

To accelerate national development...

VP Juldeh Jalloh Urges Stronger Policy Coordination

Vice President Dr Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh has called for stronger policy coherence and coordination across government, saying effective collaboration among public institutions is essential to translating national development policies into tangible improvements in the lives of citizens.

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Information Minister Calls for Stronger Africa-China Media Partnership at 7th Audiovisual Forum

By: Zacharia Jalloh, Ministry of Information and Civic Education

The Minister of Information and Civic Education Chernor Bah has called for deeper cooperation between Africa and China in the media and audiovisual sector, stressing the need to invest not only in technology and infrastructure, but also in people, institutions and professional capacity. Minister Bah made the call while representing Sierra Leone at the 7th



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MRCG Presents SLBC Policy Documents And Reform Proposals



The Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG) has formally presented a comprehensive package of reform proposals and policy documents on the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) and community media to the Government of Sierra Leone through the Ministry of Information and Civic Education.

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Calls Grow For Protection Of Women's Digital Rights

Stakeholders have called for stronger protection and promotion of women's digital rights in Sierra Leone, with increased public awareness of existing laws, digital literacy, data protection and effective mechanisms for reporting violations.

The call was made on Tuesday, 18 August 2026, at a workshop on Women's Digital Rights in Sierra Leone, organised by the Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG) at CCSL in Freetown. The forum brought together representatives from Government, the media, civil society, legal institutions and women's rights organisations to examine progress, challenges and opportunities for women's meaningful participation in the digital space.

Representing the Ministry of Information and Civic Education, the Director of Government Information and Services, Franceda Kafula, stressed that Sierra Leone's digital transformation cannot be truly inclusive if women participate

merely as users without equal protection, representation and opportunities. She emphasised that digital empowerment goes beyond access to mobile phones and the internet to include affordability, digital skills, safety, privacy, economic opportunity and meaningful participation.

She also highlighted growing threats faced by women online, including harassment, cyberstalking, impersonation, threats, blackmail and other forms of technology-facilitated abuse. She warned that online abuse should not be dismissed as "only social media", noting that digital violence can affect women's safety, dignity, livelihoods and participation in public affairs.

Panel discussions identified poor network connectivity, high internet costs, traditional gender norms, cyberbullying, blackmail, fear of speaking, limited awareness of legislation and inadequate implementation of laws as major

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Editorial

From Consultations To Parliamentary Approval: Reflections On Recommendation 78 Of The Tripartite Report. Part Three

We are now on part three. You will recall we stopped at the National Dialogue. And we said that was not an ordinary session nor was it a meeting to discuss construction of market stalls. It was an assembly that would shed light beyond the immediate political milieu. It touched on the political biology of the state - the mechanism for conferring political power for the political governance of the state. Therefore, citizens were interested in the conversations for it touched on their socio-political wellbeing; for it concerned their economic welfare; for it related to the democratic culture of a people who had chosen cohesion over disunity, peace over conflict, and consolidation over disintegration.

The National Dialogue on 17th July 2025 was well attended and graced by a number of dignitaries in both the civil, political, and diplomatic space. It reflected the appetising interest showed by the authorities and the unflinching commitment exhibited by development partners towards the process. Development partners were particularly interested because it surrounded Sierra Leone's democratic culture; it involved a determination Sierra Leoneans would make regarding an electoral system for electing their political leaders; and it was important that the choice came from the people, whose voice should shape the political governance of the state.

The speeches made at the dialogue were inspiring and nationalistic, preparing minds of the participants of the sacred duty they were called to perform on behalf of the state to determine what voting mechanism would define the democracy of the state.

Chief Minister, David Sengoh, said Sierra Leone was at the crossroads, redefining its political, legislative, and electoral history. The country was navigating a path for installing an electoral governance system that would accommodate the highest standards in electoral processes rooted in the aspiration for societal cohesion that would stimulate societal unity in a country that priorities decentralization of development for the enjoyment of its people. The National Dialogue was not just a symbolic exercise, but a serious, inclusive, and transformative national process. He thanked the European Union, International IDEA, and the United Nations for their technical and financial support in advancing the Tripartite Recommendations.

According to Alpha Sesay, Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Recommendation 78 was a testament, affirming that Sierra Leone's electoral system would be chosen

by its people, thereby providing ownership by the public and enhancing credibility of the process. Since 1996 PR and FPTP had been used interchangeably. Globally, some 90 democracies had adopted PR though various forms of it. And the Justice Cowan Constitutional Committee, which conducted some 10,000 consultations, leaned towards a system that would consolidate peace and cohesion after polls. It was important that the dialogue focused on key issues such as inclusivity, increased political participation, accountability, elimination of political instability and violence, and reduction in the cost of elections. The AG said these elements should be discussed before making a choice to be able to prefer an electoral system considered best for the country.

Minister of Information and Civic Education, Chernor Bah, opened a public education on the two electoral systems and said PR was a district-block system where a party list would be submitted on behalf of the district. There were various types of PR. There was the open list and closed list. In the closed list, candidate listed by the political party would be unknown to the public, unlike the open list where the public would vet the list and decide upon their choice of candidates. In the first-past-the-post, constituency would be created and each would vote for a candidate to represent that constituency in parliament. Therefore, it was necessary for the participants to weigh the two systems and decide upon a system that would promote peace, reduce tension, promote inclusiveness, and increase representation in parliament.

It should be understood through the speeches delivered the volume of civic education contained in them, and through the presentations made by the facilitators the amount of learning that could have taken place. That was designed to prepare citizens to articulate the issues and experiences around the two systems and decide upon what was appropriate for the country.

Development partners were also interested in the conversations. For Seraphine Wakana, United Nations Resident Coordinator, the significance of recommendation 78 was that it called for a consensus. As UN they welcomed government to accelerate the

implementation of recommendation 78 pertinent to the governance of the state. She expected that the consultation offered a range of practical proposals and enumerated choices of the electoral system to be used in the country.

Jacek Jankowski, Head of Delegation, European Union, pledged their continued support to Sierra Leone in diverse ways such as the Sierra Leone Democracy Strengthen Programme under which there were various forms of support to the country's governance and electoral processes. Under the said programme, there had been support to the AGs office for drafting electoral legislations as proposed by the Tripartite Report. There had been support to Parliament, CSOs, and SLAJ to support the implementation of the tripartite recommendations.

According to Dr Mamoud Tarawallie, Head of International IDEA, the dialogue session had been designed over a year ago as part of a comprehensive constitutional reform agenda intended not merely to fulfil donor requirements but to promote meaningful and lasting institutional change. The belief was that when legislative and administrative reforms were instituted they fostered change in line with the aspirations of the people. Planning for the national dialogue had been intense, comprehensive, and inclusive.

Readers will now see the long period of consultations on the electoral systems. Over a year ago and across the country, the public had the opportunity to discuss PR and FPTP and took a decision upon which one would solve fundamental problems plaguing elections in Sierra Leone. Concerns that there had been fewer consultations on the subject are untrue in view of the fact that there had been a year plus consultations across the country leading to a national dialogue on electoral systems. Beyond the National Dialogue, there were consultations on reviewing the drafted legislations as proposed by the Tripartite Report and the two constitutional review committees. I therefore entreat you to grab the next edition to read through the findings and recommendations of the consultants on the implementation of recommendation 78 of the Tripartite Report which proposed a National Dialogue for ascertaining the preferred electoral system for Sierra Leone between proportional representation and first-past-the-post. We will also drive into consultations on reviewing the drafted legislations that Parliament had passed a week ago. These reflections are necessary to locate where it started and understand the present electoral climate regarding the Constitutional Amendment Bill 2025 passed by Parliament. See part four.

