



# **SIERRA LEONE 2024 VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW REPORT**



# Acronyms

CSO - Civil Society Organization

DDCC - District Development Coordination Committees

ECD - Early Childhood Development

FQSE - Free Quality School Education

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

GEWE - Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

GoSL - Government of Sierra Leone

HLPF - High Level Political Forum

HIV & AIDS- Human Immunodeficiency Virus & Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

MCC - Millennium Challenge Corporation

MDA - Ministries, Departments and Agencies

MICS - Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

MPI - Multidimensional Poverty Index

## Acronyms.....continue

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MoPED - Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

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MTRS - Medium Term Revenue Strategy

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MTNDP - Medium-Term National Development Plan

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NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

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SGBV - Sexual Gender-Based Violence

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SDG - Sustainable Development Goals

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UN - United Nations

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UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

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VLR - Voluntary Local Review

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VNR - Voluntary National Review

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WASH - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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WFP - World Food Programme

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YESP - Youth Employment Support Project

# Introduction

- The Review conducted in 2024 marks the fourth Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation in Sierra Leone, following previous reviews in 2016, 2019, and 2021 respectively. Since the launch of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, the country has actively leveraged the SDGs reviews and follow-up instruments to showcase progress and ascertain the impact of policies and strategies on the ground.
- The first VNR in 2016 reported the initial efforts to mainstream the goals, while the second review in 2019 highlighted progress on the SDGs goals and targets since 2016 and presented key policy and institutional reconfigurations in the national development processes, largely informed by the country's Medium-Term National Development Plan of 2019-2023. The third review in 2021 presented the SDGs policy impact on the welfare of the citizenry, and the national COVID-19 response and recovery mechanism.
- Building on the experience of those previous reviews, the 2024 VNR is being conducted to continue tracking the SDGs policy impact on the ground, despite the multiple socioeconomic crises faced by the global economy. The Sierra Leone 2024 VNR Report will particularly assess progress on the Sierra Leone SDGs Acceleration Road Map, and the strategies it has laid out in the new Sierra Leone Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2024-2030 to accelerate progress in achieving the goals by 2030.

# Linking the MTNDP 2024-2030 to the 2030 Agenda

## Sierra Leone Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024- 2030)

## UN Sustainable Development Goals

Feed Salone

Goals 1, 2, 3, 8, 12, 15 & 17

Human Capital Development

SDGs: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 11 & 17

Youth Employment Scheme

SDGs 1, 4, 8, 10 & 17

Technology, Innovation and Infrastructure

SDGs: 7, 9, 11 & 17

# The Enablers

Diversifying the Economy and Promoting Growth	SDGs: 1, 8, 9, 14 & 17
Governance and Accountability	SDGs: 10, 16 & 17
Advancing Climate Resilience and Environmental Action	SDGs: 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15
Gender Mainstreaming	SDGs 5, 10 & 17
Financing, Partnerships for Implementation and	SDGs 1 & 17

# Post 2024 General Elections

After the June 2023 general elections, a *Presidential Initiative on Climate Change, Renewable Energy, and Food Security* was established to complement and reinforce political will for supporting national, sectoral, and local efforts to reduce the risks and impacts of climate-related disasters. Additionally, the government of Sierra Leone, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has developed a national Blue Economy Strategy along with a comprehensive Action Plan to implement the strategy. The secretariat for the blue economy, along with its technical and ministerial steering committees, will oversee the efficient and sustainable use of our abundant oceanic and aquatic resources for achieving sustainable development. A National Development-Induced Resettlement Policy has been formulated, and the National Climate Change Policy reviewed and updated, all aimed at delivering climate-resilient development services.

# **Leaving No One Behind**

Sierra Leone considers to be critical in addressing the concept of leaving no one behind. Like the previous VNRs of 2019 and 2021, VNR 2024 presents progress on the key issues in pursuing the welfare of the vulnerable and high-risk groups in society.



## **Progress on the Goals and targets and evaluation of policies and measures taken so far:**

Sierra Leone remains resilient in implementing the SDGs, making key headways at both the policy front and in result areas, even in the face of multiple challenges. This section, therefore, examines the Country's progress on the SDG targets and indicators.

