



**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

| Short Highlights

Capacity Development Workshop on
**Localizing the Sustainable Development
Goals: Advancing Subsidiarity in Practice**
2025

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA),
in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning and Economic
Development in Sierra Leone, and the African Peer Review
Mechanism (APRM)

Organized by UN DESA, together with the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 9 to 11 September 2025.

Inaugurated by His Excellency Dr. David Moinina Sengh, Chief Minister of Sierra Leone, whose opening remarks set a strong tone for the workshop's objectives.

Featured keynote addresses from several distinguished government leaders, including:

- **H.E. Ms. Kenyeh Barley, Minister of Planning and Economic Development**
- **H.E. Mr. Tamba Lamina, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development**
- **H.E. Mr. Amara Kallon, Minister of Public Administration and Political Affairs**

Attended by a diverse group of senior officials representing other key national ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Finance, and representatives from all 17 district councils as well as members of the Civil Society Organization (CSO) sector, highlighting the broad, multi-stakeholder engagement crucial to advancing SDG localization.

The Handbook on Subsidiarity, developed specifically for this event, was reviewed by the Chief Minister. During his address, he instructed that copies be produced and distributed to every cabinet minister to ensure comprehensive understanding and commitment, given the critical significance of localization across government sectors. This directive highlights the government's intention to mainstream the principles of subsidiarity across all sectors, ensuring that the localization agenda is integrated at the highest levels of decision-making.

We were informed by the Ministry of Planning that the Chief Minister had personally communicated the workshop's significance to His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio, emphasizing the strategic priority the government places on this initiative.

The event was widely reported in the media, including on social media.

70 participants

42 speakers

10 sessions

Outcomes

The workshop was highly successful, leaving councils and national stakeholders better informed and committed to scaling up efforts to localize the SDGs. A focused discussion on key recommendations was held at the end to guide next steps. Participants made the following key commitments and recommendations:

Strengthen Monitoring & Data Systems

Develop robust M&E and data capacities at the council level to track SDG progress effectively.

Secure Adequate & Innovative Financing

Improve intergovernmental transfers, empower councils to raise local revenue, and explore innovative mechanisms such as public-private partnerships (PPPs), mobile payments, and increased budget allocations.

Capacity Building and Subsidiarity

Advance subsidiarity and full devolution of powers and resources to councils, align local plans with the SDGs, ensure councils have a voice at the national stage, and provide ongoing training, tools, and capacity building to strengthen implementation. Participants also requested support in preparing Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).

Promote Community Participation & Inclusion

Reinforce bottom-up approaches, engage residents and chiefdoms, integrate district secretariats, and prioritize gender-responsive budgeting and planning.

Align with National & Continental Agendas

Integrate local activities into national budget circulars, popularize the SDGs and Agenda 2063 at the council level, and leverage the APRM review process to reinforce localization.

Sierra Leone Ministry of Planning and Economic Development



Sierra Leone Hosts Landmark SDG Localization Workshop, Chief Minister Sengoh Calls for Empowering Local Actors

Freetown, Sierra Leone – 9 September 2025 – Sierra Leone has reaffirmed its commitment to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa’s Agenda 2063 at a high-level regional capacity development workshop on “Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals: Advancing Subsidiarity in Practice.” The three-day forum, jointly convened by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and the Government of Sierra Leone, has brought together representatives from governments, local councils, civil society, UN agencies, and development partners from across Africa and beyond.

Delivering the keynote address, H.E. Dr. David Moinina Sengoh, Chief Minister of Sierra Leone, underscored the central role of local governance in achieving the SDGs.

“Our real heroes are the local actors—the people on the ground who are directly impacting lives,” he said, speaking on behalf of President Julius Maada Bio. “Municipalities, towns, and local councils are not only the front line of service delivery—they are also the laboratories of innovation and the true measure of how governments are performing.”

Dr. Sengoh emphasized the principle of subsidiarity—assigning responsibilities to the lowest effective level of governance—as essential to delivering results. He highlighted Sierra Leone’s pioneering experience with Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and called for stronger alignment of local, national, regional, and global frameworks.

The Chief Minister also pointed to innovation in municipal finance and digital governance, citing Bo City Council’s introduction of digital tax payments and annual self-evaluations as examples of how local governments can strengthen accountability.

He stressed that vulnerable districts require tailored financing models to bridge inequality gaps, and commended local councils that champion women, youth, and marginalized groups. “Localization is not optional. Subsidiarity unlocks potential. And partnership must be our mantra,” Dr. Sengeh said, urging collaboration across government, civil society, and the private sector.

In his welcome remarks, Ambrose James, Development Secretary at the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED), described Sierra Leone’s district-level structures as fundamental to advancing development.

“These frameworks provide spaces where diverse actors—civil society, NGOs, traditional authorities, and government—come together to plan, monitor, and demand accountability,” he noted. “This ensures development is co-created with the people, reaching citizens at the very last mile.”