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Governance & Development

By Bockarie Abdel Aziz Bawoh, Deputy Minister of Information and Civic Education

Whenever prices rise, particularly the prices of rice, fuel, onions, chicken and other basic commodities, the easiest political response is predictable: blame the government. The opposition will naturally exploit rising prices because the pain is real and citizens understandably expect their government to provide solutions. Government itself must accept responsibility for creating the conditions for affordable living. But there is a bigger economic truth we must confront as a nation: no government can permanently subsidise a country out of import dependency. If we consume what other countries produce, international events will continue to determine what Sierra Leoneans pay in our markets. That is the lesson Sierra Leone must learn. The Price of Dependency

For decades, Sierra Leone has depended heavily on imports for commodities that we have the natural capacity to produce ourselves. Rice is perhaps the clearest example. According to the Feed Salone Year Two Report, Sierra Leone spent approximately US\$159 million importing rice in 2024 alone, despite having millions of hectares of arable land, abundant rainfall and a population in which agriculture remains a major source of livelihood. This means that whenever international commodity prices rise, freight costs increase, oil prices escalate or supply chains are disrupted, Sierra Leone imports those problems directly into our markets. The World Bank has already warned of precisely this vulnerability. It reports that inflation in Sierra Leone fell dramatically to 4.3 percent in December 2025, helped partly by stronger domestic food production and lower international prices. But inflation subsequently rose to 8.1 percent in February 2026, with higher fuel costs among the contributing factors. That tells us something important. A country that imports much of what it eats and consumes cannot completely insulate itself from events occurring thousands of kilometres away. Emergency Support Is Necessary, but It Is Not Development

During crises, governments sometimes have no choice but to intervene. They may reduce taxes, subsidise commodities, provide cash transfers, seek donor assistance, negotiate concessional financing or undertake emergency importation. These interventions can save lives and protect vulnerable households. But they are shock absorbers, not engines of development. You cannot run a country permanently on emergency interventions. If government continuously spends scarce foreign exchange importing food, subsidising imported commodities and responding to every international shock, the country remains trapped in dependency. The sustainable answer is to produce more of what we consume. That is why the philosophy behind President Julius Maada Bio's Feed Salone agenda must be understood beyond partisan politics. Feed Salone is fundamentally about shifting Sierra Leone from dependency towards production. Its stated objectives include reducing food imports, increasing agricultural exports, creating employment and building a resilient food system. We Are Already Seeing What Local Production Can Do

The evidence is beginning to emerge. According to the Feed Salone Year Two Report,

Our Greatest Bailout Is Our Own Productive Capacity

between September 2024 and September 2025, the average price of local rice fell from NLe25 to NLe22 per kilogram, while imported rice declined from NLe24 to Nle19. More significantly, the report estimates that Sierra Leone's rice self-sufficiency reached approximately 72 percent in 2024. That is the direction we should accelerate. Every additional bag of rice produced in Tormabum, Gbondapi, Kambia, Port Loko, Bo, Kenema or elsewhere is not merely an agricultural achievement, it is an economic defence mechanism. Every onion grown locally reduces our exposure to imported inflation. Every locally produced egg reduces demand for foreign exchange. Every tonne of locally processed cassava flour, palm oil, cocoa, coffee or cashew strengthens domestic enterprise. And every young Sierra Leonean who enters commercial agriculture becomes part of the country's economic security architecture. Government Cannot Do It Alone

There is another uncomfortable truth.

Government equally has a responsibility to explain what it is doing to reduce the burden on citizens. But our national conversation must mature beyond simply asking: "Why has government not reduced the price?" We must also ask: "Why are we importing something we can produce ourselves?" Why should fertile Sierra Leone remain vulnerable to the price of rice produced thousands of kilometres away? Why should international shipping costs determine whether a family in Kpuwabu can afford its basic meal? Why should geopolitical conflicts elsewhere determine the price of commodities that Sierra Leone possesses the land, water and labour to produce? Those are bigger questions than party politics. Our Greatest Bailout Is Our Own Productive Capacity

Development partners will remain important. International assistance will remain important. Emergency support will sometimes be necessary. But assistance should strengthen our capacity, not

According to the Feed Salone Year Two Report, Sierra Leone spent approximately US\$159 million importing rice in 2024 alone, despite having millions of hectares of arable land, abundant rainfall and a population in which agriculture remains a major source of livelihood.

Food sovereignty cannot be achieved by the Ministry of Agriculture alone. Government can provide tractors, irrigation, improved seeds, agricultural finance, feeder roads, storage facilities and policy incentives. Indeed, Feed Salone identifies mechanisation and irrigation, seeds and inputs, processing and marketing, agricultural finance, technology and the empowerment of women and youth as its six strategic pillars. But ultimately, Sierra Leoneans must produce. The private sector must invest. Banks must begin to see agriculture as business. Young people must begin to see farming, processing, transportation, storage and agricultural technology as opportunities for wealth creation rather than occupations of last resort. Government institutions themselves should increasingly procure locally produced food wherever quality and supply permit. Feed Salone already envisages institutional purchasing for schools, the military, police and correctional institutions as a mechanism for creating reliable markets for Sierra Leonean farmers. That is how an agricultural economy develops: produce locally, process locally, buy locally and eventually export competitively. From Political Argument to National Responsibility

The opposition has every democratic right to question government whenever prices increase.

replace it. The ultimate protection against imported inflation is domestic production. The ultimate protection against food insecurity is food sovereignty. And the ultimate protection against dependency is national productivity. Sierra Leone is blessed with fertile land, abundant rainfall, rivers, fisheries, a youthful population and enormous agricultural potential. Our long-term solution therefore cannot simply be finding more money to import what others produce. It must be producing more ourselves. The question should no longer simply be how government can cushion the next international shock. The bigger question is: How do we build a Sierra Leone strong enough to withstand it? That is why Feed Salone should ultimately be bigger than President Bio, bigger than the SLPP and bigger than electoral politics. It should become a national philosophy. Because countries that cannot produce what they fundamentally need will always remain vulnerable to those who can. We cannot control every global crisis. But we can control how vulnerable we are when the next one comes. And that begins by harnessing the strength within.

Focus On Peace Building

The Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion (ICPNC) has begun efforts to revive and strengthen its network of Peace Mediators in the Western Area Urban and Western Area Rural Districts, with a focus on improving community-level conflict prevention, mediation and



response. The initiative brought Peace Mediators and key community stakeholders together on 4 August 2026 at the ICPNC Board Room in Freetown for an engagement aimed at reconnecting local peace actors, assessing emerging peace and conflict concerns and strengthening their capacity to respond to disputes within their communities.

The Peace Mediators are drawn from a broad range of community structures, including civil society organisations, religious and traditional leaders, women and youth groups and other local stakeholders. Their role is to help identify tensions at an early stage, facilitate dialogue among conflicting parties and support peaceful solutions before disputes escalate.

The reactivation of the mediators comes three years after the network received specialised training ahead of the 2023 General Elections, with support from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC). The training was designed to strengthen the capacity of Peace Monitors and Mediators to support peaceful and democratic elections before, during and after the electoral period.

Since that training, however, the Peace Mediators have not been meeting regularly to review developments in their communities or address emerging mediation challenges. Changes in community structures, the relocation or loss of some mediators and the emergence of new peace and conflict concerns have created the need to update and strengthen the network.

The ICPNC is therefore seeking to develop an updated list of Peace Mediators while equipping them with the skills and knowledge required to respond effectively to current challenges.

The initiative is also informed by gaps identified in the Commission's 2024 Organisational Development Assessment, particularly in relation to strengthening local peace infrastructure.

The latest engagement is intended to address some of these gaps by reconnecting community peace actors with the Commission and strengthening the mechanisms through which communities can prevent and resolve conflicts.

