

LABOUR MARKET PROFILE SIERRA LEONE - 2020



The profile provides a comprehensive overview of the labour market's structures, development, and challenges.

Danish Trade Union
Development Agency,
Analytical Unit



ULANDSSEKRETARIATET – DTDA
DANISH TRADE UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

PREFACE

The Danish Trade Union Development Agency (DTDA) is the development organisation of the Danish trade union movement. It was established in 1987 by the two largest Danish confederations – Danish Federation of Trade Unions (Danish acronym: LO) and Danish Confederation of Professionals (Danish acronym: FTF). These two organisations merged to become the Danish Trade Union Confederation (Danish acronym: FH) in January 2019. The name of this organisation, former known as the LO/FTF Council, was changed to DTDA.

The work of DTDA is in line with the sustainable development goals and the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Decent Work Agenda (DWA). The four Decent Work Pillars: Creating decent jobs, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue forms the overall development objective of DTDA's interventions in the South. The core objective is to eradicate poverty and support the development of just and democratic societies by furthering the DWA.

DTDA works in partnership with trade union organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. The immediate objective of the programme collaboration is to assist the partner organisations in becoming change agents in their own national and regional labour market context, capable of achieving tangible improvements in the national DWA conditions and towards the achievement of the labour-related Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs).

The format of the Labour Market Profile (LMP) provides a comprehensive overview of the labour market situation in the individual countries of engagement. LMP aims at giving a comprehensive view of structures, developments, and challenges in the labour markets. The document is divided into eleven thematic sections describing trade unions, employers' organisations, government, bi-/tripartite institutions and social dialogue, national labour legislation, violations of trade union rights, working conditions, workforce, education, social protection, and economy.

LMPs are reporting on several key indicators addressing several aspects of labour market development, especially the trade union membership evolution, social dialogue and bi-/tri-partite mechanisms, policy development and legal

reforms, status vis-à-vis ILO conventions and labour standards, among others.

Main sources of data and information for LMPs are:

- As part of program implementation and monitoring, national partner organisations provide annual narrative progress reports, including information on labour market developments. Furthermore, specific types of data and information relating to key indicators are collected using a unique data collection tool.
- National statistical institutions and international databanks are used as a source for collection of general (statistical) data and information. It includes the ILOSTAT and NATLEX, World Bank Open Data, ITUC Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights, the U.S. Department of State as well as other labour related global indexes.
- Academia and media sources (e.g. LabourStart, national news, etc.) are also used in the extensive research on labour market issues.

Labour Market Profiles for more than 30 countries are available on the DTDA's [website](#).

DTDA's Analytical Unit in Copenhagen prepared this Labour Market Profile in close collaboration with the DTDA Western Africa sub-Regional Office in Togo and the Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC).

Cover photo: fishers from the informal economy in Tumbu, Sierra Leone, photographed by Ms Eva Tabor.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sierra Leone was recovering from a deep recession in the economy as an impact of the Ebola virus outbreak in 2014-2016, combined with falling global commodities prices. High inflation in consumer prices has stymied a real increase in the minimum wage and the basic cost of living was on a rise. The country is in a shaky situation for the economic impact of global Corona epidemic in 2020. The labour productivity growth in 2015/2018 stays below 2000/2002, and the country is measured among the least competitive countries worldwide. Around 75% of employment lives below US\$3.2 per day.

Central labour laws are out-of-date and contain flaws on international standards concerning trade union rights. Main reforms in recent years are the Insurance Act from 2016 and the new minimum wage in April 2020. The country has a logjam in informing the application of ILO Conventions, but ratified five ILO Conventions in 2019.

Leading tripartite institutions are functioning in the formal sector, and social dialogue is in progress. As an example, the application of collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) is widespread: 39 effective CBAs registered in 2019 covering around 64% of employees. The use of CBAs on enterprise-level is challenged by weak cooperation in labour-employer relations, though. Most workers in the private sector operate in informal micro- and small-enterprises that often loophole labour and business regulation.

Trade union movement lost members as an impact of the Ebola virus epidemic outbreak and economic downturn, especially among organised workers from the informal economy, and a deterioration in trade union rights violations. Enrolment in membership rebounded slowly since 2016 and registered a relatively high trade union density of total employment at 20% in 2019. Organised employers are supporting awareness campaigns of the social protection regulations.

During the last two decades, an evolution of the employment structure has been halted: just minor changes from the agriculture sector towards the service sector, supporting a growing urbanisation rate. The agriculture sector still absorbs close to six out of ten workers. The industry sector demonstrates a flat growth with an

employment share of 6% in 2020. The more formal 'employees' represents just one out of ten workers.

Sierra Leone has a youthful population driven by a high fertility rate. Initial projection of the unemployment rate is relatively low at 4.4% in 2020. It is shadowed by the potential economic downturn in the aftermath of the Corona epidemic just as the current high underemployment rate of 36%. The formal sector is not creating enough jobs to curb the growing youth bulge, and unemployment insurance is not available. Close to nine out of ten workers are forced into 'vulnerable employment' who are less likely to have formal work.

There is widespread gender inequality in the country. Youth is active on the labour market with low-slung NEET rate at 9% (i.e. youth not in employment, education, or training). The government has prioritised education: school enrolment rates are high, except in advanced level. However, many people do not complete their studies, which are echoed in a very high child labour rate, double as high as Africa average. Likewise, only 6% had ever served apprenticeship.

