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# UN AGENCIES WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

## 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

## UNiTE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls



Monday–Friday,  
24th - 28th November 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. **Digital violence is real violence**, and it demands collective accountability. As the **#16DaysOfActivism** begin, UN Sierra Leone, together with government, partners, the private sector, and communities, reaffirms a shared commitment to creating safer online and offline spaces for women and girls. Protecting digital rights and dignity is central to advancing equality, safety, and justice for all.

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# Sierra Leone launches 16 Days of Activism against GBV.

On 25 November 2025 in Freetown, Sierra Leone, with support from the Government of Iceland, UN Women Sierra Leone, in partnership with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and sister UN agencies, officially launched the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence under the global theme: **"UNiTE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls."**



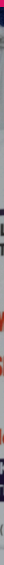
The campaign brings together government officials, development partners, civil society organisations, and community leaders and the media to raise awareness and strengthen support for survivors.

Speaking at the national launch, Dr. Moinina Sengh, Chief Minister of Sierra Leone, said, **"Our Government through its laws from its leader the President, Dr. Julius Maada Bio to everyone of us reject every form of violence against All Women and Girls online and offline."**

He called on all citizens to UNiTE in ending violence against women and girls, stressing that it is a collective responsibility.

Representing Ms. Seraphine Wakana, UN Resident Coordinator in Sierra Leone, Mr. Fredrick Ampiah, Resident Representative for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

He affirmed, **"The 16 Days of Activism is a clarion call to all of us: Development Partners, the UN, Government, and Civil Society. It demands tenacity of purpose and unwavering commitment. As the United Nations, we reaffirm our dedication to building a world where every woman and girl can live free from fear, both offline and online."**





According to Dr. Isata Mahoi, Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs, ending violence against women and girls is not solely a women's issue, but a collective moral duty and a fundamental human rights obligation. She emphasised that violence in any form undermines national development, weakens families and communities, and erodes the dignity and safety of society as a whole.



The Minister reaffirmed the Government's commitment to strengthening laws, institutions, and community-based prevention efforts, while calling for sustained collaboration across all sectors to ensure that every woman and girl in Sierra Leone can live free from fear, violence, and discrimination.

The UN family, reaffirms its unwavering commitment to working with Government, UN agencies, civil society, the private sector, and communities to prevent violence in both physical and digital spaces.

Through coordinated advocacy, policy support, service delivery, and community engagement, the UN remains steadfast in its mission to ensure that every woman and girl can live, learn, work, and participate online and offline in safety, dignity, and equality.



# UNDP drives action on gender equality as the 16 Days of Activism begin.

As we mark the start of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, a global campaign calling for the elimination of violence in all its forms. Technology and social media increasingly become tools for harassment and abuse, digital spaces have emerged as a critical frontline in protecting the rights, safety, and dignity of women and girls.



In parallel with national advocacy efforts, UNDP Sierra Leone convened a staff consultative meeting on UNDP's Global Gender Equality Strategy, with technical support from the Regional Bureau for Africa Gender Team.

The session highlighted that while gender equality remains central to Sierra Leone's development agenda, deeply rooted socio-cultural norms, limited digital access for women, and low representation in leadership continue to restrict opportunities for women and girls.

As the 16 Days of Activism advance, stakeholders are reminded of the urgent need to confront systemic barriers, strengthen coordinated action, and accelerate progress toward equality.

Together, the United Nations, Government, civil society, and partners remain committed to building a society where women and girls are protected, empowered, and able to thrive. The call to action remains clear: say NO to violence, everywhere, in every form.





# UNFPA and partners engage students to end digital violence.

As part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, UNFPA Sierra Leone, in partnership with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, UN Women, WHO, the National Cyber Security Coordination Centre (NC3), and the Embassy of Iceland, engaged students at Fourah Bay College to tackle technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV).



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The event brought together students, university leadership, government officials, and youth advocates for interactive sessions, panel discussions, and creative student-led performances. Participants explored the forms and impacts of digital violence and gained practical tools to prevent abuse online.

The programme highlighted UNFPA's #Bodyright campaign, emphasising dignity, respect, and protection online, alongside UN Women's Real Man Challenge, which encourages young men to be allies in promoting safe digital spaces.

**"Young people have the strongest voice in shaping the future of Sierra Leone,"** said UNFPA Country Representative Kunle Adeniyi. **"When you stand for Bodyright, you stand for safety, dignity, and a future where technology works for people, not against them."**

Knoxforda Ayodele Glynis Nicol, Secretary of the Gender Equity Society at Fourah Bay College, delivered a vote of thanks: **"We leave here more informed, more empowered, and ready to take action. Together, we can make our online spaces safer for all women and girls."**



# Independent monitors deployed for Sierra Leone's census pilot.

Statistics Sierra Leone (Stats SL) and UNFPA have deployed Independent Monitors to oversee the 2025 Population and Housing Census Pilot, a key rehearsal ahead of the 2026 national census. The pilot tests Sierra Leone's digital readiness and field operations while ensuring transparency and credibility.



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The monitors, including national researchers, civil society representatives, and international experts, are stationed in Kailahun, Bo, Bombali, and the Western Urban Area. They will provide daily, real-time feedback on the process, helping to identify challenges and improve quality.

