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Monday–Friday,
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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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Strengthening cross-border peace and resilience in the Gola Forest corridor: A Sierra Leone-Liberia partnership.



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The Gola Forest region, straddling the border between Sierra Leone and Liberia, is a biodiversity-rich ecosystem and home to communities with deep cultural, linguistic, and economic ties. GOLA-REAP (Resilience, Empowerment, Access, and Peacebuilding) project, funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), recognises the value of this shared past, present and future as enablers for peace.



By fostering collaboration among forest rangers, border authorities, and local leaders, and empowering youth and women through inclusive governance and climate-smart livelihoods along and across the border, the project promotes peaceful coexistence, sustainable development, and environmental stewardship. It transforms a historically fragile zone into a model of regional integration and community-led peacebuilding.

The GOLA-REAP Project commenced implementation in February 2025, under strategic leadership and oversight on the Joint Project Steering Committee. The committee meets bi-annually, the recent meeting was convened last Friday, 03 October 2025 in Monrovia, Liberia, co-chaired by the Internal Affairs Ministers of Liberia and Sierra Leone and the UN Resident Coordinators for both countries.

The committee reviewed project progress since its launch, acknowledged achievements and challenges, and endorsed adjustments to the work plan and budget. Emphasis was placed on inclusive stakeholder engagement, strategic sustainability planning, and joint resource mobilization.

The project is already engaging the 57 communities identified and selected who are central to the implementation of the project. Communities have accelerated dialogue for shared solutions and future for sustaining peace. Communities supported are using rice farms as dialogue and cohesion spaces, the project is supporting communities through 40 inland valley swamps for rice production, expanding opportunities for climate-smart farming.



The donation reflects WHO's continued commitment, alongside global partners, to building a stronger, more resilient, and sustainable health system in Sierra Leone.

UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Seraphine Wakana, who visited project sites in Bayama and Zimmi, Pujehun District on her way to Liberia, reaffirmed her commitment to championing the voices of beneficiaries. She described GOLA-REAP as a **“shared vision for peace, prosperity, and sustainability,”** anchored in the Gola Forest and driven by unified efforts to address the root causes of conflict.



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Sierra Leone's Internal Affairs Minister, AIG (Rtd) Morie Lengor, praised the project's role in strengthening bilateral relations, citing the peaceful resolution of a potential border conflict in Koindu. His Liberian counterpart, Hon. F. Sakila Nyumalin Sr., emphasised the ecological and social significance of the Gola Forest, calling the initiative **“a beacon for regional cooperation, environmental conservation, and inclusive development.”**

GOLA-REAP is jointly implemented by IOM and WFP, in partnership with the Governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Mano River Union Secretariat, civil society organizations, and national institutions including Liberia's FDA and Sierra Leone's NPAA, with the community at the heart of implementation.

It is a cross-border initiative focused on promoting peace, resilience, and sustainable development in the Gola Forest landscape shared by Sierra Leone and Liberia.



WHO donation strengthens Sierra Leone's health system with essential supplies and equipment.

Sierra Leone's health system has received a major boost following the donation of essential supplies and equipment worth USD 456,483.20 from the World Health Organization (WHO) to the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the National Public Health Agency (NPHA).

The package includes six computers for the AMR coordination at NPHA, Four Laboratories and Pharmacy Board, provided with support from the Fleming Fund, to establish a digitized system that enables real-time analysis of antimicrobial importation data.



World Health Organization



Speaking at the ceremony, WHO Country Representative Dr. George Ameh stressed the importance of the support: **"This is more than just a delivery of equipment. By digitizing systems, strengthening electronic reporting, and equipping regional structures, this donation will boost real-time disease monitoring, improve decision-making, and ensure faster response to outbreaks."**

Deputy Minister of Health, Prof. Charles Senessie, expressed appreciation, **"This contribution is vital for our preparedness and response capacity. With these tools, we can detect, analyze, and respond to health threats more effectively, safeguarding the health of our people."**

The donation reflects WHO's continued commitment, alongside global partners, to building a stronger, more resilient, and sustainable health system in Sierra Leone.

This will strengthen surveillance of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and improve accountability in medicine importation. WHO also delivered 92 tablets through the Pandemic Fund to enhance the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) system, ensuring health workers can electronically collect and transmit data for faster outbreak detection.