The Sierra Leone Civil War (1991-2002) caused a vast displacement of population, and inter-regional migratory continues to be very dynamic. There is a high incidence of illegal migration to Western Europe and the Middle East, but external migration remittance has not been a central part of the officially registered economy. Foreign refugees are not a critical issue in the country. The National Labour Migration Policy and regulatory framework for the recruitment of labour for overseas employment were under auditing in 2019.

By law, health social protection is universal in the country, and out-of-pocket health expenditure plummeted since 2011. Social protection initiatives remain ad-hoc and fragmented. Contributing to pension schemes is very low connected to the narrow formal sector. The enactment of the Insurance Act 2016 mandates all employers to insure employees in enterprises with at least five personnel. For most small and medium enterprises, protecting employees is a novelty. Untreated traumas from the civil war, the Ebola outbreak and extreme poverty have left an estimated 10% of the population with mental health issues.

The table below depicts the status of key labour market indicators in the framework of the Decent Work Agenda (DWA) in Sierra Leone.

The second table on key Sustainable Development Goals in labour market related issues (next page) presents an overview of labour-related SDGs indicators' current value and targets in relation to labour market issues.

Status of key labour market indicators in the framework of the Decent Work Agenda (DWA) in Sierra Leone, 2019

Creating decent jobs	
Policy reforms addressing creation of decent employment	Yes. Policies on employment, youth employment, poverty eradication, minimum wages, productivity, industrial, migration and education are adopted and enforced. Policies on minimum wages and skills development are furthermore ongoing.
ILO standard setting on improvement of status of workers from the informal economy	No. Tri-partite national forum, other national forum addressing status of informal economy workers or policies addressing the status of informal workers are operating. However, informal economy workers can be organised into trade unions and they are legally registered.
Guaranteeing rights at work	
Growth in partner trade union members from year 2014 to 2019 (%)	-6.0 % as an impact of Ebola virus epidemic in 2014/16 and general economic downturn.
Violations of trade union rights	Ranking 5 out of 5 (5+ is the worst). *
Labour legislation is improved according to ILO standards	Yes. The government has put migration as a top priority and ratifies ILO conventions on migration (C97 and C143) as well as three other conventions Convention 155 on Occupational Safety, Convention 187 on Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Recommendation, and the Maritime Labor Convention. Furthermore, the Health Insurance Act aiming better and affordable primary health care for all has been adopted.
Partner organisations with minimum 30% women representation in decision-making bodies	No. The rate is below 20 %.
Extending social protection	
Health social protection coverage as % of total population in partner countries	By law, 100 % universal coverage.
Workers from the informal economy have access to national social security schemes	Yes, in principle. But, since the establishment of the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT), just 4,287 informal economy workers are covered and contributing to the social security scheme. It is a voluntary contribution.
Promoting social dialogue	
Trade union density of formal/informal organised workers to employment (%)	20 %.
Cooperation in labour-employer relations	Ranking 125 out of 141 (1 is best). **
Number of Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs)	39 CBAs.
Workers' coverage of CBAs to employees	Approximately 185,800 workers, which equals 64% of 'employees'.
Bi-/tri- partite agreements concluded	Yes. CBAs in industry, hotel and public utility sectors were reviewed.
* This is interpreted as systematic violations of rights. Countries with a rating of 5 are interpreted as no guarantee of rights (Source: ITUC, Global Rights Index).	
** This indicator is based on data from the Global Competitiveness Index that represents employers' opinion from surveys (Source: World Economic Forum 2018)	
Sources: ILO; DTDA Sub-Regional Office data collection tool 2018 and 2019, and own calculations on trade union membership growth and trade union density.	

Status of key Sustainable Development Goals in labour market related issues in Sierra Leone

Indicators	Value	Year	SDG Targets
1.1.1: Working poverty rate (percentage of employed living below US\$1.90 PPP)	44 %	2020	By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day
1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems	2011	30 %	Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
5.5.2: Female share of employment in managerial positions	38 %	2014	Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
8.1.1: Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita	4.9 %	2020*	Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries
8.2.1: Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person	4.9 %	2020*	Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
8.3.1: Proportion of informal employment in total employment	86 %	2018	Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, through access to financial services
8.3.1: Women	-	-	
8.3.1: Men	-	-	
8.5.1: Average hourly earnings of women and men employees	-	-	By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
8.5.2: Unemployment rate (Total)	4.7 %	2014	
8.5.2: Women, 15+	3.9 %	2014	
8.5.2: Women, 15-24 years	6.1 %	2014	
8.5.2: Men, 15+	5.6 %	2014	
8.5.2: Men, 15-24 years	14.8 %	2014	
8.6.1: Proportion of youth (15-24 years) not in education, employment or training)	10 %	2014	By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
8.7.1: Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour (Total)	39 %	2013	Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025, end child labour in all its forms
8.7.1: Girls	40 %	2013	
8.7.1: Boys	38 %	2013	
8.8.1: Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries	-	-	Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment
8.8.2: Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining)	-	-	
9.2.2: Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment	2.8 %	2014	Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries
10.4.1: Labour income share as a percent of GDP	48 %	2017	Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

* ILO estimations.