Speaking to the importance of the initiative, ICPNC officials noted that local peace actors are often best placed to understand the dynamics of conflicts within their communities. Their proximity to community members allows them to identify tensions, facilitate communication and support early interventions before



ICPNC Moves to Revive Community Peace Mediation Network in Western Area

disagreements develop into larger conflicts. The Commission's approach recognises that conflicts differ from one community to another and therefore require responses that take account of local realities. Strengthening local mediation structures allows communities to play a more active role in addressing the issues that affect them while creating stronger links between community actors and formal peacebuilding institutions. The engagement also provides an opportunity for Peace Mediators to identify concerns affecting their communities and make recommendations on how the Commission and other stakeholders can better support local conflict prevention and resolution efforts. The capacity-building process is expected to reinforce their understanding of conflict resolution and management, including the policies, procedures and frameworks that guide the work of the ICPNC. It will also provide space for mediators to share



experiences, examine the nature of conflicts affecting their communities and consider appropriate approaches to mediation.

The initiative places particular emphasis on developing mediators who are impartial, capable and sensitive to the realities of the communities they serve. This is important in ensuring that mediation processes are trusted by the parties involved and that disputes are addressed through dialogue rather than confrontation.

Women, youth, traditional authorities, district councils, security agencies and civil society organisations are also important to the process, given their roles in community governance, conflict prevention and social cohesion.

For the ICPNC, strengthening Peace Mediators is part of a wider effort to build a stronger national peace infrastructure in which communities are not only recipients of peacebuilding interventions but active participants in preventing and resolving conflicts.

Peace Mediators are expected to contribute to addressing the root causes of conflict, facilitating dialogue and reconciliation, supporting referrals where necessary and strengthening community resilience.

Their work also supports broader national and international peacebuilding priorities, including the Women, Peace and Security agenda, which recognises the importance of women's participation in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and decision-making.

The Western Area initiative is expected to provide lessons that can inform similar interventions in other parts of the country. By strengthening existing community networks and building the capacity of local actors, the ICPNC hopes to create more responsive mechanisms for addressing conflict before it threatens wider peace and social cohesion.

The initiative reflects the Commission's broader mandate to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts and promote peace and national cohesion in Sierra Leone.

For communities, the message is clear: peacebuilding cannot depend solely on institutions at the national level. It must also be sustained by trusted individuals and structures within communities who understand local concerns, can bring people together and are prepared to intervene when tensions begin to emerge.

Through the reactivation and strengthening of its Peace Mediators, the ICPNC is seeking to ensure that those community-level mechanisms remain active, connected and better prepared to contribute to lasting peace in Sierra Leone.

Spotlight On Health Care

Sierra Leone Reaches 79% of Zero-Dose Children in Major Immunisation Drive

“No child should be left behind simply because they live in a hard-to-reach community or have not yet been connected to the health system.”

This message is at the heart of Sierra Leone's Ministry of Health ongoing efforts to reach children who have never received a routine vaccine, as the country records 79 per cent achievement of its national zero-dose target under the Government's 300 Days of Activism for Triple Zero.

Of the national target of 9,006 zero-dose children, 7,117 have been reached and vaccinated, leaving 1,889 children still to be identified and protected. The achievement marks significant progress in the country's efforts to ensure that every child has access to essential and life-saving immunisation services.

The 300 Days of Activism, launched in March 2026, places zero-dose children alongside the prevention of maternal and child deaths at the centre of a national effort to strengthen healthcare delivery. The campaign is focused on identifying gaps in service delivery and ensuring that children and families who have traditionally been missed by routine health services are reached.

Community Mobilisation Driving the Gains

A major factor behind the progress has been the increased use of community structures to identify and reach children who are not accessing routine immunisation services.

District social mobilisation coordinators, community health workers, paramount chiefs, religious leaders, women's groups, local councils, youth leaders and other trusted community actors have been mobilised to identify missed children and encourage caregivers to ensure that their children receive the vaccines they need.

The approach represents a shift from relying primarily on caregivers to bring children to health facilities towards actively going into communities to find those who have been missed.

This strategy is particularly important for children living in remote and hard-to-reach settlements, where distance, limited information and other barriers can prevent families from accessing routine immunisation services.

Sierra Leone has previously demonstrated the impact of community-based vaccination. During the 2024 nationwide measles and rubella campaign, the country achieved 99 per cent administrative coverage and identified and vaccinated more than 16,000 previously zero-dose children, according to the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa.

Bombali Demonstrates the Power of Local Engagement

Bombali District is providing a strong example of how community mobilisation can support the zero-dose agenda.

Through its Health Education Unit and Risk

Communication and Community Engagement pillar, the District Health Management Team convened stakeholder engagements across six low-performing chiefdoms and localities: Bombali Shebora Rural, Gbanti, Gbendembu, Kamaranka, Mara and Makeni City.

The engagements brought together traditional and religious leaders, youth and women leaders, commercial motorbike riders and caregivers to discuss the importance of vaccination, completion of immunisation schedules, and the need to address rumours and misconceptions that can discourage vaccine uptake.

Community stakeholders subsequently committed to supporting fixed and outreach vaccination sessions, helping health teams address vaccine refusals and strengthening community-level efforts to encourage caregivers to comply with recommended immunisation schedules.

Similar engagements have since been undertaken across districts, reinforcing the role of communities as critical partners in the national effort to find children who remain outside the

Three districts: Falaba, Karene and Western Area Rural have already vaccinated more zero-dose children than their original targets, exceeding them by 464, 262 and 141 children, respectively.

While surpassing the targets demonstrates strong outreach and community mobilisation, the figures also require careful validation to ensure the accuracy of reported coverage.

The higher numbers could be linked to population movement, children coming from neighbouring catchment areas, previously unmapped settlements or underestimated population denominators.

Health authorities will therefore need to validate the denominators and microplans in these districts to ensure that reported coverage accurately reflects the population reached.

Beyond the 79 Per Cent Milestone

For the Ministry of Health, the zero-dose agenda is about much more than reaching a numerical target. The ultimate goal is to ensure that every child, in every settlement, is found, vaccinated and supported to complete the recommended

Through its Health Education Unit and Risk Communication and Community Engagement pillar, the District Health Management Team convened stakeholder engagements across six low-performing chiefdoms and localities: Bombali Shebora Rural, Gbanti, Gbendembu, Kamaranka, Mara and Makeni City.

routine immunisation system.

1,889 Children Still to Be Reached

Despite the encouraging progress, the Ministry of Health faces the challenge of reaching the remaining 1,889 zero-dose children.

Many of these children are expected to live in hard-to-reach settlements where routine facility-based services have historically struggled to maintain regular contact with families.

The next phase of the campaign will therefore require intensified outreach, detailed microplanning and community-level tracking to locate and vaccinate every remaining zero-dose child.

The Ministry must also ensure that children who have received their first vaccine doses return for subsequent doses. Reaching a child once is only the beginning; ensuring completion of the recommended immunisation schedule is essential to providing full protection and preventing children from becoming immunisation dropouts.

Three Districts Exceed Zero-Dose Targets

immunisation schedule.

The progress achieved so far demonstrates what can be accomplished when the health system sets a clear target, identifies the children being missed and works through trusted community structures to reach them.

Sierra Leone's broader immunisation performance also reflects the country's continued efforts to strengthen routine vaccination. The country recorded more than 90 per cent coverage for the third dose of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine in 2025, an important indicator of the health system's ability to consistently reach children with vaccines.

As the 300 Days of Activism continues, the focus is now firmly on reaching the remaining 1,889 zero-dose children, completing vaccination schedules and sustaining the gains made through stronger community engagement.

The campaign's message remains clear: no child should be left behind because of where they live, the barriers their family faces, or because they have not yet been connected to the health system.