Statistician General Andrew Bob Johnny highlighted the census's importance, saying, **"This is more than just counting people; it is the foundation for effective governance, equitable development, and policies that reach every community. Reliable data allows us to ensure that no one is left behind."**

UNFPA Country Representative Kunle Adeniyi emphasised the monitors' critical role: **"You are the eyes and ears of this exercise. Your objective and unbiased observations will help refine the process, ensuring that when the national census happens in 2026, it is transparent, efficient, and trusted by the public."**

UNFPA Deputy Representative Sibeso Mululuma summed up their mission: **"Your work guarantees quality, coverage, trustworthiness, transparency, and credibility. Every insight you provide strengthens the integrity of this landmark national exercise."**





# UNRCO's convened in Freetown towards enhancing joint programming and support to the MRU.

On 24–25 November 2025, United Nations Resident Coordinators' Offices (RCOs) of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire successfully convened in Freetown, a two-day Technical Workshop on Opportunities for Consolidated UN Support to the Mano River Union (MRU).



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The workshop marked an important step toward strengthening coordinated, innovative and future-oriented UN engagement across the sub-region.

Hosted by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Sierra Leone, the workshop brought together Heads of RCOs, Economists, Peace and Development Advisors, Partnerships Officers, Peacebuilding Fund teams and senior representatives of the MRU Secretariat.

The session provided a strong platform for reflection, alignment and joint action on how the UN system, through the coordination role of the RCOs, could more effectively support the MRU's mandate.

The MRU, comprising Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, was reaffirmed as a vital regional framework for advancing peacebuilding, governance, climate resilience and inclusive development. In the spirit of UN 2.0, discussions emphasised innovative and integrated solutions, modernized development approaches, stronger partnerships and deeper private sector engagement.



Over the two days, participants focused on strengthening UN support to the MRU's mandate, reinforcing cross-border peacebuilding and governance, scaling climate resilience, women's empowerment and meaningful youth engagement, and further strengthening the MRU Secretariat as it implements its strategic plan.



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Other thematic discussions covered include trade, agriculture, drug and substance abuse, health, and migration, ensuring that UN programming remains interconnected and responsive to shared regional priorities.

The workshop achieved key outcomes including a shared understanding of MRU priorities, clear entry points for coordinated UN engagement, and progress toward the development of a draft roadmap for joint programming, partnerships and resource mobilization across the four countries.

The atmosphere across the two days was marked by strong collaboration, openness and shared commitment. Participants concluded the workshop with renewed confidence in translating dialogue into practical actions, strengthened partnerships and joint programming solutions that will continue to advance peace, resilience and inclusive development across the Mano River basin.





# On World Prematurity Day, UNICEF launched the Kangaroo Mothers Care Guidelines and handed over 100 resilient oxygen concentrators.

On 26 November 2025, UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Health to launch the Kangaroo Mothers Care Clinical Implementation Guidelines and handed over 100 resilient oxygen concentrators to the Ministry of Health. This was a celebration belated of the World Prematurity Day which was on 17 November 2025.

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Together with the Ministry of Health and partners, UNICEF is also advancing newborn survival through training of almost 50 neonatal nurses; expanding KMC in all 17 Special Care Baby Units; solarizing SCBUs to ensure uninterrupted essential services and providing Free Health Care commodities for the smallest and most fragile babies.

**“The Oxygen is a lifesaving for babies struggling to breathe”,** she added. **“These concentrators, along with filter sets, flow splitters, nasal prongs, pulse oximeters, and spare parts, will strengthen care in Special Care Baby Units, paediatric wards, and primary health facilities across the country”.**

This year’s theme, **“Give Preterm Babies a Strong Start for a Brighter Future,”** speaks directly to Sierra Leone’s reality. While progress has been made, newborn mortality remains high, half of these deaths occur on the day of birth, and most within the first month. These losses are heartbreaking but largely preventable through simple, cost-effective interventions.

This milestone launch of the KMC guidelines reflects strong Government leadership and the collective effort of partners to make KMC a standard of care for preterm and low-birthweight babies, said Liv Elin Indretein, UNICEF Deputy Representative in Sierra Leone. **“This is a lifesaving and cost-effective approach where the mother or father is keeping the baby safe and warm through direct contact by carrying the baby on their chest.”**



# UNICEF Representative, Rudolf Schwenk, visited fishing communities on the islands of Bonthe to see WASH, education and health projects.

Between 26 and 28 November 2025, UNICEF Representative, Rudolf Schwenk, accompanied by a small team, visited WASH facilities that are being established for children and their families living in five riverine island communities in Bonthe District.

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The Mayor of Bonthe City Council, His Lordship Mohamed Robinson, welcome Rudolf to Bonthe Island and expressed profound gratitude for the development work that the organization is doing in Bonthe District.

Using a small boat, the team visited ongoing construction projects on community and school toilets, water supply, fish landing platforms and Early Childhood Development centres in the islands of Mbokie, York, Mania, Saama and Yagoi mainland. These projects are being supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Iceland through the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources.

**"UNICEF is working alongside government and partners to change this, bringing safe water closer to homes, improving maternal and child health, and opening doors to early education. Together, we can give every child in Bonthe the chance to thrive."**

UNICEF supports the Bonthe District Council for monitoring the implementation of WASH interventions in the five targeted locations. In addition, UNICEF assists the Council in deploying three site engineers to oversee progress at each construction site.

Together, these efforts are contributing to improved and more sustainable access to WASH services.

Rudolf and his team visited the Special Care Baby Unit at the main referral hospital in Bonthe Island that was supported by the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office. He interacted with the matron and staff who also expressed appreciation to UNICEF for the support they have been getting especially on capacity building and medical supplies.

**"Here in Bonthe, we see incredible strength in families and communities. Yet many children still lack clean water, basic health care, and early learning opportunities,"** said Rudolf.







## 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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