Source: [United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals, Knowledge Platform](#), [Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Economic Survey 2019](#), [UNICEF 2016](#) and [ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\)](#), [Sierra Leone integrated household survey \(SLIHS\) report, 2018](#)

COUNTRY MAP



Source: [CIA, The World Factbook](#)

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TRADE UNIONS

Sierra Leone has one of the oldest trade union movements in Africa. Their earliest strikes were recorded in 1874.¹ The government generally respects the freedom of association of workers and the right to collective bargaining. However, the trade union movement consider that they continue to be political interference into the administration of trade unions by government officials supporting illegal change of leadership in trade unions.

In 2019, close to half a million organised workers were members of the largest trade union centre, whereas the majority (85%) were associations representing workers from the informal economy (Table 1). If the trade union density is measured into all organised workers (formal and informal), it was 20%, which is significantly higher than other Western Africa countries, e.g. 4.2% in Ghana, 2.8% in Niger, 13% in Benin, and 7.4% in Togo.² Trade union density of organised formal workers to employees is similarly high at 25% in the country. Here it is worthwhile to mention that the employees' share covers just 11% of the total employment. The trade union density of organised formal workers to total employment is low at 2.9%, which shows that Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC) has succeeded in organising informal workers (see more ahead).

Table 1: Status of trade unions in Sierra Leone, 2019

Number of trade unions with declared members	37
Dues, per person / per month	US\$0.09 (formal) US\$0.01 (informal)
Total members	489,155
Formal	73,768
Informal	415,687
Growth in membership, 2014-2019	-5.0 %
Trade union density of organised formal workers to 'employment' *	2.9 %
Trade union density of organised formal workers to 'employees' **	25 %
Trade union density of formal/informal members to 'employment' *	20 %

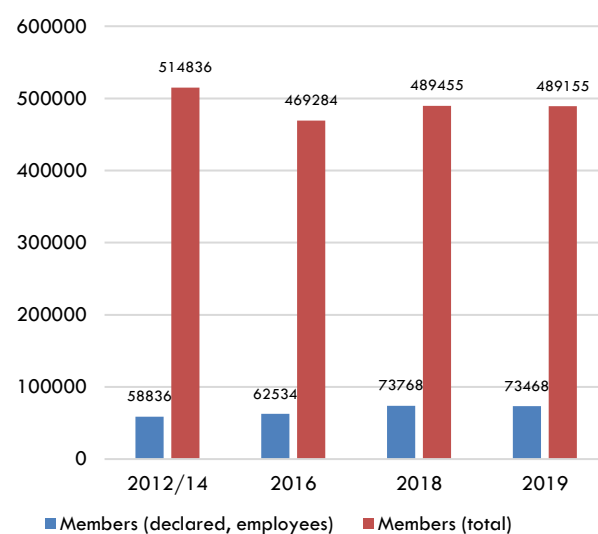
* This 'employment' includes employees, own-account workers, and contributing family workers. ** 'Employees' are workers with contracts that give them a basic remuneration.

Sources: SLLC and own estimations on trade union density with employment estimations from ILOSTAT.

The trade union movement had around 150,000 declared members before the Sierra Leone Civil War (1991–2002). As an aftermath of the war, the number of members plummeted. Approximately 42,000 members were registered by SLLC in 2007. Afterwards,

based on innovative and effective campaigning strategy, the number of members rebounded and increased dramatically. It was driven by an upsurge of organised informal workers. There are divergences in the membership structure among formal and informal organised workers, e.g. significant different in paying dues (Table 1). During the 2010s, the total trade union membership peaked in 2012. The growth was affected negatively in 2014/2015 as an impact of a regional outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD).³ For example, several workplaces were affected; causing the fold-up or scaling-down of enterprise operations and the segment of formal employees plunged.⁴ It kicked in a downturn in the membership rate at -6% from 2014 to 2016, primarily from organised informal workers. Registration of organised workers in the formal sector rose by 6% in the same period, though. Since 2016, the enrolment in trade unions is increasing again, which includes among organised informal workers (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Sierra Leone Labour Congress membership rate trend, 2012/14-2019



Source: SLLC.

The Labour Law allows workers in both the public and private sectors to join independent unions of their choice without prior authorisation, bargain collectively, and conduct legal strikes. Police and members of the armed services are excluded from joining unions or engaging in strike actions. All unions are independent of political parties and the government. Cordial relationship with the government and political parties is present, but certain unions, such as the Sierra Leone Teachers' Union (SLTU), have more close ties to the government. Generally, the government and the SLLC have resolved to work amicably towards the development of the country. The trade union movement experienced several strike actions

in recent years. There is one central trade union centre, and its status is outlined below.

Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC)

SLLC was founded in 1976, and it is the central umbrella organisation of trade unions in Sierra Leone. It has affiliated 37 unions, out of which 15 organisations were from the informal economy in 2019. Twelve new unions have been registered since 2012, which includes two new unions – Sierra Leone Film Industry, Labour and Marketing Guild and Sierra Leone Keke Riders Union – affiliated in 2019. Women represent around 13% in leadership positions and decision-making bodies in the organisation; and youth below 30 years old in these positions are scarce below 10%. SLLC is affiliated to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Appendix Table 21 shows details on each affiliated trade union to SLLC.