Government Of Sierra Leone Presidential Address Delivered By His Excellency Dr. Julius Maada Bio G.C.R.S.L
 President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces

On the Occasion of the State Opening of the Fourth Session of the Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic of
 Sierra Leone In the Chamber of Parliament Building Tower Hill, Freetown On Friday, 7th August 2026 At 10:00 a.m.

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192. Digital systems support registration of over 18,000 nurses and midwives, disease surveillance, energy management, EDSA fault reporting, and new personnel and pension systems for the Sierra Leone Armed Forces and the Police. This makes records easier to verify and services faster.

193. We will integrate databases, expand secure online services and extend electronic payments, reducing delays, cash handling and revenue leakage.

194. Cybersecurity, privacy, data protection and skills will remain central.

195. Our objective is public services that are faster, safer, more transparent and easier for every citizen to access.

B. NATIONAL POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members,

196. As we modernise public services, Government must also have accurate and reliable information about the people and communities it serves.

197. With support from the United Nations Population Fund and other Development Partners, the Government has launched the 2026 Population and Housing Census, the Medium-Term National Development Plan Dashboard and the Power of Data Initiative.

198. The main census, scheduled for December 2026, joins the global 2030 Round of Population and Housing Censuses. It will show where people live and what they need, guiding schools, clinics, water and other services.

199. This national exercise must be credible, inclusive, transparent and professionally conducted.

200. I urge every citizen to participate and all political, traditional, religious and civic leaders and the media to promote public understanding, counter misinformation and safeguard the integrity of the process.

201. Reliable national data will improve planning, fair resource allocation and measurement of development in every community.

C. ANTI-CORRUPTION AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members,

202. Corruption deprives schools, hospitals, roads and essential services of vital resources. It also erodes public trust and increases the cost of doing business.

203. We are reviewing the Public Financial Management (PFM), Public Debt Management and Public Procurement Acts to strengthen discipline and value for money.

204. We are preparing the Electronic Government Procurement System; we have rolled out digital audit-follow-up software across Government and deployed PFM Smart to all twenty-one Local Councils.

205. Every Leone protected from waste or theft can serve a classroom, clinic, road or community. No office, status or political affiliation will shield anyone from

lawful scrutiny.

D. LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECENTRALISATION AND TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members,

206. Local government is where most citizens directly experience the State.

207. My Government will deepen decentralisation by devolving greater responsibilities with corresponding resources, strengthening local revenue mobilisation and improving coordination with the central Government.

208. Local councils must manage public resources transparently and deliver measurable improvements in roads, markets, water supply and sanitation, healthcare, education and other essential services.

209. Paramount Chiefs and traditional authorities remain indispensable to community leadership, peacebuilding and social cohesion. As custodians of tradition, they understand their communities and hold a distinct place in our system of governance.

210. We will strengthen cooperation with Paramount Chiefs on local development, land and community disputes, public safety and service delivery, while preserving the respective roles of councils and traditional authorities.

211. Traditional leaders must remain accessible, impartial and responsive to their people.

212. Following extensive consultations, I have established a Technical Committee, led by the Honourable Vice President, to examine the proposal to increase Paramount Chief representation in Parliament from one to two representatives per district.

213. The Committee will undertake inclusive consultations and evidence-based technical work before submitting recommendations consistent with our Constitution and laws.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members,

214. Decentralisation succeeds when institutions cooperate, resources are responsibly managed, and citizens experience tangible improvements.

215. The same principles must guide the management of our natural wealth. Petroleum, minerals and tourism must deliver fair and lasting benefits to communities and the nation.

IX. EXTRACTIVES SECTOR

A. UPSTREAM AND MIDSTREAM PETROLEUM SECTOR

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members,

216. Sierra Leone may be approaching an important new economic chapter in oil and gas. While the prospects are encouraging, only drilling can confirm a commercial discovery.

217. F.A. Oil Limited completed a three-dimensional seismic survey valued at approximately USD 30 million at no cost to the Government. The data are now being processed and interpreted to strengthen our understanding of the offshore basin and inform investors.

218. Subject to favourable results, regulatory approval and a final investment decision, Sierra Leone could witness its first offshore exploration well since 2012.

219. Global energy companies Eni and Shell have also acquired Reconnaissance Permits to assess the basin's potential, reinforcing Sierra Leone's position as a frontier exploration destination.

220. The Government has concluded negotiations with Marginal Energy Limited on a Petroleum Licence Agreement providing for a minimum investment of USD 225 million over seven years.

221. Subject to Parliamentary approval, it will promote local content, skills development, technology transfer and opportunities for Sierra Leoneans.

222. We are also reprocessing seismic data, modernising the National Petroleum Data Repository and reviewing the legal framework to support transparent and responsible investment.

223. The Sierra Leone National Petroleum Company Limited will serve as the State's commercial arm, enabling national participation across the petroleum value chain and creating opportunities for Sierra Leonean businesses and professionals.

224. Sierra Leone signed the Intergovernmental Agreement for the African Atlantic Gas Pipeline at the ECOWAS Summit in Lungi on 19th July 2026, building on the 2022 Memorandum of Understanding.

225. The proposed USD 26 billion, 6,800-kilometre pipeline would link Nigeria and Morocco through Atlantic coastal states, advancing regional integration, investment and energy security.

226. All petroleum activities will remain subject to rigorous oversight. Any discovery must deliver lasting value to the State, develop Sierra Leonean skills and enterprises, and support our long-term national development.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

227. Petroleum holds significant promise for the future. Mining, however, concerns the mineral wealth already being extracted from our soil.

B. MINING SECTOR

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

228. Sierra Leone's mineral wealth must deliver lasting prosperity for our people. Mining remains our largest source of foreign exchange and a major contributor to revenue, employment and economic stability.

229. Mineral exports reached USD 1.3 billion in 2025 - an increase of 16 per cent over 2024 and 44 per cent over 2023. The sector generated USD 55.8 million in non-tax revenue and supported 15,543 formal jobs, more than 92 per cent of them held by Sierra Leoneans.

230. In the first half of 2026, mineral exports declined by 8.2 per cent to USD 651.7 million, mainly due to lower exports of mineral sands and diamonds.

231. Yet non-tax revenue increased by 21.3 per cent to USD 30.2 million, royalties rose by 17.3 per cent, and formal employment grew by 10.3 per cent to 17,140 jobs.

To be continued next edition

Planning Minister Calls for Stronger Policy Coherence to Accelerate Sierra Leone's Development



The Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Hon. Kenyeh Barlay, has called for stronger policy coherence across Government, emphasising that effective coordination is critical to delivering Sierra Leone's national development priorities and maximising the impact of limited resources. She made this call today 20th August, 2026 at the National Symposium on Strengthening Policy Coherence for Governance Effectiveness in Sierra Leone's Public Sector, being held from 20-21 August 2026 at the Foreign Service Academy, Tower Hill, Freetown.

The two-day symposium, convened by the Office of the Principal Executive Adviser to the President on the Public Service and the Public Sector Reform Unit, is aimed at strengthening understanding of policy coherence, identifying gaps and overlaps in the national policy landscape, and promoting more consistent approaches to policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and accountability.

In her statement, Minister Barlay stressed that the success of the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) depends on Government institutions and development actors working towards common national priorities. She noted that better alignment between policies, plans, budgets, investments and implementation systems would help reduce duplication, improve efficiency and strengthen public service delivery.

She further linked policy coherence to development financing, noting that at a time of limited fiscal space, Sierra Leone must ensure that existing resources are used more efficiently. "Policy coherence is not an administrative luxury. It is a development imperative, a governance imperative, and increasingly, a financing imperative," she added.

She also highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen the connection between national development planning, public investment and budgeting, while calling for a whole-of-government approach to policy coordination. She further stressed that achieving policy coherence requires collective responsibility across Government and the wider development community.

