbolic cutting of the anniversary cake by President Bio and Resident Coordinator Wakana—a gesture of remembrance and renewed commitment to peace and partnership.



Their collaboration ensured a wide range of services, including checks for weight, height, BMI, blood pressure, pulse, temperature, SPO2, blood sugar, hepatitis B, malaria, Widal test, HIV, eye and breast health. The event also featured health awareness briefings, referrals, recommendations, and condom distribution. A total of 377 clients were registered, with the majority being non-UN personnel.

A photo exhibition was also held, showcasing images of the contributions of UN agencies from the country’s time as a UN member since 1961 to the civil war period and beyond, including Ebola, COVID, and other interventions. The Trade Fair allowed SMEs to showcase their locally made products to the UN staff and the public alike. The week of celebrations concluded on Saturday evening with a staff entertainment night featuring music, comedy, and dancing. Artists used the platform to spotlight the critical issue of substance abuse, particularly the growing concern around Kush, Tramadol, and other harmful substances affecting Sierra Leone’s youth.

The celebrations began with a press conference where the UN Country Team engaged the media on its key achievements in Sierra Leone. Heads of UBA, ECOBANK, Rokel Commercial Bank, and Africell also shared insights on their new partnership with the UN and their contributions to the success of the planned activities.

A major highlight was the Health Check exercise held on Friday, October 24, offering free medical screenings and wellness services to the public. The event drew strong participation from both UN and non-UN entities, reflecting a shared commitment to community health and inclusion. A total of 11 service providers supported the initiative, including eight non-UN organisations—Well Woman, Lifecare Hospital, AMI, Freetown International Hospital (FIH), Sight Savers, National AIDS Secretariat, Women’s Place, and AIDS Healthcare Foundation—and three UN entities: UNFPA, WHO, and UNJMS.



Sierra Leonean girls join regional summit to champion equality and leadership.

As part of the International Day of the Girl celebrations, two adolescent girls from Sierra Leone joined peers from across West and Central Africa at the UNICEF Regional Girls' Summit held in Dakar, Senegal. The Summit, organized by the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office, brought together young changemakers, policymakers, and partners to amplify girls' voices and leadership across the region.

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The event celebrated the power of adolescent girls as catalysts for change, highlighting their potential to shape policies, drive advocacy, and influence the future they want. Through panel discussions and peer exchanges, participants explored key issues including girls' education, gender equality, climate action, and leadership.

UNICEF Sierra Leone's participation and support underscore the organization's ongoing commitment to empowering girls to lead, speak up, and contribute meaningfully to decisions that affect their lives. The Summit also serves as a platform to strengthen regional solidarity and collective action toward achieving gender equality and advancing girls' rights.

When girls are heard and supported, communities thrive, and progress toward equality becomes unstoppable.



UNICEF strengthens efforts to improve hand hygiene and WASH Systems across Sierra Leone.

Access to handwashing facilities remains one of the most effective ways to prevent disease and save lives, yet significant gaps persist across Sierra Leone. While awareness of the importance of handwashing is high (94.7%), only 11.6% of households have access to basic hand hygiene services, and nearly eight in ten schools still lack functional handwashing facilities (WASHNORM 2022).

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UNICEF, in partnership with the Government of Sierra Leone and other stakeholders, continues to address these challenges by improving water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) systems nationwide. This includes supporting the installation of handwashing facilities in schools and health centres, ensuring a consistent supply of soap, and promoting sustainable behaviour change through community engagement and hygiene education.

Children at the newly inaugurated Konacrydee Early Childhood Development Centre, one of nine centres built with funding from the Government of Iceland, now have access to clean water and WASH facilities. This enables them to learn, play, and thrive in a safe and healthy environment, setting the foundation for lifelong hygiene practices.

By strengthening WASH infrastructure and promoting good hygiene habits from early childhood, UNICEF is helping to protect children and families from preventable diseases, ensuring healthier communities and better learning outcomes for every child.

Because clean hands don't just protect individuals, they protect everyone.



Advancing foundational learning for every child in Sierra Leone.

Improving learning outcomes at the foundational level remains a top priority for the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE). With support from UNICEF and partners, a nationwide learning assessment is currently underway, targeting pre-primary and primary school children across all 16 districts of Sierra Leone.

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The assessment aims to generate critical data that will serve as a national baseline for understanding the current state of learning outcomes among young learners. The findings will inform education planning and policy decisions, enabling the government and its partners to track progress over time as new interventions are rolled out.

This initiative is a key milestone in Sierra Leone's efforts to strengthen foundational learning, ensuring that every child acquires essential literacy and numeracy skills early in life. It underscores the government's strong commitment—supported by UNICEF—to transforming education and creating equal opportunities for all children to thrive and reach their full potential.



UNICEF showcases impact for children and families at UN@80 celebrations.

As part of activities marking the 80th anniversary of the United Nations, UNICEF Sierra Leone joined sister UN agencies, government ministries, and partners at the UN@80 Photo Exhibition and Trade Fair in Freetown. The event celebrated eight decades of multilateralism and collective progress in advancing peace, development, and human rights around the world.

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Through its exhibition booth, UNICEF showcased impactful programmes and innovations that are driving progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — from improving access to quality education, healthcare, and nutrition, to strengthening child protection, water and sanitation systems, and social protection mechanisms.

Visitors had the opportunity to engage with multimedia displays, photos, and publications illustrating how UNICEF's partnership with the Government of Sierra Leone and local communities is transforming the lives of children and families nationwide.

The event also provided a platform for collaboration and reflection on the UN's shared commitment to achieving the SDGs and leaving no one behind.



WFP and MBSSE welcome Korean rice donation to strengthen school feeding in Sierra Leone.

The World Food Programme (WFP) and the Government of Sierra Leone held a formal handover ceremony at the WFP Kissy Warehouse in Freetown to acknowledge a significant donation from the Republic of Korea: over 36,000 bags (40kg each) of rice, valued at USD 2 million. This rice will support the National School Feeding Programme, which provides daily meals for primary school children across the country.



Speaking at the event, WFP Representative and Country Director Andrew Odero highlighted the broader impact of Korea's support: **"We are grateful to the Republic of Korea not only for the rice itself but for the consistency and clarity of their commitment. Korea has set a standard for meaningful cooperation—one rooted in solidarity and mutual growth."**

This contribution supports Sierra Leone's "Free Quality School Education" initiative, aimed at fostering human capital development, ensuring children receive daily hot meals, and reducing household food stress in vulnerable communities.

The event concluded with the official handover and a tour of warehouse loaded with bags of the donated rice. This partnership between the Republic of Korea, WFP, and the Government of Sierra Leone demonstrates a shared commitment to ending hunger and advancing sustainable development through education. As Sierra Leone continues to prioritize the well-being of its children, this donation stands as a testament to the transformative power of international collaboration in building a brighter future for the nation.

The rice, donated through Korea's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA), is expected to reach more than 106,700 children in Bonthe, Kambia, Kenema, and Pujehun districts during the 2025/26 academic year. This builds on the previous year's donation, which provided 48,000 bags of rice and benefited over 123,500 children—helping to achieve a 95 percent school attendance rate and a 97 percent retention rate.

Augustine Koroma, Coordinator of the Free Quality Education program, emphasised the impact of the donation: **"This support ensures that primary school children in targeted areas receive daily nutritious meals, which is critical for both their health and their learning."**

Counsellor Inkee Min of the Republic of Korea to Sierra Leone expressed his government's commitment, stating, "This gesture underscores the strong friendship between the people of Sierra Leone and Korea. The hope of any nation lies in education and the nurturing of its young talents."





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.

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