# SDG-3

## Good Health & Well-being

On SDG3, the government of Sierra Leone has strengthened the implementation of the Free Health Care Initiative. National budgetary allocation to the health sector increased from 6% to 11.6% between 2019-2023. The government recruited more healthcare workers, and established four dialysis stations. These policy efforts have positively impacted health indicators, particularly maternal mortality, which decreased from 717 deaths in 2019 to 443 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020, and life expectancy increased from 53 years to 61 years during 2017-2023.

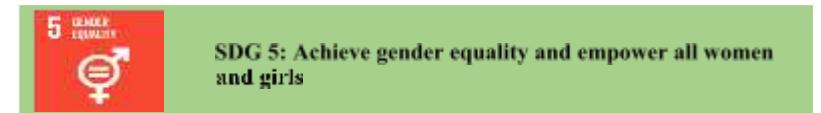


**SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

# SDG-5

## Gender Equality

- A total of three indicators are reported in this assessment, and progress was made on all three indicators as analyzed below.
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- i. ***Indicator 5.1: The proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM) remains unchanged since the 2021 report.***
- ii. ***Indicator 5.2: The proportion of women and girls aged 15-49 years subjected to sexual violence by their spouse in the previous 12 months reduced by 32 percent in 2022 from 60.7 percent in 2019. Between 2019-2022, sexual and gender-based violence was drastically reduced. Of the 2762 SGBV cases reported in 2022, 45 percent were peer-to-peer sexual activity, captured as rape due to the Law, which otherwise would not have been included in the figures.***
- iii. ***Indicator 5.3: The proportion of seats held by women in national parliament***
  - Sierra Leone has made excellent progress towards the targets of gender equality and women empowerment as the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament improved from 12.3 percent in 2013 to 28.2 percent in 2023, and a drastic increase in female representation in ministerial cabinet positions over 30 percent.



## **SDG-8**

### **Decent Work and Economic Growth**

The government remained mindful that a high-quality and motivated labour force is very strategic to its national economic transformation drive. In this regard, it has increased the minimum wage by 60 percent from Le 500,000 to Le 800,000 to improve the life of workers both in the private and public sectors. Additionally, the labour laws in the country are now stronger, with an existing Comprehensive Decent Work Programme which has led to the development of the Labour Market Information System and the National HIV/AIDS workplace policy. The programme has also facilitated the domestication of International Conventions on the Elimination of Child Labour.

# SDG-17

## Partnership for the Goals

The government remains firm in its efforts to mobilize resources for financing the national development plan and the SDGs despite global and domestic challenges. It undertook various reforms to increase mobilization of domestic revenues while strengthening international development cooperation to complement national efforts at mobilizing resources. Various partners have been active in supporting the country's development agenda, including bilateral and multilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Efforts have been made to strengthen local government and community development systems for enhanced public service delivery at sub-national level, while strengthening science, technology and innovation, national statistics and monitoring and evaluation.

17 PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and  
revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

# Means of Implementation



- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the crucial roles of inclusive participation from a wide- range of stakeholders and effective development cooperation for delivering on the goals. It is on this note that the Sierra Leone SDG Acceleration Roadmap and the MTNDP 2024-2030 emphasized the strategic role of strengthened development cooperation and stakeholders' mobilization for accelerated delivery of the SDGs. The MTNDP 2024-2030 has laid out the platform for advancing implementation of the SDG.
- Sierra Leone is fully committed to implementing the UN 2030 Agenda and has been consistent in the SDG review and reporting processes. The country has undertaken three previous VNRs and produced an SDG Acceleration Roadmap in September 2023.
- The roadmap prioritized goals one, two, and ten and has outlined national investment commitments for sustained poverty reduction and socioeconomic transformation of the country. As part of the SDGs' localization process, three Local Reviews were conducted in 2022 and 2023 in three administrative districts, each assessing progress on local indicators and targets.
- The leading SDG Acceleration commitments and the rest of the 2030 agenda are relentlessly pursued within the framework of the New Sierra Leone Medium-Term National Development Plan 2024-2030, framed around the Government's Big Five Game Changers.