Delivering the keynote address, Vice

President Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh underscored the importance of policy coherence in strengthening the effectiveness of Government and improving public-sector performance.

He emphasised the need for Government institutions to work in a coordinated manner, with national policies and programmes aligned to the country's development priorities and focused on delivering tangible results for citizens.

He further highlighted the importance of strengthening institutional coordination and ensuring that policy decisions translate into effective implementation. He encouraged stakeholders participating in the symposium to use the platform to identify practical solutions to policy fragmentation and strengthen a more coordinated approach to governance and national development.

Presenting on the National Policy Landscape, the Development Secretary Mr. Ambrose James said the session was important in helping stakeholders understand the current policy environment and identify areas requiring greater coordination.

He added that the review examined key national public-sector policies, institutional mandates and areas of overlap, as well as gaps and fragmentation that can affect effective policy implementation. The session also looked at opportunities for improving alignment across Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

He further added that effective policy coherence requires institutions to work within clear mandates while maintaining strong connections with other parts of the public-sector system.

He noted that fragmentation can occur where policies, plans, budgets, programmes and projects are not adequately aligned.

He further said the MTNDP should serve as the organising framework for national prioritisation, sequencing and results, with major policies demonstrating clear links to national development outcomes, financing and measurable delivery.

Mr. James also highlighted the importance of stronger coordination between national and local levels, noting that policy coherence requires both horizontal alignment among institutions and vertical alignment across different levels of

Government.

He said strengthening policy coordination should not result in additional layers of bureaucracy, but should instead create clearer interfaces between institutions, shared outcomes and better-aligned decisions.

The Development Secretary's presentation set the stage for further technical discussions on how Sierra Leone can address policy overlaps, gaps and coordination challenges while improving the overall effectiveness of public-sector delivery. The symposium is also providing participants with practical approaches to strengthening policy development. Sessions are focusing on the development of a standard policy framework, policy development

guidelines, monitoring and evaluation tools, and mechanisms for improving implementation, reporting and accountability across MDAs.

Participants are also expected to engage in breakout sessions examining how MDA policies can be better aligned with the MTNDP, how policy overlaps and gaps can be addressed, and how monitoring and evaluation can be strengthened to improve implementation.

The symposium is expected to contribute to broader efforts to strengthen coordination across Government and support a more coherent policy system capable of translating national priorities into effective programmes, investments and improved development outcomes.

MoPED Communications

Chef Kumba Mary Sinah To Represent Sierra Leone In Guinness World Record Culinary Marathon

Renowned Chef Kumba Mary Sinah, CEO of My Food by Kumzea and celebrated Reality TV Personality, will proudly represent Sierra Leone in the upcoming "Cooking Beyond Limits: Guinness World Record Culinary Marathon" scheduled for 5th - 11th November 2026. With strong support from the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs (MTCA), Chef Kumba's participation seeks to tell Sierra Leone's story through food, uniting communities through culture and positioning the nation firmly on the global culinary map.

This marathon marks one of the first globally recognised

culinary endurance attempts by Sierra Leone, showcasing the country's resilience, creativity, and rich gastronomic heritage. Chef Kumba's journey is expected to inspire pride at home and admiration abroad, as she demonstrates the power of food to



connect people and cultures.

The MTCA has called for partnership support to enhance this laudable venture, urging stakeholders, businesses, and the diaspora to rally behind Chef Kumba Mary Sinah as she carries Sierra Leone's culinary identity to the world stage.

Calls Grow For Protection Of Women's Digital Rights

barriers. Participants cited the Cyber Security and Crime Act and the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act as important developments in strengthening the legal framework.

Participants called for laws on women's digital rights to be simplified and popularised, particularly at grassroots level, while urging victims of violations to formally report cases to the appropriate institutions.

The forum concluded with calls for

stronger documentation of women's experiences, improved digital literacy, greater public awareness, data protection and stronger partnerships among Government, regulators, civil society and communities.

The discussions reaffirmed that Sierra Leone's digital transformation will only be truly inclusive when women have the access, knowledge, protection, equality and confidence required to participate fully and safely online.



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Policy & The People

Who Is Responsible When a Policy Involves Several Institutions?

By Alice A. Kamara Esq.

A policy may begin with one problem, but solving that problem may require the work of several institutions. Consider something as ordinary as a public sign or billboard. It may involve information and advertising, road safety, the use of public space, local government authority, planning and enforcement. Each institution may have a legitimate responsibility, but where does one mandate end and another begin?

This is where one of the less visible challenges of public policy begins: Who is actually responsible?

In government, many national issues do not fall neatly within the responsibility of one Ministry, Department or Agency. Health, education, employment, the environment, digital governance and public infrastructure can all require several institutions to work together. That is not necessarily a problem.

In fact, coordination is often essential to good policy. The difficulty arises when the responsibilities of those institutions are not clearly understood.

Two institutions may believe they have the same responsibility. Another may assume that a matter belongs entirely to someone else. An institution with the primary mandate may hesitate to act because another agency has become involved. At the same time, an important part of implementation may fall between the gaps.

The result can be duplication on one hand and inaction on the other. For citizens, the distinction may seem simple: if Government has a policy or law addressing a problem, someone should be responsible for making it work.

But effective implementation requires more than assigning a name to a lead institution.

There must be clarity about who formulates the policy, who provides technical support, who finances it, who implements it, who regulates it and, where necessary, who enforces it.

These roles do not always have to belong to the same institution. What matters is that they are clearly defined and that the institutions involved understand how their responsibilities fit together.

This becomes particularly important where a policy cuts across different sectors.

One institution may have the primary mandate, while several others have supporting responsibilities. The solution, therefore, should not necessarily be about determining who owns the policy, but about determining who does what.

Good policy coordination should make those boundaries clearer, not blur them.

It should also create mechanisms for institutions to communicate, resolve overlaps and remain accountable for the responsibilities assigned to them.

Ultimately, Government does not work through institutions operating in isolation. The effectiveness of a policy often depends on how well those institutions work together.

Because when responsibilities are clear, institutions can act with confidence.

When they are unclear, even a well-designed policy can struggle to deliver its intended results.

A policy may belong to Government as a whole. But someone must know who is responsible for making it work.

Ministry of Finance
Continues Consultations on
Proposed Public Financial
Management Act, 2026



The Ministry of Finance on Friday, 14th August 2026, continued its consultative engagements on the proposed Public Financial Management (PFM) Act, 2026, with Permanent Secretaries of Ministries, Heads or representatives of Departments and Agencies, Chief Administrators of Local Councils, Heads of State-Owned Enterprises and representatives of Civil Society Organizations. The engagement, held at the Miatta Conference Centre in Brookfields, Freetown, forms part of a broader consultation process aimed at gathering stakeholder views and practical inputs to strengthen the proposed legislation. An earlier stakeholder consultation had also been held as part of the process.

In his opening remarks, Financial Secretary Matthew Dingie explained that the proposed legislation seeks to provide a stronger legal framework for managing public finances, generating resources and expanding the country's resource base. He noted that the review of the 2016 Public Financial Management Act is intended to address existing gaps, strengthen transparency and accountability, and introduce a modern framework that can respond to the evolving needs of public financial management. He further noted that the consultation process is also part of requirements associated with World Bank support to Sierra Leone, particularly in facilitating the disbursement of resources aimed at improving critical areas of national development.