In addition, essential supplies and office equipment funded by the Global Fund were handed over to operationalize five Regional Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) in Bo, Western Area Rural, Port Loko, Kenema, and Bombali, which are critical for timely and coordinated emergency response.



Fleming Fund and WHO review achievements in Sierra Leone's AMR response.

Mott MacDonald, managing The Fleming Fund grants, has conducted an assessment and monitoring visit to the WHO Country Office in Sierra Leone to review progress made through the Fleming Fund Grants support in strengthening the country's fight against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

The visit focused on achievements, challenges, and ways to ensure sustainability as the current phase of support concludes in March 2026.



World Health Organization



Speaking during the visit, Dr. George Ameh, WHO Representative in Sierra Leone, said: **"The Fleming Fund's investment has transformed Sierra Leone's response to antimicrobial resistance. This joint review confirms the substantial achievements made and underscores the importance of sustaining these gains beyond Fleming Fund grant in March 2026 AMR is a global and national public health threat, that needs the Government and stakeholders attention."**

He reaffirmed WHO commitment to supporting AMR priorities, and advocating for broader stakeholders engagement. On behalf of the Mott MacDonald/ Fleming Fund, Adjo Mfodwo noted: **"We are pleased to see the impact of our investment better laboratories, stronger surveillance, and improved stewardship. This visit allows us to reflect on achievements and work with partners on sustainability and government ownership moving forward."**

With a total investment of £3.3 million across two phases, the Fleming Fund's support has been transformative. Key milestones include the renovation and equipping of microbiology laboratories at Connaught Teaching Hospital, Ola During Children's Hospital (ODCH), and Makeni Government Hospital; capacity building of laboratory staff; and a significant rise in External Quality Assessment (EQA) scores from 50% in October 2024 to about 90% in April 2025.

Another landmark was Sierra Leone's first-ever submission of AMR data to WHO's Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System (GLASS).

The review also highlighted advances in Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) with committees established at three hospitals, national AMS guidelines developed, plans and improved coordination among ministries, regulators, and academia.



Raising awareness on Mpox in schools.

With Mpox cases in Sierra Leone now on the decline, UNICEF, in collaboration with the National Public Health Agency and the Ministry of Health, is engaging schools in targeted awareness-raising sessions to sustain progress against the disease.

unicef 
for every child



These sessions equip the pupils, teachers, and school authorities with practical knowledge on how to prevent infections, combat stigma, and maintain safe classrooms through personal and school hygiene, early detection, and timely referral.

By reaching schools, the initiative ensures that children, the most active members of their communities become agents of change, spreading accurate information to peers, families, and neighbors. This approach is not only crucial for maintaining a safe environment in classrooms but also strengthens community awareness and builds resilience against future outbreaks.

Sustained awareness and preventive action are crucial for maintaining a safe environment in classrooms and protecting entire communities from Mpox.



Government of Iceland supports children and families in Sierra Leone.

It is a new beginning for children in Konacrydee, where the Government of Iceland, in partnership with UNICEF and the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, have officially launched an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre. The centre is one of nine established in Bonthe, Moyamba, and Port Loko districts with funding from the Government of Iceland.

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for every child



These ECD centres provide children in hard-to-reach communities with the opportunity to learn, play, and grow in a safe and supportive environment, laying the foundation for lifelong learning and success.

During their visit to Sierra Leone, a high-level Icelandic delegation also met with partners and community members in Konacrydee to witness firsthand how Iceland's investment, through partnerships with UNICEF, UNFPA, and the Government of Sierra Leone, is strengthening access to education, health, and WASH services.



Iceland delegation visits Conakry Dee to strengthen maternal health services.

A high-level delegation from the Government of Iceland, together with the Acting Minister of Health, the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, UNICEF, and UNFPA, undertook a field mission to Conakry Dee Community Health Centre in Port Loko District on 30 September, 2025 to review progress in maternal and child health.



The support forms part of Iceland's investment in UNFPA's Obstetric Fistula Programme, which is strengthening Sierra Leone's health system while restoring dignity and opportunities for women. Since its launch in 2022, the programme has achieved significant results, including:

- Training more than 800 health workers to deliver quality maternal health care.
- Screening 1,098 women and girls for fistula and related conditions.
- Supporting 15 health facilities to provide comprehensive RMNCAH services.
- Providing surgical treatment to over 500 women living with obstetric fistula.
- Supporting 249 survivors with skills training, counselling, and reintegration.
- Reaching approximately 1 million people with information on maternal health.

