

Cycle 4: UPR of SIERRA LEONE



FACT SHEET 5:

RIGHT TO AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES FROM THIRD UPR CYCLE

Key Theme 1: Poverty Reduction and Improved Living Standards:

Emphasizes sustained and coordinated efforts to reduce poverty in all its forms while improving overall living conditions, particularly for vulnerable populations.

States: Venezuela (143.128), Tunisia (143.127), Azerbaijan (143.129), China (143.130), Lebanon (143.135), Indonesia (143.138)

Key Theme 2: Social Protection, Health and Support for Vulnerable Groups

Focuses on strengthening social safety nets and access to essential services, especially for children, women and other at-risk groups.

States: Venezuela (143.128), Tunisia (143.127), Islamic Republic of Iran (143.140)

Key Theme 3: Rural Development, Employment and Income Generation

Highlights the need to address rural poverty through job creation, income-generating opportunities and inclusive economic development.

States: Azerbaijan (143.129), Lao PDR (143.134)

Key Theme 4: Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Calls for integrating national development strategies with the 2030 Agenda to ensure coherence, accountability and long-term sustainability.

States: United Arab Emirates (143.133), Cuba (143.139)

Key Theme 5: Progressive Realization of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Reinforces a rights-based approach to development, ensuring access to education, health, water, housing and adequate standards of living.

States: Cuba (143.139), Islamic Republic of Iran (143.140)

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

- 1. Social Protection Programs:** The government has implemented social protection programs, such as the **Social Safety Net Program**, to provide financial assistance to vulnerable populations, including those affected by conflict and displacement. These programs aim to reduce poverty and improve access to basic services, such as healthcare and education.
- 2. Infrastructure Development:** The government has invested in infrastructure development, including the construction of roads, bridges, and schools, to improve access to basic services and promote economic growth.
- 3. Agricultural Development:** The government has invested in agricultural development, including the provision of training and support to small-holder farmers, to promote food security and improve rural livelihoods. The 'Tomabum Rice Projects' are an example.

CHALLENGES AND THEIR IMPACTS

- ❖ Sierra Leone's **Multidimensional Poverty Index** indicates that 58% of the population are multidimensionally poor, while by late 2025 an estimated 59.9% were projected to live below the national poverty line. Nearly 7 in 10 children experience child poverty. National poverty rose from 57.8% in 2023 to nearly 60% in 2024, reversing earlier gains. Rural poverty is far higher at 73.9% compared to 34.8% in urban areas. Poverty, food

insecurity, and limited livelihoods, worsened by climate change, particularly affect rural women and agricultural communities.

- ❖ **Limited social protection spending** constrains health, education, and services essential for wellbeing and growth. Existing schemes inadequately cover vulnerable groups, including conflict- and displacement-affected populations. A child born today in Sierra Leone is only 45% as productive as with full health and education, while youth (15–35) unemployment or underemployment stands at around 60%.
- ❖ **Access to clean water:** While 63% of citizens have access to basic water, only 23% have access to safely managed water within their premises. Only 13.6% of households have access to basic sanitation services. Roughly 25% of the population still practices open defecation.
- ❖ **Access to electricity:** A 2019 report (with ongoing relevance in 2024) indicated that roughly 60% of the population lacks access to electricity and proper cooking energy. Electricity reaches 28% nationally and just 4.9% in rural areas, far below Sub-Saharan Africa’s 47.6% average.
- ❖ **Insufficient food consumption** affects about 55 percent of the population. Nearly one in three households is severely food insecure, with 71% spending over 75% of expenditures on food. In 2024, 1.1 million people (14%) needed urgent food assistance, rising to 1.57 million (20%) during the July–October lean season.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Christian Brothers Development Office, Sierra Leone; Edmund Rice International and VIVAT International **urge Member States to recommend** that Sierra Leone:

1. **Strengthen and expand social protection systems** to ensure effective, inclusive, and shock-responsive coverage of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including children, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, and rural populations, with a view to reducing poverty and inequalities and ensuring an adequate standard of living.
2. **Accelerate equitable access to basic services and sustainable livelihoods** by improving access to safe water and sanitation, affordable energy, adequate housing, and essential services; increasing targeted support to smallholder farmers through access to credit, markets, and climate-resilient agricultural practices; and investing in rural infrastructure to promote food security, resilience, and poverty reduction.

ADVANCE QUESTIONS

1. Since the last UPR, what measures has Sierra Leone taken to improve access to adequate housing, food security, clean water, and sanitation—particularly for low-income households and rural communities and how is progress being monitored and reported?
2. What steps has the Government taken to strengthen social protection systems, employment and livelihood programmes, and target subsidies to reduce poverty and inequality, and what evidence demonstrates improved living standards for vulnerable groups?

SOURCES

- ❖ UNICEF Sierra Leone (2024): Situational analysis of children, reporting on malnutrition and food insecurity
- ❖ World Food Programme (WFP) (2024): Annual Country Report 2024
- ❖ World Bank (2025): Sierra Leone Economic Update (7th Edition) and Poverty & Equity Brief (Oct 2025)

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