Mr. Dingie emphasized the important role of Ministers and Vote Controllers in the implementation of the national budget, noting that the proposed legislation seeks to address issues including the effective implementation of Audit recommendations, which he said were not adequately provided for under the existing 2016 Act. He encouraged participants to carefully review the draft and freely share their views and experiences to ensure that the proposed law is practical and responsive to institutional realities. In her keynote statement, Acting Minister of Finance Kadiatu Allie welcomed participants and underscored the need for stronger legislation to improve accountability, transparency and fiscal discipline in the management of public resources. She noted that years of implementation and experience had highlighted areas requiring strengthening, particularly as the country seeks to improve fiscal sustainability and embrace digitalization in public financial management. Madam Allie highlighted key reforms under the proposed PFM Act, 2026, including strengthened Medium-Term Fiscal Planning, a more comprehensive public investment management framework, enhanced commitment controls and increased oversight of State-Owned Enterprises. She also noted provisions providing a legal foundation for Climate Finance and Carbon Revenue, as well as the recognition of digital financial management systems and electronic payments, alongside stronger consideration of the fiscal impact of legislation and policy proposals.

She encouraged participants to test the proposed provisions against operational realities, institutional mandates, existing legal frameworks, implementation capacity and the practical challenges faced by Vote Controllers and other PFM practitioners. The Ministry's Legal Team subsequently presented the proposed amendments to the 2016 PFM Act through a PowerPoint presentation, followed by questions, discussions and clarifications from participants. The consultation is expected to contribute to further refinement of the proposed legislation before its consideration through the appropriate legislative process.

MOF Communications

Foreign Mission In Focus

The Executive Director of the Sierra Leone Foreign Service Academy, Soulay B. Daramy, has urged Liberia to use its history of peacebuilding and democratic transition to strengthen its leadership on the United Nations Security Council when it assumes the Council's presidency in December 2026. Speaking at the Foreign Service Institute of Liberia, Daramy said Liberia's election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for 2026-2027, with 181 of 187 votes, reflects growing international confidence in the country. He described the return, more than 60 years after Liberia's first term in 1961, as an important opportunity for the country to move from its history as a post-conflict state to a contributor to global peace and security. Drawing on Sierra Leone's experience, which held the Council presidency in August 2024 and November 2025, Daramy said Liberia should focus on a few strategic issues rather than attempt to address every global challenge. He identified Women, Peace and Security and Early Warning and Preventive Diplomacy as areas where Liberia could make a distinctive contribution. Ambassador Daramy cautioned that the presidency will come with challenges, including divisions among the permanent members, pressure from powerful states and the technical demands of Council proceedings. He stressed the importance of diplomatic neutrality, strong preparation and close coordination between Liberia's Permanent Mission in New York, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and national leadership. He also urged Liberia to turn its post-conflict experience into diplomatic capital, noting the country's journey from civil war to peacebuilding and democratic governance. "Countries that have experienced war understand the value of peace differently from countries that have only studied war," he said,

Sierra Leone Foreign Service Academy Director Urges Liberia To Leverage Peacebuilding Experience At UN Security Council

arguing that Liberia can bring valuable lived experience to international efforts to prevent future conflicts. Ambassador Daramy concluded that small states can exercise significant diplomatic influence without veto power if they combine focus, preparation and credibility. He encouraged Liberia to develop its own diplomatic identity while learning from Sierra Leone's experience, describing the Security Council presidency as an opportunity to convene, build bridges and place African priorities at the centre of global peace and security discussions. Mamawa S. Richards, Information Attachè, Sierra Leone Embassy, Monrovia, Liberia



Sierra Leone Strengthens Its Leadership in Africa's Digital Health and Data Transformation



Minister of Health, Dr. Austin Demby, PhD, MPH, is in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, representing Sierra Leone at the inaugural Board Meeting of the Health Intelligence Centres for Africa (HICA). As a proud founding member, Sierra Leone is contributing to continental efforts to strengthen health intelligence, digital transformation and evidence-based decision-making across Africa. HICA is a continental initiative aimed at supporting African countries with reliable health data, digital tools and evidence to guide policy, strengthen service delivery and enable timely responses to public health emergencies. The initiative aligns closely with Sierra Leone's ongoing efforts to transform its health information systems and strengthen the use of data in decision-making. Joining Minister Demby in Addis Ababa is Dr. Joseph David Koroma, Head of Sierra Leone's Health Information Hub in Freetown. The Hub is supporting the transition from

paper-based systems to real-time digital dashboards, enabling decision-makers to monitor maternal and child health indicators, disease trends and other critical health information while strengthening timely planning and response at district level. As a founding member of HICA, Sierra Leone is contributing to discussions around country ownership of health data, data sovereignty, ethical governance and the responsible use of digital technologies. The country's participation reflects its growing commitment to building a resilient, data-driven and technology-enabled health system. Following the HICA Board Meeting, Minister Demby will represent Sierra Leone at the 76th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa (Rc76), where African countries will deliberate on key health priorities, policies and investments. Sierra Leone will use these platforms to advance its national health priorities, strengthen strategic partnerships and advocate for resilient, equitable and technology-led health systems across the continent.

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Inside Parliament

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Parliamentary Tourism Committee Calls for Stronger Investment in Sierra Leone's Cultural Heritage

The Parliamentary Committee on Tourism and Cultural Affairs has called for increased investment, stronger institutional support and improved legislation to preserve and promote Sierra Leone's museums, monuments, relics and cultural heritage.

The call was made during the Committee's engagement with the Monuments and Relics Commission, Sierra Leone National Museum and Sierra Leone National Railway Museum at the Speaker's Conference Room Parliament Building to review their activities, achievements, challenges and future plans.

Deputy Chairman of the Committee, Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara, said the engagement was aimed at understanding the challenges confronting heritage institutions and identifying areas where Parliament could intervene. He encouraged the institutions to be transparent about their operational difficulties and assured them of the Committee's support.

The Monuments and Relics Commission highlighted its efforts to promote heritage education through Heritage School Clubs involving about 25-30 schools, while introducing young people to traditional games and cultural activities. The Commission also reported progress in the maintenance and rehabilitation of heritage sites, including the Museum Heritage Tower, Writer's Stone and King's Yard, as well as substantial completion of rehabilitation works at the National Museum following the 2024 fire. However, the Commission cited outdated legislation, the absence of a substantive Board for about six years, inadequate staffing, limited vehicles and motorcycles, low staff remuneration and delays in receiving its Management and Functional Review report as major challenges. The National Museum also reported progress in conservation, documentation, exhibitions, educational visits and collaboration with schools and communities. However, it faces inadequate funding, ageing infrastructure, limited exhibition and storage space, insufficient conservation equipment, shortage of trained professionals, security concerns and limited outreach beyond Freetown.



The Museum plans to digitize its collections, establish a National Digital Artefact Database, introduce a nationwide Mobile Museum Outreach Programme, improve conservation facilities and expand heritage education and domestic tourism.

Meanwhile, the National Railway Museum outlined its achievements in preserving important railway assets, including the historic 1897 steam locomotive, diesel locomotive and former Governor's and Queen's Coaches. The Museum has also established Railway Heritage Clubs in about 25 schools.

Despite these efforts, it continues to face challenges including poor accessibility, dust and heavy traffic, termite damage, pigeon infestation, inadequate maintenance resources and limited specialized training. The Committee Chairman, Honourable Tom Tucker, commended the institutions for their presentations and emphasized the importance of protecting Sierra Leone's cultural and historical assets for future generations. He called for stronger collaboration with universities, international organizations, development partners and investors. Honourable Tucker also stressed the need for proper planning, accountability and documentation, including annual work plans, financial statements, procurement records, project documents and monitoring reports. The Committee assured the institutions that issues relating to inadequate staffing, logistics, remuneration and other operational constraints would be raised with the relevant authorities. The engagement ended with a commitment to strengthen cooperation between Parliament and heritage institutions, including through further engagements and site visits, to ensure that Sierra Leone's rich cultural and historical heritage is preserved, promoted and developed for future generations.