The SLLC amended its constitution during its last congress in 2012 to include workers from the informal economy as legal members. A wide range of campaigning succeeded in bringing an impressive influx into affiliated trade union members (Figure 1). The drop in declared and affiliated trade union members from the informal economy was, among other reasons, due to the 18 % decline in the bike riders' union membership in the period from 2014 to 2016, falling to 120,000 members. More information on the trade unions is available in Appendix Table 21.

The largest formal trade union with members paying dues is the Sierra Leone Teachers' Union (SLTU) with 36,000 members. SLTU accounts for approximately half of the total formal economy membership in the country. Paying dues is monthly payment, but not check-off system. Actually, it is difficult to give the exact membership number for SLTU, as teachers continually join and leave the profession.⁵ Another issue is ghost teachers in the system who are registered as working in schools and getting salaries but never attend school.

The union has complained that the last collective bargaining agreement is from 1966 and the law hampers them from renewing it. In recent years, SLLC has focused on lobbying state authorities for the provision of social security coverage, health insurance, access to friendly micro-credit and vocational/technical skills training for informal economy workers in Sierra Leone. Programs and policies that take care of informal economy operators in terms of occupational health and safety and social security coverage have been crafted. In collaborating with the National Social Security and

Insurance Trust (NASSIT), the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and other social partners, SLLC continues to work towards the completion of the Social Security Act. This initiative includes the incorporation of the informal sector in the draft Act.⁶ SLLC played a key role during the review of the labour law.

According to SLLC, internal democracy in the organisation is improving; especially informal economy unions are progressively getting entrenched in their day-to-day operations. This situation is related to the union leaders increasingly coming under membership spotlight and audit for delivering service as expected from them. However, there have been some intra-union disputes, and SLLC has managed to resolve many of them. Few are difficult to resolve due to political interference in the administration of those unions. Some cases have been taken to court, especially the Motor Drivers Union.

SLLC has been appointed to seat in several Government Agencies' Boards like Local Content Board, the Corporate Affairs Commission, The Political Parties Registration Commission, the National Social Security and Insurance Trust Board, the Electricity and Water Resources Commission, etc.

SLLC faces several challenges. First, inadequate organisational capacity is a central issue related primarily to limited facilities such as computers and cars, together with inadequate national communication infrastructure. Second, there is lack of finance constraints effectiveness of the labour movement. Third, it is difficult for SLLC successfully to represent both formal and informal workers within the union, given that the vast majority of affiliated members are within the informal economy. Fourth, SLLC officials are concerned about unfair use of legal-bureaucratic measures by the state to control the labour movement. Finally, collective bargaining unit lacks resources.⁷ Not to mention, there is an increase in the practice of casual, contract and temporary employment, which is stymieing unionism practices.

EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS

In 2020, the employers are estimated to form 2.7% of the total employment in Sierra Leone (see in Figure 5 ahead). This share is slightly lower than the Western Africa rate of 2.6%.

The Global Competitiveness Index provides a view on a wide range of aspects, including labour market efficiency. The latter aspect is elaborated upon surveys

among employers in the country and other statistical data. Sierra Leone was measured among the least competitive countries worldwide ranking 132 out of 140 countries (1 is the best) in 2018 (Table 2).

Out of the 12 labour market efficiency indicators, the best scoring is in labour tax rate (37). The second and third best scorings are in the ease of hiring foreign labour (65) and active labour policies (77), overall indicating a certain degree of dynamics in the labour market when it comes to tax, policies and foreign labour. Worst rankings are in redundancy costs (138), internal labour mobility (128) and cooperation in labour-employer relations (125), indicating an immobile labour market where it is expensive to dismiss and a weak level of social dialogue. Compared to 2017, Sierra Leone scores slightly worse in 2018. Cooperation in labour-employer relations indicator improved slightly in 2018, though.

Table 2: Labour market efficiency in Sierra Leone, 2018*

Labour market indicators	Rank **
Labour market efficiency	132
Redundancy costs (weeks of salary)	137
Hiring and firing practice	100
Cooperation in labour-employer relations	125
Flexibility of wage determination	113
Active labour policies	77
Workers' rights	80
Ease of hiring foreign labour	65
Internal labour mobility	128
Reliance on professional management	118
Pay and productivity	116
Ratio of wage and salaried female workers to male workers	121
Labour tax rate	37

* Sierra Leone is not included in the *Global Competitiveness Report 2019*.

** Rank from 1 to 140 (1 is best).

Source: [The Global Competitiveness Report, 2018, 8th pillar: Labour market efficiency](#)

Sierra Leone Employers Federation (SLEF)

SLEF was established in 1966 and is a non-profit business association and the main employers' organisation in Sierra Leone. Limited online data is available, but SLEF appears to have a relatively small membership base. It has collaborated with ILO for institutional development as well as SLLC and the National HIV and AIDS Secretariat on other occasions. SLEF is present on the board of the NASSIT.

SLEF is part of the Sierra Leone Local Content Agency, together with the Ministry of Labour and workers.⁸ In 2019, Sierra Leone officially appointed four points for the promotion of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration).

National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT) has been a central issue for SLEP in recent years. In practice, most employers do not pay NASSIT contributions for their employees, which is a violation of NASSIT Act from 2001. SLEP has initiated to aid and guide employers in discharging their obligations set in the NASSIT Act. In addition, SLEF supports an engagement to create awareness and to brief employers and employees on their various obligations as propagated in the social protection regulations is in progress.

