

# Republic of Sierra Leone



## Participants in the Study Visit

Mrs. Nenehbah Jalloh is the current National Coordinator of the Scaling Up Nutrition Secretariat Office of the Vice President, President of the Commonwealth Business Network, Board Chairman of the Youths and Children Empowerment Forum Africa, Executive Board Member of the International Sisterhood Alliance, Chairman of the Annual National Nutrition Fair, Philanthropist, Humanitarian, Mentor, Public Figure, Entrepreneur, Former Columbia University Research Scholar, Nutrition Consultant, Former Teacher Kabala Secondary School (KSS)

## Expectations for the Study Visit

### 1. Integrating Nutrition into Multisectoral Policies

How has Brazil successfully operationalized multisectoral governance mechanisms to ensure nutrition is mainstreamed across different ministries, and what practical lessons can Sierra Leone adopt to strengthen coordination for its own food and nutrition security policies?

### 2. Scaling Up and Financing School Meals

How does Brazil sustainably finance and manage its national homegrown school meal program, ensuring local food procurement, nutrition education, and resilience to fiscal constraints, and how could Sierra Leone adapt similar financing and governance approaches to expand and strengthen its school meals program?

### 3. Leveraging Food Systems for Healthy Diet

What strategies has Brazil used to promote healthy diets from sustainable food systems, including nutrition-sensitive agriculture, regulation of food environments, and community-level interventions, and how can Sierra Leone adopt context-appropriate approaches to improve diet quality and food system resilience?

## Nutrition Facts

Encouragingly, according to SOFI 2025, Sierra Leone is progressing toward exclusive breastfeeding, with 50.9.0% of infants aged 0 to 5 months exclusively breastfed in 2023, when compared to only 31.2% in 2012. The national implementation score of legal measures related to the implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk

Substitutes is 99 (out of a maximum of 100). The country has also made some headway in addressing stunting: 25.2% of children under five were affected in 2024, a rate significantly lower than the 33.3% rate estimated for 2012, and also lower than the Western Africa average of 29.7%. However, progress on reducing wasting remains limited, with 6.3% of children under five affected in 2024—a rate very similar to the Western Africa average of 6.5%. While there has been some advancement in reducing low birth weight—estimated at 10.3% in 2020—no progress has been recorded in tackling anemia among women of reproductive age, with 44.6% of women aged 15 to 49 still affected in 2023.

The prevalence of overweight children under five was 5.4% in 2024, an important increase from the 2.6% rate estimated for 2012, and Sierra Leone seems to be currently off track to prevent further increases. In terms of diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs), progress has been limited. Obesity affects 7.1% of the adult population.

## Programmes and Initiatives

Sierra Leone has demonstrated a reduction in stunting that surpasses what would typically be expected based on its gross domestic product. This achievement reflects the impact of targeted policy and advocacy actions.

Efforts to address acute malnutrition have been supported through planned resource allocation, including the procurement of therapeutic foods, ensuring readiness to respond to the nutritional needs of vulnerable children.

Sierra Leone continues to foster alignment among stakeholders to reinforce country leadership and accountability. Ongoing coordination between government and partners supports resource alignment and strengthens mutual responsibility for achieving national nutrition goals.

The Multi-sector Strategic Plan to Reduce Malnutrition (2019–2025) in Sierra Leone serves as a critical framework to guide national efforts in addressing malnutrition through a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach. The plan was developed to align the efforts of various stakeholders and to ensure that nutrition is tackled not only as a health issue but also through education, agriculture, water and sanitation, and social protection.

The strategic plan aims to unify partners under a common goal by defining clear objectives, indicators, and actions that span nutrition-specific, nutrition-sensitive, and enabling-environment interventions. Its development process emphasized inclusive participation, ensuring the full involvement and ownership of all key stakeholders, including government ministries, development partners, and civil society organizations.