As part of the mission, UNFPA and the Government of Iceland officially handed over the newly refurbished Conakry Dee Community Health Centre (CHC) and a consignment of essential medical equipment to the Ministry of Health. The CHC serves a catchment population of more than 12,000 people, providing vital maternal and child health services in one of the country's most underserved areas.

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The review also highlighted advances in Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) with committees established at three hospitals, national AMS guidelines developed, plans and improved coordination among ministries, regulators, and academia.



Speaking during the handover, health workers and a fistula survivor expressed gratitude for the programme's impact, noting how improved infrastructure, trained health personnel, and access to life-saving services are transforming lives in Port Loko.

The Director General of Iceland's International Development Cooperation Directorate, Ms Elin R. Sigurdardottir, said Iceland remains deeply committed to supporting Sierra Leone's efforts to eliminate obstetric fistula.



She noted that the programme represents not only an investment in health, but also a pathway to gender equality and dignity for women and girls.

She stressed that strong health systems and access to quality maternal care are essential to preventing fistula and maternal deaths. Witnessing the progress at Conakry Dee, she said, strengthens Iceland's resolve to stand with the Government of Sierra Leone, UNFPA, and partners to ensure that women and girls can recover, rebuild their lives, and thrive.

UNFPA Deputy Representative Ms. Sibeso Mululuma emphasised that the handover was more than just the refurbishment of a facility, describing it as an investment in women's health, dignity, and futures. She noted that through the partnership with Iceland, the Ministry of Health, and other stakeholders, Sierra Leone's health system is being strengthened to ensure that no woman is left behind.



Statistics Sierra Leone launches regional cartographic mapping training ahead of 2026 population and housing census.

Statistics Sierra Leone launched the regional training for the National Cartographic in preparation for the 2026 Population and Housing Census, engaging 679 field staff across the five regional headquarters of Bo, Kenema, Makeni, Port Loko, and the Western Area.



Southern Regional Training

The training is a crucial component of the census preparations, involving selected staff from all 16 districts. Its primary goal is to furnish participants with the technical skills necessary for the National Cartographic Mapping Exercise, which is a foundational stage of the census process.

The Statistician-General and Chief Census Officer addressed the trainees, emphasizing the importance of focus and commitment. They expressed gratitude for the support received from the Government of Sierra Leone and reaffirmed the statistical office's dedication to delivering a high-quality census.

Speaking at the launch of the training in the Western Area, UNFPA Deputy Representative underscored the critical role of the cartographic mapping phase in producing a credible, inclusive, and development-focused census. She stressed that the resulting accurate data is indispensable for evidence-based governance, national development planning, and equitable resource distribution.

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Mapping activities are vital for achieving complete and inclusive national coverage, which is fundamental to ensuring a successful and credible census.

UNFPA partners with Save the Children to support the national roll out of child and adolescent health and Life Skills.

As part of support to MBSSE's roll out of the Child and Adolescent Health and Life Skills (CAHLS), UNFPA handed over teaching and learning materials to Save the Children for distribution across Sierra Leone, directly impacting 6,700 students in 42 schools. This collaborative effort was made possible by the financial commitment of the Government of Iceland.



The initiative represents a strategic investment in the next generation, focused on adolescent empowerment and rights. The CAHLS curriculum covers critical topics, including:

- **Adolescent Health:** Providing essential knowledge for health protection.
- **Personal Development:** Fostering resilience and informed decision-making.
- **Life Skills:** Equipping students to make safe choices and actively participate in their communities.

By delivering these comprehensive resources, the initiative directly strengthens the capacity of young people to navigate challenges, maintain health, and pursue educational and personal goals, thus contributing to the realization of their full potential.

The initiative reflects the strong partnership between UNFPA, the Government of Iceland, and the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education to advance the health, education, and empowerment of young people in Sierra Leone.



Strengthening data to improve reproductive health services in Sierra Leone.

The Ministry of Health in collaboration with UNFPA successfully trained 40 enumerators for the 2025 Health Facility Assessment of Reproductive Health Commodities and Services. The training equipped participants with essential skills in survey methods, effective interviewing, and the use of Kobo Collect to collect accurate, real-time data from health facilities across all 16 districts.