GOVERNMENT

The government generally protects the right to collectively bargain and respects freedom of association. As most employment in Sierra Leone is informal and unregulated, MLSS is not regulating the majority of workers in practice.⁹ The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) is responsible for the regulation of the country's labour market.

Sierra Leone Statistics is the national statistical bureau in Sierra Leone responsible for coordinating, collecting, compiling, analysing and disseminating official statistics to support evidence-based decision-making processes at both policy and planning levels together with discussions within the government, business and the media, as well as the wider national and international community.¹⁰ In 2014, the bureau conducted the first Labour Force Survey in over 30 years to collect information on Sierra Leone's Labour market. The survey has largely focused on wage employment, agricultural self-employment and non-agricultural household enterprises.

CENTRAL TRIPARTITE STRUCTURES

The partite structures and social dialogue of labour relations are usually effectuated in either bipartite negotiations (between trade unions and employers' organisations) or tripartite (the former two parties together with the government). Central tripartite institutions are active in at least five meeting per year and their status is summarised below:

Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)

The tripartite JCC is functioning, and it has played a role during the review of Labour Law in recent years. The institution has furthermore addressed minimum wage adjustment to the challenges faced by employees in the country.

Joint National Negotiation Board (JNNB)

The tripartite JNNB sets the minimum wages in Sierra Leone every second year. The Board is composed of nine members with representation from the employers' organisation SLEF, employees represented by SLLC and Labour and Social Security Ministry.¹¹ The board has a mandate to review the minimum wage, which has not been done frequently. For example, before 2013, the minimum wage has not changed since 1996.¹² And, the JNNB convened to review the National Minimum Wage in November 2019. They conceded to adjust the minimum wage that became valid in February 2020 (see more in Working Condition section).

Mediation and Arbitration institutions

The 1991 Constitution provided for commissions of inquiry, arbitration committees, and Labour Industrial Dispute bodies, set up under the Arbitration Act, to settle disputes between employers and employees. Magistrate's Court covers industrial matters in Sierra Leone. No statistical data on the handling of collective labour disputes was available.

The mediation and arbitration structure is active in the country. It covers the formal sector, which could signify the employers and employees' aggregate share at 14% of the total employment in 2020 (see also Figure 5 ahead). Around nine out of ten workers are operating outside the formal mediation and arbitration structures that loophole these regulations.

The shop steward and the sectional head handle individual grievances at workplaces. If that fails, then the head of personal affairs tries to resolve it, but if not, then it is transferred to the secretary-general of the relevant union. If that fails, disputes between employers and employees arising from matters such as unlawful dismissal are typically settled through arbitration by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS). Where such measures fail, parties may resort to the industrial court for settlement of disputes.

Both employers and workers are free to file complaints to the MLSS. Upon receipt of their complaints, the Ministry investigates and advises as appropriate. In cases where the ministry is unable to resolve the industrial dispute, the cases are forwarded to the Industrial Court for legal redress. Employees win over 80% of industrial complaints filed to MLSS. It is, to a large degree, a result of most employers failed to provide supporting documents or records to support their statements or actions against their employees. According to the Labour Law, the responsibility to keep or provide employment

record rests mainly with the employer.¹³ Generally, most industrial actions were taken against the government, primarily to protest unpaid salaries and reduced benefit packages.¹⁴

National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT)

The NASSIT is a Statutory Public Trust set up by the National Social Security and Insurance Trust Act. No. 5 of 2001 that administrate the National Pension's Scheme. It covers three major contingencies: Old age, Invalidity and Death. It is a partially funded scheme, but the financing of the scheme primarily comes from contributions and investment earnings. The institution has a high coverage among formal public/private workers at 90% among employees (see more in the Social protection section). Other data suggest that 10% of those subscribing with the NASSIT are those in the informal economy.¹⁵ Four tripartite fora are held yearly.

Other bi/tripartite organs

- Trade Group Negotiating Council.
- Joint Consultative Committee.
- Regulating Committee on Fuel and Transport Fares.
- National Budgetary Committee.
- Sierra Leone Business Forum.

Other national tripartite structures are operating in Sierra Leone such as national climate committees with a representation of employers, unions and other civil society organisations. Not to mention, on a regional level, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Tripartite Social Dialogue Forum was established in 2011 to implement the labour and employment policy, including its strategic action plan (see more in Trade Agreement sub-section).

Social Dialogue

The Regulation of Wages and Industrial Relations Act from 1971 provides for collective bargaining. Collective bargaining must take place in trade group negotiating councils, each of which had an equal number of employer and worker representatives.

Sierra Leone's new government from 2018 has made significant political and governance changes to reflect their New Direction Agenda. Among others, the government has working towards job evaluation exercise that will culminate to the establishment of the Wages and Compensation Commission for fair pay for equal work done in the public service. In addition, the government is furthermore in process of renegotiating new terms of

agreement with major investment business entities in mining, agriculture, fishing and services to making them more country beneficial.

Social dialogue is functioning in Sierra Leone in the formal sector. For example, collective bargaining is widespread, and a majority of enterprises are covered by collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) on wages and working conditions.¹⁶ The extent of CBAs' application may be limited by the fact that negotiations can only occur within councils of representatives from employers and workers, counting equivalent numbers of each. In addition, a majority of workers in the private sector operate in the informal economy and in micro, small and medium enterprises that are challenged by cumbersome business regulation along with lack of awareness or incentives to apply labour regulations in practice (see more ahead).