Sierra Leone's National Social Protection Strategy (2022–2026) complements its nutrition agenda by reinforcing the country's commitment to reducing poverty and vulnerability through coordinated, people-centered interventions. The strategy provides a comprehensive

framework for protecting the most disadvantaged populations from economic and social shocks, while also promoting long-term human development—including improved nutrition outcomes.

Built on principles of inclusion, equity, resilience, and sustainability, the strategy aligns with national priorities and global commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals. It emphasizes a life-cycle approach to protection, targeting vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly, and people living with disabilities.

In the context of nutrition, the strategy supports nutrition-sensitive social protection interventions, including conditional and unconditional cash transfers, food assistance, and school feeding programs. These initiatives are designed to improve household food security, promote better dietary diversity, and increase access to health and nutrition services—especially for women and children.

By linking with the Multi-sector Strategic Plan to Reduce Malnutrition (2019–2025), the National Social Protection Strategy fosters policy coherence and cross-sectoral collaboration, aiming to break the cycle of malnutrition and poverty. Together, these two frameworks reinforce Sierra Leone’s national vision for a healthier, more resilient, and inclusive society.

### **N4G Commitments (as of April 2025)**

- Increased Awareness on Household Food Security to prevent Malnutrition
- Scaled-up Coverage of Cash Transfer Schemes Targeting Extreme Poor
- Strengthened Supply Chain and Accountability for RUTF
- Increased Demand for Diverse, Locally-Produced, Nutritious Foods
- Increased Domestic Spending on Nutrition-Specific and -Sensitive Intervention
- Expanded Family Planning Access and Choice
- Increased Adoption of Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices/ Approaches
- Strengthened Multisectoral Nutrition Governance, Coordination and Data
- Strengthened Climate Data and Early Warning Systems
- Scaled-up Coverage of MMS and VAS
- Expanded and Enhanced Home-Grown School-Feeding Programme
- Increased Availability of Safe, Affordable and Nutritious Foods

**Sierra Leone is an early member of the  
Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty.**

## Engagement with the Healthy Diets Coalition

Sierra Leone joined the Healthy Diets Coalition in 2024 and is currently serving as a Steering Committee Chair (2025-2026), underscoring its leadership and commitment to advancing healthy diets globally. The country is represented by two focal points: the SUN focal point in the Office of the Vice President, and the Director of Food and Nutrition, Ministry of Health and Sanitation. This high-level, cross-sectoral representation reflects strong government ownership and ensures nutrition is integrated across national priorities. Other specific engagement includes:

- **Rome Nutrition Week:** Sierra Leone was featured in the HDSFS side event “Enhancing policy coherence towards delivering healthy diets through agroecological approaches.” The country shared the Feed Salon policy initiative, which promotes agroecological farming to boost local production, cut imports, and build resilience, while improving nutrition with a focus on women and youth. It also highlighted the First Foods initiative to improve complementary feeding for mothers and children. Linking these to platforms such as SUN and HDSFS, Sierra Leone stressed the value of multi-sectoral collaboration to address malnutrition and strengthen resilience (2025).
- **Case study:** Sierra Leone was selected as one of the HDSFS Coalition case study countries in collaboration with the One Planet Network Sustainable Food Systems Programme. The study, currently under development, explores how national food system transformation efforts are advancing healthier diets and will highlight key policy entry points. Findings are expected to be published ahead of COP30 (2025).

## Remaining Challenges

Sierra Leone is making notable progress in improving maternal, infant, and young child nutrition, particularly in reducing low birth weight and advancing exclusive breastfeeding. Despite persistent challenges such as high anemia prevalence among women and limited progress in reducing wasting, the country has achieved meaningful reductions in stunting below the regional average. Strengthened policy frameworks, multisectoral coordination, and targeted social protection initiatives underpin Sierra Leone’s efforts to foster sustainable nutrition improvements, with ongoing commitments to enhance capacity, governance, and stakeholder alignment.