James reaffirmed MoPED’s commitment to innovation and new financing strategies to complement limited government and donor resources.

Representing UN DESA, Ms. Saras Jagwanth, on behalf of Ms. Adriana Alberti, welcomed participants and praised Sierra Leone’s leadership in advancing subsidiarity. “Subsidiarity means decisions must be taken as close as possible to the people who are affected by them,” she said. “Global commitments only succeed when they are implemented locally, in the daily lives of all people.”

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative, Mr. Fredrick Ampiah, stressed that localization is the bridge between global ambitions and local realities.

“The SDGs are not just 17 targets. They are about clean water in our taps, jobs for our youth, dignity for our elders. Localization means translating these global goals into local priorities and empowering councils to deliver,” he said. Ampiah commended Sierra Leone’s first Voluntary Local Reviews in Kambia, Moyamba, and Western Area Rural, urging more districts to follow suit. H.E. Ms. Kenyeh Barley, Minister of Planning and Economic Development and Sierra Leone’s APRM Focal Point, welcomed participants and underscored Sierra Leone’s integration of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 into its Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024–2030).

She highlighted the country's recent Fourth Voluntary National Review presented at the UN High-Level Political Forum in New York, noting that lessons from social protection and poverty assessments continue to shape national policy. "We must not only identify challenges and capacity gaps, but also focus on practical solutions," Minister Barley stressed. "This project will enlighten, empower, and inspire us to find solutions that work for Sierra Leone."

H.E. Mr. Tamba Lamina, Minister of Local Government and Community Affairs, echoed these sentiments, stressing the importance of multilevel governance. "Local councils and communities are closest to the people. They understand their needs and can deliver services more effectively when properly resourced and supported," Minister Lamina said. "Our task is to ensure that the SDGs are not just aspirational goals written on paper, but practical commitments lived out in our districts, towns, and chiefdoms."

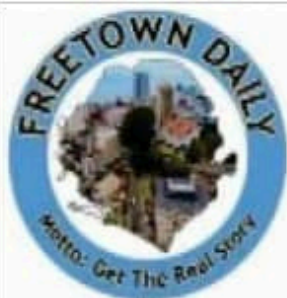
Sierra Leone has been selected as one of three West African countries participating in the regional project "Strengthening Local and National Government Capacities for SDG Localization in Africa," supported by the Government of Italy. As part of the initiative, UN DESA and MoPED are working together to assess policy gaps, enhance municipal finance systems, and strengthen monitoring and evaluation capacities.

The three-day workshop will combine peer learning, technical sessions, and working groups to identify practical strategies for embedding subsidiarity in governance. Expected outcomes include stronger national-local coordination, enhanced municipal finance frameworks, and improved capacity for resilience planning and service delivery.

As Dr. Sengeh reminded participants in his closing appeal: "Real change happens when global aspirations meet local realities. Together, we can turn challenges into transformation—and ensure that no one in Sierra Leone, and indeed across Africa, is left behind."



For more information, please contact Alfred Kabia at +232 79174027, or visit MoPED's social media platforms: Twitter (@moped2025), Facebook, or the official website at www.moped.gov.sl.



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Sierra Leone Champions Localized Approach to Global Development Goals

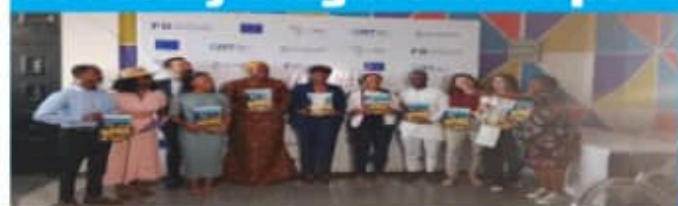
... MoPED & Local Govt. Takes Lead in Agenda 2063



By Kumba Fillie
It is a significant stride toward sustainable development, Sierra Leone is hosting a pivotal four-day workshop focused on localizing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa's Agenda 2063. The event, organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and the Government of Sierra Leone, underscores the country's commitment to translating global frameworks into tangible local actions. Supported by the Government of Italy, the workshop aims to enhance institutional capacities for accelerating SDG implementation and deepening the impact of local planning, budgeting, and service delivery.