In 2019, 39 effective CBAs were registered, covering around 186,000 employees, which equivalent to 64% of the employees in 2019; it covers just 7.3% of the total employment (Table 3 and Appendix Table 21). New CBAs for Public Utilities and Industries was agreed in 2019.

Table 3: Status of Collective Bargaining Agreements, 2019

Number of effective CBAs	39
Workers covered by CBAs (approximate)	186,000
Share of employees covered by CBAs	64 %

Note: Number of CBAs and coverage among workers represent data from affiliated trade unions from SLLC.
Source: SLLC and own calculations on CBA coverage among employees based on data from ILOSTAT.

Another issue is that national legislation has flaws on collective bargaining to international standards:¹⁷

- Previous authorisation or approval by authorities required to bargain collectively.
- Absence of criteria or discretionary, unclear or unreasonable criteria for determining representative organizations.
- Prohibition or limitation of bargaining at a certain level (local, regional, territorial, national; enterprise, industry, sector or general).
- Imposition of fixed and unreasonable procedural requirements (e.g. short time-limits for reaching an agreement).
- Authorities' power to intervene in the preparation of collective agreements.
- Prohibition or limitation of collective bargaining.

NATIONAL LABOUR LEGISLATION

Labour legislation regulates and sets standards and restrictions for the labour market in Sierra Leone. Many of the important laws regulating the labour market in Sierra Leone date back to 1960s, a year before independence from the United Kingdom. These include the Employers and Employed Ordinance and the Trade Unions Ordinance of 1960. Thus, significant parts of the current labour laws are obsolete and modern employment rights standards are not applied. In particular, the laws on hiring and dismissal are unclear.¹⁸

Reforms were initiated back in 1996, which was stalled. It was restarted several times afterwards, but still not with success. The trade union movement in Sierra Leone has advocated for incorporation in the national labour laws that guarantee the right protection of workers from the informal economy.

Legislation regulate and set standards and restrictions for the labour market in Sierra Leone. ILO registered 166 national labour-related laws in the country in 2019. Only a few new bills were recorded in recent years (Table 4). More details of the legislation are available in Appendix Table 23. Newly approved legislation has a quite limited impact on the core labour market legislation, which remain in a review. The two latest laws are from 2019 and regard anti-corruption and anti-money laundering.

Table 4: Number of approved national labour, related legislations in Sierra Leone, 2016-2019

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of new legislations	6	1	0	2

Source: [ILO, NATLEX, Sierra Leone](#) and [SierraLeone.org](#)

Some labour legislation/policy has experienced some improvements according to international labour standards in recent years. It includes: i) better and affordable primary health care for all from the Health Insurance Act, and ii) audition and regulatory framework for the recruitment of labour for overseas employment from the Employment Migration Policy. Extension of coverage to informal economy workers from the Social Security Act is on an ongoing policy process. Besides, in February 2019 the country ratified five ILO conventions (see ahead). The status of core labour legislation is summarised below.

Constitution

The constitution of Sierra Leone was established in 1991. It protects the freedom of association, health and safety

at work, fair working conditions, equal pay for equal work and fair compensation.

The constitution has so far, no amendments after the civil war. First attempt to review the constitution started in 2007 but were not materialised in constitutional amendments.

In 2013, an 80-person constitution review committee was launched. In early 2017, the committee submitted a 680-page report to the government with 134 recommendations to review the 1991 constitution. The recommendations were based on suggestions from the public through submission forms and position papers from institutions within and outside the country.¹⁹ In late 2017, the government responded within a white paper. Here the government criticises the committee for not truly representing the view of the people and has rejected 102 of the recommendations, at times with claims that the issues already exist in the current constitution.²⁰ Governmental rejections include the recommendations abolition of the death penalty, enshrining provisions on economic, social and cultural rights and equality for women.²¹ Next step will be for the government to table a constitutional amendment bill before the parliament. So far, it has stalled several reforms in recent years, which include police reform.

Employers and Employed Act

This Act from 1962, which was latest amended in 1970, regulates relations between employers and employed, and safeguards the health of the employed. Sets forth provisions relating to the formation and interpretation of contracts of service, the recruitment of native labour for foreign services, restrictions on the engagement of industrial workers, employment of women, adolescents and children apprenticeship contracts. Also regulates the death, insolvency and change of residence of an employer; breaches of contract and disputes between an employer and employed, provisions as to agents; advances by employers.²²

Regulations of Wages and Industrial Relations Act

The legislation from 1971 set wages and freedom of association, collective bargaining and industrial relations. Limited information is available on a review of the impact of this legislation.

Observations on the labour legislation

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has registered flaws of the labour legislation protection of trade union rights in terms of international standards:²³

- Prior authorisation or approval by authorities required for the establishment of a union.
- Power to refuse official registration on arbitrary, unjustified, or ambiguous grounds.
- Absence of recourse to an independent body in the event of administrative refusal to register a trade union.
- Sanctions imposed for organising or joining an organisation not officially recognised.
- Excessively long prior notice / cooling-off period.
- Restrictions concerning the objective of a strike (e.g. industrial disputes, economic and social issues, political, sympathy and solidarity reasons).
- Absence of specific protection for workers involved in lawful strike actions (e.g. against dismissal).
- Discretionary determination or an excessively long list of “essential services” in which the right to strike is prohibited or severely restricted.
- Absence of compensatory guarantees for categories of workers deprived of the right to strike.