Hon. Ishmael Sankoh Yillah Engages Lokomasama Stakeholders Ahead of New Boys' Senior Secondary School Opening



Honourable Ishmael Sankoh Yillah has engaged stakeholders in Lokomasama Chiefdom, Port Loko District, ahead of the official opening of the newly constructed Lokomasama Boys' Senior Secondary School in Komrabai Town.

The stakeholder engagement, held on Sunday, 16 August 2026, was aimed at mobilising community support for the new institution and strengthening local participation in the Government's Free Quality School Education Programme under the leadership of President Julius Maada Bio.

Addressing stakeholders, Hon. Yillah emphasised the importance of education as a foundation for individual success and national development. He called on parents, community leaders and other stakeholders to work collectively to ensure the sustainability and success of the school.

The Chairman of the Conference of Principals in Port Loko, Abdul Karim Sesay, commended the Government and Hon. Yillah for their contribution to advancing education in the district. He assured the delegation of the continued cooperation of school authorities in promoting quality education.

The Commissioner for Lands in Port Loko, Madam Rugiatu Kemoh Dumbuya, also expressed appreciation for the development and appealed

to Hon. Yillah and the Government to consider the construction of a girls' secondary school to complement the boys' institution.

Madam Dumbuya further encouraged communities to make land available for development projects, stressing that land can serve as an important resource for attracting public infrastructure and improving the lives of local residents.

For his part, Paramount Chief Bai Maroo Raka III of Lokomasama Chiefdom expressed delight over the establishment of the school, describing it as a major opportunity for young people in the chiefdom.

He thanked the Government and Hon. Yillah for bringing the project to Lokomasama and called on community members to contribute to its development and sustainability. He emphasised that the community remains a key stakeholder in ensuring the long-term success of the institution.

The Paramount Chief also urged stakeholders to keep education above political differences, calling on parents to support their children and commending teachers for their dedication and sacrifices in educating the community.

Meanwhile, the Inspector of Schools in Port Loko, Backrie Bangura, commended schools across the district for their performance in the National Primary School Examination (NPSE) and praised teachers for their continued commitment.

He described the establishment of the boys' senior secondary school as a significant milestone for Port Loko District, recognising the efforts of Hon. Ishmael Sankoh Yillah and the Government in making the development possible.

Mr. Bangura also raised concerns about early marriage and teenage pregnancy in the district. He encouraged pupils and community members to report such cases to the relevant authorities to ensure that affected children are protected and given the opportunity to continue their education.

The engagement concluded with stakeholders expressing appreciation for the establishment of the Lokomasama Boys' Senior Secondary School and reaffirming their commitment to working with Hon. Ishmael Sankoh Yillah, the Government and school authorities to ensure the institution becomes a sustainable centre of learning and opportunity for young people in Lokomasama Chiefdom.

300 Days of Activism
for Triple Zero

R dae go
clinic early
Early action
dae save life.

Zero Dae Start Wit Action



Ministry of
Health



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION
AND CIVIC EDUCATION



ENTERTAINMENT

Angelique Kidjo: Africa's Voice Now Immortalized On Hollywood Walk Of Fame

By Marian Magdalene Bangura

From Cotonou to the world stage, Kidjo has blended Afrobeat, jazz, funk, and traditional African rhythms to create a sound that is uniquely hers. With 5 Grammy Awards, countless albums, and collaborations with artists from Carlos Santana to Alicia Keys, she has carried African culture to every corner of the globe. But Angelique is more than music. She's a UNICEF and OXFAM Goodwill Ambassador, a fierce advocate for girls' education through her Batonga Foundation, and a cultural ambassador who has consistently used her platform to tell African stories with pride. This Walk of Fame star is more than an award. It's a message to every young



History has been made. Beninese music legend Angelique Kidjo has been awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in New York City, becoming the first African woman in history to receive the iconic honour. The global recognition cements Kidjo's place not just as one of Africa's greatest musical exports but as a world icon whose voice, activism, and artistry have transcended borders for over 4 decades.

African girl with a dream: Your voice matters. Your culture matters. The world is watching. As tributes pour in from across

the continent, Sierra Leone joins Africa in celebrating this monumental achievement. Angelique Kidjo hasn't just opened doors - she's kicked them down. Congratulations to the Queen of Africa on this well-deserved honor



MRCG Presents SLBC Policy Documents And Reform Proposals

The documents were presented on Thursday, 20 August 2026, as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen Sierra Leone's media landscape and promote a more inclusive, accountable and sustainable broadcasting sector. The package includes proposals for the reform of the SLBC, a draft SLBC policy, reports from nationwide consultations on SLBC reform, a desk study and technical paper on community media, with particular focus on tax incentives, subsidies and waivers for community media institutions. Presenting the documents, MRCG National Coordinator, Dr. Francis Sowa, explained that the proposals were developed following extensive consultations with relevant stakeholders, including government representatives. He said the process was undertaken by three independent consultants under MRCG's ongoing project, "Media Empowerment for Democracy, Inclusion and Accountability (MEDIA)." Dr. Sowa noted that the intervention was informed, among other things, by Recommendation 77 of the Tripartite Report and Recommendation 4 of the National Action Plan for Media Development in Sierra Leone. He stressed that the consultations and technical assessments were intended to ensure that the proposed reforms respond to the realities and needs of Sierra Leone's broadcasting and wider media environment. Also speaking at the ceremony, BBC Media Action Country

Director, Musa Sangari, expressed appreciation to the Ministry of Information and Civic Education for its continued support for media development initiatives and for the work of media development partners in the country. Mr. Sangari described the MEDIA project as a broad-based intervention being implemented by both national and international media development organisations. He said local institutions, including MRCG, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and the Independent Radio Network (IRN), are working alongside international organisations such as the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), with each institution undertaking specific interventions. He emphasised that although BBC Media Action is an international organisation, its staff working on the project are Sierra Leoneans and are therefore committed to ensuring that its interventions remain responsive to the country's needs and consistent with contemporary media development standards. Receiving the documents on behalf of the Government, Deputy Minister of Information and Civic Education, Bockarie Aziz Bawoh, commended MRCG, BBC Media Action and all stakeholders who contributed to the development of the reports. The Deputy Minister assured the delegation that the Government recognises the importance of a vibrant, professional and sustainable media

sector and remains committed to working with media stakeholders to advance media development in Sierra Leone. He cited President Julius Maada Bio's record on media reform, noting that since 2018, the Government has demonstrated its commitment to creating a more conducive environment for the media, including the repeal of Part V of the Public Order Act of 1965 and increased government subvention to SLAJ over the years. Deputy Minister Bawoh assured the MRCG team that the Ministry's Legal and Policy Unit would carefully assess the submitted reports and proposals. He said the necessary steps would subsequently

be taken to advance the SLBC reform proposals to the Law Officers' Department for the required legal consideration and eventual enactment. He further assured stakeholders that the recommendations concerning community media would also be examined with a view to facilitating their full implementation. The presentation marks another significant step in the ongoing national conversation on the future of public broadcasting and community media in Sierra Leone, with stakeholders now looking towards translating the recommendations into concrete policy, legislative and institutional reforms.