# New and Emerging Challenges

- As already mentioned, the implementation of the SDGs continues to be challenged by the rising global geopolitical tension and the ensuing macroeconomic uncertainties. The uncertain global economic environment and high food and energy prices continued to weigh on economic growth in 2023.
- The high rate of drug addiction and misuse among the youth has emerged as a national security concern that needs concerted efforts to address as a matter of urgency. In November 2022, this alarming rate of the spate of consumption of dangerous drugs, especially among the youth, prompted the Office of National Security to meet with other stakeholders to find practicable solutions to the scourge of drug abuse in Sierra Leone. The widespread consumption and abuse of narcotics minimizes their chances of getting skillfully employed. To tackle this rising menace head-on, the government's third big Five Game Changer on *Youth Employment Scheme* has programmed a special policy result area for Addressing drug and substance abuse. Other national institutions such as the Ministry of Social Welfare and the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency are also implementing strategic programmes in this direction. These include establishing rehabilitation centers for drug addicts; livelihood support for persons living with disability; and cracking down on youth in drug abuse.
- Sierra Leone remains highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change and extreme weather conditions. Climate change effect negatively disrupts the farming calendar thereby increasing the country's vulnerabilities to, especially food insecurity.

# Summary of Challenges

The late commencement of the review process was a major challenge which put additional pressure on the technical team

Resources for the process were extremely limited and arrived very late, making it impossible to complete all necessary tasks within the available timeframe.

The country's weak private sector continues to constrain revenue generation, thereby limiting the fiscal space for SDGs implementation

The Sierra Leone Economy is yet adequately diversified and remains highly vulnerable to external shocks

Data systems and reporting capacity remain challenged. The lack of current data to provide status updates on the indicators owing to the differential timing of this current round of reporting with the frequency and timing of the different surveys conducted by the national statistical office.



# Key Lessons Learned

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Several important lessons can be gleaned from the 2024 VNR process, providing valuable insights for future efforts.

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One critical lesson is the importance of integrating local contexts and priorities into the national development agenda. Tailoring strategies to the specific needs and challenges of the local communities has proven to be more impactful in addressing the needs of the people and enhancing local ownership.

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The 2024 VNR process for Sierra Leone started very late due to the country's engagement in the formulation of the current MTNDP 2024-2030. This late starter badly affected the review process, including the limited time to access all relevant evaluation reports for a better-informed review report.

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While partnership and development cooperation remains crucial, the unpredictability of partner resources should be a reminder for state actors to allocate sufficient funds for the VNR process and general SDGs implementation.

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Data gaps remain a binding constraint in the implementation of the SDGs. Data is indeed a powerful resource that drives change and catalyzes action in development processes - policy design, planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

# Recommendations and Action Plan

- Key recommendations for accelerating the implementation of the SDGs in Sierra Leone within the framework of the MTNDP 2024-2030 and the Government's 5 game changers are:
  1. Accelerate the implementation of the country's Integrated National Financing Framework.
  2. Support Statistics Sierra Leone to provide accurate, clear, and timely data from censuses, surveys, and administrative records on social, health, demographic, economic, and financial activities of the state.
  3. Leverage the country's demographic dividend, the blue economy and the African Continental Free Trade Area potentials to be the mainstay for the SDGs, putting in readiness for off-the-shelf bankable projects.
  4. Explore funding and partnership opportunities for the Sierra Leone Blue Economy Strategy and optimize the climate finance opportunities.
  5. Scale up sensitivity to climate resilience, renewable energy, gender, and youth development.

# Recommendations and Action Plan...continue

1. Scale up efforts to attract more private investment, strengthen property rights and good institutions; protect the rule of law, pursuing peace and national cohesion.
2. Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Governance institutions to plan, execute, and monitor SDG-related activities effectively, while implementing robust mechanisms to combat corruption and ensure transparency in resource allocation and usage through regular audits and public disclosure of progress
3. Strengthening tax systems and public financial management to increase domestic revenues, while simultaneously seeking support from international donors and development partners to align aid with national priorities and build local capacities through public- private partnerships.
4. Intensify Civic Engagement and Participation, especially the active participation of civil society organizations, local communities, and marginalized groups in the SDGs implementation process.

# The Next Steps include:

1. Organize post-VNR stakeholder engagement on the lessons learned from the voluntary reviews process and the outcome of the 2024 HLPF.
2. Develop key action points with specific timelines for addressing the key issues emerging from the review process
3. Institute Technical and Steering Committees on the Integrated National Financing Framework
4. Organize a technical meeting for the statistics Sierra Leone on how to address and close the huge data gaps for the SDGs

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**THANK YOU!**