Ratified ILO Conventions

About Sierra Leone’s ratification of international labour standards, a total of 35 of the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) Conventions are ratified. The conventions cover principles and rights at work.

First, the eight Fundamental Conventions are the most important conventions that cover four fundamental principles and rights at work. The nation has ratified all of them.

Second, ILO has designated four Governance Conventions that are important to build national institutions and capacities that serve to promote employment, i.e. these conventions support a well-regulated and well-functioning labour market. The country has ratified two of these, leaving out the Employment Policy Convention (C122) and Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention (C129).

Third, the ILO has 177 Technical Conventions, out of which 83 conventions are “Up-To-Date” and actively promoted, i.e. an Up-To-Date Convention is one that is ready for ratification by the Member States and has been examined by the ILO Governing Body and deemed to be relevant.²⁴ In February 2020, ILO registered 25 ratified Technical Conventions, but just two are up-to-date: Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention (C94) and Protection of Wages Convention (C95) (see Appendix Table 24).

Out of 35 Conventions ratified by Sierra Leone, ILO registered that 26 are in force, four have been denounced; five instruments have been abrogated, and none has been ratified in the past 12 months.²⁵ The country ratified five ILO conventions in 2019: Convention 97 on Migration for Employment, Convention 143 on Migrant Workers, Convention 155 on Occupational Safety, Convention 187 on Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Recommendation, and the Maritime Labor Convention.²⁶

The ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) is an independent body composed of 20 legal experts at the national and international levels, charged with examining the application of ILO Conventions and Recommendations by ILO member States. First, in 2019, CEACR registered that none of the reports due has been sent for the past two or more years. Twenty-three reports are due on fundamental, governance and technical conventions, most of which should have included information in reply to the Committee's comments.²⁷

Second, CEACR's latest comments are from 2018 concerning both 10 direct requests and 8 observations.²⁸ Of observations are a repetition initiated in 2004 regarding a concern that the government's report to ILO has not been received. Direct requests include an appeal not to let the functions of labour inspectors interfere with their main objectives.

The latest in 2017, CEACR took note of observations forwarded by ITUC referring to several issues raised, which include necessary measures to amend the following provisions of the 2003 Labour Act and its 2007 Regulations as well as alleging violations of the right to strike in practice. The government indicates in its report that the National Tripartite Committee, the relevant ministries and other relevant authorities, are considering the concerns raised for necessary action. However, CEACR's concerns regarding the lack of progress in this respect continued and requested the government to intensify its efforts in bringing its legislation into conformity in line with international standards on freedom of association and collective bargaining (Conventions 87 and Convention 98).

Trade Agreements

Sierra Leone is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The country is neither a signatory nor an observer to any of the plurilateral agreements concluded under the WTO.

At the regional level, Sierra Leone is a founding member of the African Union (AU), the successor to the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The AU aims to become an economic and political union in the whole of Africa. The country is also a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which form a leading international economic cooperation. This organisation's treaty contains labour provisions with the following: i) cooperation regarding harmonisation of labour law and social security, ii) promotion of women's, youth and professional organisations, and iii) consultation of the social partners.²⁹ ECOWAS members adopted a standard external tariff (CET) in 2013, and Sierra Leone planned to implement it in 2017. Moreover, the ECOWAS protocols establish the free movement of persons; a Monetary Cooperation Program (EMCP) that calls for the creation of a single monetary zone in the sub-region; and Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS). The latter provides for products deemed of Community origin to be traded across borders duty-free and without quantitative restriction. In 2019, Sierra Leone became the first African country to announce visa-free entry for ECOWAS and US\$25 fee for Africa Union citizens.³⁰ Besides, the country is a signatory to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and the African Union Democracy and Good Governance Protocol.

Sierra Leone is eligible for the European Union's (EU) "Everything But Arms Initiative", which provides Least Developed Countries (LDCs) with non-reciprocal, duty-free and quota-free access to the EU market. Sierra Leone is participating in the negotiations for an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU, through the ECOWAS group. As already mentioned, the EU is among Sierra Leone's major trading partners.

Since 2002, Sierra Leone has benefitted from the United States' African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which is a Generalised System of Preferences (GPS). It allows duty and quota-free access to cane products, oil-palm products, lemongrass, ginger, tobacco, and bitterroot.

Sierra Leone has also signed other bilateral agreements for Angola, China, Ghana, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa. These agreements are mostly on trade cooperation matters.³¹

In 2018, the parliament of Sierra Leone ratified the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement aiming at promoting trade liberalisation in Africa, which in 2019 entered into force.

TRADE UNION RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

ITUC Global Rights Index 2019 ranked Sierra Leone as 5 out of 5+ and is listed with 'no guarantee of rights': countries with the rating of 5 are the 'worst countries in the world to work in'. While the legislation may spell out certain rights, workers have effectively no access to these rights and are therefore exposed to autocratic regimes and unfair labour practices.³² The country has seen its ranking worsen in 2019 compared the earlier recent years with a rise in attacks on workers' rights in law and practice.

ITUC's latest registered trade union rights violation case was from 2014. The case was related to the Sierra Leone Seamen's Union (SLSU) that reported intensive threats against trade unionists by the management of a company. Workers were told they would be dismissed and blacklisted if they continued to demand the negotiation of a collective agreement.