Information Minister Calls for Stronger Africa-China Media Partnership at 7th Audiovisual Forum

Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Radio, Television and Audiovisual Services, held in China under the theme, "Share Development Opportunities, Shape the Audiovisual Future" on the 20th August 2026. Addressing Ministers, government representatives and stakeholders from across Africa and China, Minister Chernor Bah described the theme as timely, noting that the future of media and audiovisual communication would be shaped not only by technological advancement but also by the quality of communication, the strength of media institutions, the responsible use of emerging technologies and the ability of Africans to tell their own stories. Minister Bah further said, Sierra Leone considers access to credible information an important component of national development, particularly under His Excellency President Dr Julius Maada Bio's human capital development agenda. He explained that the transformation of the former Ministry of Information into the Ministry of Information and Civic Education reflects the Government's recognition that citizens require not only information, but also the knowledge and civic awareness needed to participate meaningfully in national development. According to Minister Bah, strong, professional and trusted media institutions are essential for creating informed citizens, promoting accountable governance and supporting national development. He further emphasised that investing in people must include ensuring access to credible information, opportunities for participation and digital tools that enable citizens to thrive in an increasingly technology-driven world. Additionally, Minister Bah highlighted Africa's youthful population as one of the continent's greatest opportunities, noting that young Africans are already playing important roles as journalists, broadcasters, filmmakers, digital content creators and technology innovators. He said, young Africans are developing digital media platforms, producing films and documentaries and creating artificial intelligence applications that are changing the way the continent is perceived globally. "Our responsibility is to give them the tools, skills, institutions and opportunities to succeed," he said. Minister Bah identified Africa-China cooperation as an important avenue through which these opportunities could be expanded, particularly in strengthening media institutions and

developing the continent's creative industries. Speaking of opportunities, Minister Bah outlined several areas where Sierra Leone sees opportunities for stronger cooperation with China, including the modernisation of broadcasting and audiovisual infrastructure, strengthening public broadcasting, professional exchanges and capacity building. He also called for greater opportunities for journalists, broadcasters, filmmakers, producers and digital media professionals to benefit from training and professional exchanges between Sierra Leone, China and other African countries. To support the production of more films, documentaries and creative content that would allow African stories to reach Chinese audiences, while Chinese stories could reach African audiences. Another important area discussed was the growing trend of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Minister Bah noted that AI technology is already transforming journalism, broadcasting, translation, education and content production. He said AI could create new opportunities to preserve African languages, expand access to information and enable young creators and journalists in Sierra Leone to reach audiences in China and around the world. However, he cautioned that technological innovation must be accompanied by responsibility, particularly because the same technologies that can educate and inform millions can also be used to spread misinformation on a massive scale. "The challenge, therefore, is not simply whether we embrace AI. It is whether we govern it wisely," he stated. Minister Bah called for Africa and China to explore cooperation in responsible AI, media innovation, research, skills development and policy frameworks that ensure technology promotes truth, inclusion and human creativity. In conclusion, Minister Chernor Bah stressed that Africa must move beyond being a consumer of global technologies and media content and instead play a greater role in shaping the technologies and narratives of the future. He argued that Africa should not remain merely the subject of stories produced by others, but must tell its own stories with authenticity, excellence and confidence. He reaffirmed Sierra Leone's readiness to work with China and other African partners to develop a media and audiovisual sector that informs citizens, strengthens institutions, empowers young people, celebrates African cultures and contributes to shared prosperity. "Together, let us not simply watch the future unfold. Let us inform it, tell it, and shape it," the Minister told the Forum.

To accelerate national development...

VP Juldeh Jalloh Urges Stronger Policy Coordination

The Vice President made the call on Thursday, 20 August, while opening the National Symposium on Policy Coherence, Coordination and State Effectiveness at the Foreign Affairs Academy in Freetown. Dr Jalloh said Sierra Leone's major challenge was not a lack of policies, but the need for government institutions to work together more effectively to implement and deliver national development priorities. He noted that critical national issues, including food security, youth employment and healthcare, cut across the mandates of several ministries, departments and agencies, making coordinated action necessary to achieve sustainable results. The Vice President urged public institutions to move away from working in silos and ensure that policy decisions are informed by evidence and the realities faced by citizens. Using the health sector as an example, he pointed to unreliable electricity affecting hospitals and medical equipment as a challenge that cannot be addressed by one institution alone. He said stronger coordination across sectors was therefore critical to improving public service delivery. Dr Jalloh linked the need for improved policy coordination to President Julius Maada Bio's public sector reform

agenda, which seeks to build a more efficient, professional, responsive and results-oriented public service. He challenged public servants to measure the success of government not by the number of policies produced or programmes launched, but by the actual results and improvements those policies deliver to citizens. The Vice President further called for policies to be backed by clearly defined institutional responsibilities, realistic financing, effective implementation plans, measurable outcomes and regular monitoring and review. He stressed that, given Sierra Leone's limited resources and competing national priorities, government could not afford duplication, fragmentation or inefficient use of resources. Dr Jalloh therefore urged ministries, departments and agencies to strengthen collaboration and maximise available resources in order to translate the country's national development agenda into meaningful and measurable improvements in the lives of Sierra Leoneans. He said stronger policy coherence and effective state coordination would be critical to ensuring that government priorities move beyond policy documents and programmes to produce practical development outcomes for citizens.



Sierra Leone's Kumba Brima Joins Deportivo Alavés On Season-Long Loan



Sierra Leone international forward Kumba Zainab Brima has completed a season-long loan move to Spanish club Deportivo Alavés Gloriosas from Latvian side Riga FC Women.

The 24-year-old striker moves to Spain after a prolific spell in Latvia, where she finished as the top scorer in the Baltic Women's Champions League with 23 goals and also featured in the UEFA Women's Champions League qualifying rounds.

Known for her strength, pace and versatility in attack, Brima's switch marks another big step in her career and gives her the chance to compete at a higher level of women's football in Spain.

The move is also a milestone for Sierra Leonean women's football, highlighting the growing presence of the country's players abroad.

Brima previously made her name with FC Kallon Females, where she won the Golden Boot in the Sierra Leone Women's Premier League after scoring 32 goals in 15 games in 2023/24. She was also part of the Leone Starlets squad that won the WAFU A Women's Tournament in Mauritania.

Alavés will hope the Sierra Leonean adds firepower to their attack for the 2026-27 campaign.

Sierra Leone U17 Drawn With Senegal, Gambia And Mauritania For WAFU-A Qualifiers

Sierra Leone's U17 national team, the Sierra Stars, have been drawn in Group A alongside hosts Senegal, Gambia and Mauritania for the WAFU-A U17 Africa Cup of Nations Qualifiers in Senegal. According to the Sierra Leone Football Association, the regional tournament will run from September 7 to 20, 2026. The top teams will advance to the U17 AFCON finals. Preparations have already begun with regional trials across the country's five regions,

WAFU A QUALIFIERS	
GROUP A	GROUP B
SENEGAL	MALI
MAURITANIA	LIBERIA
THE GAMBIA	GUINEA
SIERRA LEONE	GUINEA BISSAU
7 SEP - 20 SEP	

Leone Stars Complete First Week Of Training Camp Ahead Of AFCON 2027 Qualifiers



Via Leone Stars head coach Didier Gomes Da Rosa and his technical team have wrapped up the first week of a training camp with home-based players as preparations begin for the TotalEnergies 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers.

organized by the SLFA Technical Department to identify talent for the squad. Selected players have now assembled for training ahead of the competition. The draw places the Sierra Stars in a tough West African group. Senegal are the 2023 U17 AFCON champions, while Gambia and Mauritania are regular contenders in the WAFU-A zone. The SLFA says the goal is to build a competitive squad that can secure qualification to the continental finals and make the nation proud

The week-long camp focused on assessing local talent, fitness levels, and tactical cohesion ahead of Sierra Leone's campaign to reach Africa's biggest football tournament.

According to the Sierra Leone Football Association, the camp will resume on Monday as the technical team continues to evaluate players and fine-tune the squad. The emphasis is on building a competitive group capable of competing for qualification. Sierra Leone last featured at AFCON in 2021. With the 2027 edition set to be co-hosted by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, the Leone Stars are aiming to return to the continental stage.

Gomes Da Rosa, appointed in 2023, is tasked with blending home-based players with professionals abroad as qualifiers approach later this year.

The SLFA says the process marks the start of the road to AFCON 2027, with unity and performance at the core of the team's preparations.

Credit: Miracle Kargbo