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World Bank Launches Creative Economy Diagnostic Report



A Call for Unity: Embracing Ady Macauley Within the APC



Sierra Leone Champions Localized Approach to Global Development Goals

... MoPED & Local Govt. Takes Lead in Agenda 2063

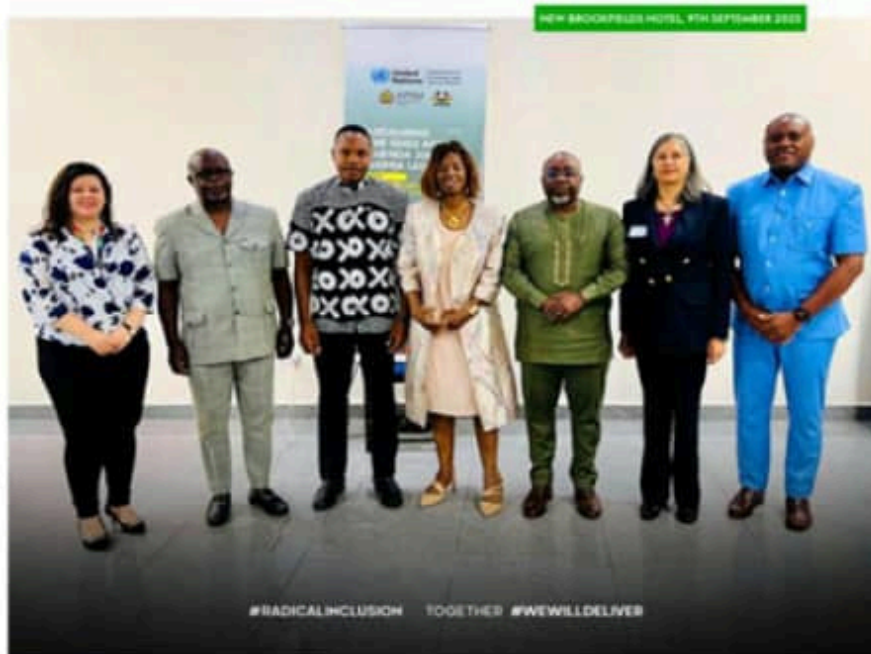
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In a significant stride toward sustainable development, Sierra Leone is hosting a pivotal four-day workshop focused on localizing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa's Agenda 2063. The event, organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and the Government of Sierra Leone, underscores the country's commitment to translating global frameworks into tangible local actions. Supported by the Government of Italy, the workshop aims to enhance institutional capacities for accelerating SDG implementation and deepening the impact of local planning, budgeting, and service delivery. The workshop, themed "Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 in Sierra Leone: Advancing the Principle of Subsidiarity in Practice," emphasizes the principle of subsidiarity a governance approach that assigns responsibilities to the most effective level of government while ensuring coherence across tiers. This principle, endorsed by the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration in 2018, is critical for achieving inclusive development. Participants include representatives from ministries, local councils, civil society, UN agencies, and development partners, all collaborating to align Sierra Leone's national priorities with continental and global commitments. Sierra Leone's experience with Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) in three municipalities provides a strong foundation for scaling up actions and promoting inclusive planning.

Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024–2030) explicitly integrates the SDGs and Agenda 2063, reflecting the country's dedication to resilient and transformative growth. Agenda 2063, Africa's blueprint for socioeconomic transformation, outlines seven "Moonshots," including achieving middle-income status, enhancing regional integration, and fostering responsive public institutions. The Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2024–2033) of Agenda 2063 emphasizes resilience, domestic financing, and citizen engagement themes central to the workshop. This alignment ensures that global agendas are contextualized to address Sierra Leone's unique challenges, such as data gaps, financing constraints, and coordination complexities.

The workshop focuses on practical strategies to overcome implementation barriers. Key among these is enhancing domestic resource mobilization to reduce illicit financial flows and promote local revenue generation, such as digital tax systems. Strengthening data-driven monitoring through initiatives like the National Result Framework, which tracks SDG indicators, is also a priority. Multi-stakeholder engagement is emphasized to ensure inclusivity, with partnerships between government, civil society, and private sectors playing a crucial role. Chief Minister Dr. David Sengh highlighted the importance of radical inclusion for marginalized groups, while Minister of Planning and Economic Development Madam Kenyeh Bartay called for innovative financing solutions for local councils.

Chief Minister delivered the keynote address at the event
"Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063 in Sierra Leone: Advancing the Principle of Subsidiarity in Practice"



Sierra Leone's pioneering efforts in Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) position it as a model for other African nations. The workshop aligns with broader regional and global initiatives, such as the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035), which recognizes transport as a catalyst for achieving SDGs like clean energy, sustainable cities, and infrastructure development. The 2026 ECOSOC Partnership Forum will further highlight these themes, emphasizing transformative actions for the SDGs. By sharing its experiences, Sierra Leone contributes to regional learning and cooperation, reinforcing Africa's collective ambition for an "integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa driven by its citizens".

The workshop represents a critical step toward achieving the Africa envisioned in Agenda 2063. By localizing global goals, Sierra Leone not only addresses its unique challenges but also demonstrates the power of subsidiarity and inclusivity in driving sustainable development. As the world navigates complex crises, Sierra Leone's commitment to contextualizing global agendas offers a blueprint for ensuring that no one is left behind. The outcomes of this workshop are expected to resonate beyond national borders, inspiring similar efforts across the continent and advancing the global pursuit of a sustainable future for all.



Voice of Salone

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— Dr. Ibrahim Bangura Avers

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Sierra Leone Hosts Workshop on Localizing UN SDGs and Agenda 2063

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