The nationwide assessment will gather comprehensive information on the availability of contraceptives, maternal and reproductive health medicines, stock-outs, facility resources, client experiences, and service costs. These insights will support evidence-based decision-making, strengthen supply chains, optimize service delivery, and guide policies to ensure all communities in Sierra Leone can access quality reproductive health services.

Ministry of Health partners with UNFPA and Marie Stopes brings family planning services to Tombo ahead of World Contraception Day 2025.

On 24 September 2025, ahead of World Contraception Day 2025, UNFPA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Marie Stopes, organized a community outreach in Tombo, a densely populated fishing community. The initiative brought family planning and reproductive health services directly to women, men, and young people, making it easier for residents to access care and information.



Under the global theme “**A Choice for All: Agency, Intention, Access**”, community members were able to receive contraceptives, access counselling, and obtain information to make informed decisions about their reproductive health. Health workers provided guidance on different methods, addressing questions and concerns in a supportive and confidential setting.

“I didn’t want to get pregnant again,” said Jenneh Sesay, 23, a mother of two. “When I heard about the services in our community, I was excited to come. Family planning is often something people shy away from, but when I arrived and saw other women and young people, I felt really encouraged. The nurse explained all the options in a way that made me feel safe, and I was able to make a decision that works for me and my family.”



For Jenneh and many others in Tombo, the outreach was more than just access to contraceptives, it was an opportunity to make informed choices about their futures, protect their health, and take control of their family planning decisions.

On 26 September, UNFPA, the Ministry of Health, CSOs and young people commemorated World Contraception Day 2025 with a press conference and handover ceremony.

Over US\$2.47 million worth of contraceptives, maternal health medicines, and equipment were handed over to strengthen reproductive health services nationwide.



UNDP, partners strengthen SLP communication capacity for force to service transition.

The Sierra Leone Police (SLP) has completed a two-day Strategic Communication Workshop for its media and public relations officers, marking a key step in the institution's transition from a force to a modern, people-centred service. The training was organised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ).



The strategic workshop is part of the UNDP in Sierra Leone's ongoing institutional support to the Sierra Leone Police. This partnership aligns with UNDP's broader mission to promote peace, justice, and strong institutions, directly contributing to the goals of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) and the realization of the Medium-Term National Development Plan of Sierra Leone.

SLAJ President, Mr. Alhaji Manika Kamara, welcomed the initiative as a timely investment in police–community relations. **“Enhancing communication is vital to building trust, and this training gives police officers the tools to tell their story more effectively,”** he said.

The workshop represents another important step toward ensuring the Sierra Leone Police delivers on its people-centred transformation agenda.

The workshop brought together police media officers from across the country, equipping them with practical skills in internal communication, public engagement, and content creation to better support the ongoing transformation. Deputy Inspector General of Police, Mr. Sahr Yomba Senesi, urged participants to take ownership of their role in shaping public perception. **“As media officers, you are the voice of this institution. How you engage with citizens will define how our transition is received. Use your platforms to demonstrate transparency, accountability, and professionalism,”** he said.

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.



100 Women Entrepreneurs Complete EWASME Training to Boost Rice Value Chain in Sierra Leone.

One hundred women-led and owned Very Small Enterprises (VSEs) in Sierra Leone have successfully completed a comprehensive capacity-building training under the Empowering West African Women Small & Medium Enterprises (EWASME) Programme, implemented by UNDP Sierra Leone.



The EWASME programme, designed by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and funded by the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi), is co-financed and implemented by UNDP across Guinea, Niger, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone, the project focuses on strengthening women-led enterprises in the rice value chain, a critical sector for food security and livelihoods.

By empowering women in rural communities, the initiative aims to reduce poverty, increase food security, and enhance the competitiveness of local rice production.

The successful completion of the training marks a significant step toward enabling women entrepreneurs to scale their businesses, create jobs, and contribute to sustainable economic growth.

The trainees were selected after competitive pitch fair which identify the most promising enterprises, equipped the women entrepreneurs with essential skills in business development, governance, financial management, and access to mentorship. These tools are designed to help them grow their businesses from subsistence to sustainable, profitable ventures.

Each participating enterprise will also receive a matching grant to invest in productive assets, improve service delivery, and expand operations. Over the next year, the entrepreneurs will benefit from ongoing mentorship, providing guidance and practical support to apply their training in real-world business environments.





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