The government has been criticised for not adopting provisions with sufficiently effective penalties for the protection of workers and workers' organisations against acts of antiunion discrimination and acts of interference.³³

Since 2011, the multinational agribusiness company SOCFIN has due to large-scale investment (more than 18,000 hectares) in palm oil in the Southern Province in Sierra Leone, deprived communities access to and control over their land.³⁴ Serious violations and abuses of civil and political rights have furthermore emerged. Parts of the violations have been revealed in the Panama Papers.

Other reports of labour rights violations were identified in the mining industry. In 2019, communities affected by diamond mining won the right to sue OCTÉA Group companies over alleged human rights abuses including displacement, property damage, and soil and water contamination, loss of income from farming, deaths and injuries after violent repressions of demonstrators.³⁵

In 2015, workers of the Shandong Steel's iron ore mine went on an unlimited strike citing unfair treatment as the reason for the strike. Shandong Steels, which was formerly a minority partner with the then African Minerals, had sought to reorganise the activities of the mine, which it hoped would lead to some cost savings. The workers' union leaders contended that some workers were paid just two months' salary as severance pay regardless of how long they have worked for the company. A union leader also alleged that some social security benefits were not paid.³⁶ Communications

Director of Shandong Steel however assured workers that the company will pay any benefit that is due them.³⁷

The country is also suffering from the aftermath of the Ebola crisis in 2014, which particularly have affected the country's health workers. Reports estimated that 5% of medical doctors and 7% of nurses lost their lives during the epidemic. The dire situation was exacerbated by an inadequate supply of Personal Protective Equipment to healthcare workers during the crisis. The surviving health workers also face stigma from the public, which has led to some health workers being evicted by landlords.³⁸

ILO Committee of Freedom of Association has no active or follow-up Freedom of Association cases (Table 5).

Table 5: ILO Complaints Procedure Freedom of Association Cases

Active	Follow-up	Closed
0	0	3

Source: [ILO, NORMLEX, International Labour Standards country profile, Sierra Leone](#)

WORKING CONDITIONS

After many years, the outdated monthly minimum wage was finally increased in 2015 from Le21,000 (US\$3.7) to Le500,000 (US\$63). The National Minimum Wage was again adjusted in November 2019 that was set at Le600,000 (US\$62) per month and became effective in April 2020. The country's minimum wage is basically in line to other countries in Western Africa: Benin's of US\$64, Niger's of US\$57, Ghana's of US\$55 and Togo's of US\$59.³⁹ Most typical 'career' wage is around US\$234 per month. However, the application of formal wages, including minimum wage, are not applied in the informal economy that shadowing close to nine out of ten workers.

Table 6: Status of Monthly Wages in Sierra Leone

	Leone Current	US\$ Current
Most typical 'career' wage (2019)	2,125,333	234
Nominal minimum wage (2020-current)	600,000	62
Nominal minimum wage growth from 2015/19 to 2020-current		20 %
Real minimum wage growth from 2015/19 to 2020-current		1.2 % *

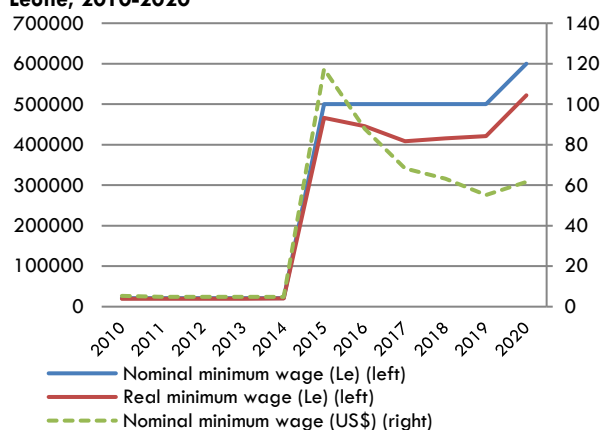
* The nominal minimum wage rise in 2020 deducted by inflation in consumer prices in the period from 2015 to 2019.

Source: [WageIndicator.org](#) and [Averagesalarysurvey.org](#)

Despite the 20% increase in the nominal minimum wage from 2015/19 to 2020, it has not happened in real terms. The minimum wage is not indexed to inflation or the economic growth rate. Among others, the

depreciation of the Leone currency against major foreign currencies adversely contributes to rising food prices since 2014 (see also Economic Performance section). It created a widening gap between the nominal and real minimum wage: this gap was estimated on an aggregate value at 14% on average in the period from 2015 to 2019. If the minimum wage is adjusted with inflation, the real rise stands at around 6%. The hike took place after five years, and so, the annual average rate of real minimum wage increase is only 1.2%. The real minimum wage growth rate further has been lower than the GDP growth per capita at 2.3% on average from 2016 to 2018. It reflects the fact that the minimum wage is not following the economy's development. By the same token, wages are not meeting the basic cost of living just as employers often do not respect the minimum wage in practice.⁴⁰ Figure 2 below depicts the minimum wage trends in Sierra Leone in the period 2010-2020.

Figure 2: Nominal and Real Minimum Wage Trends in Sierra Leone, 2010-2020



Source: ILO and WageIndicator.org

In April 2016, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security embarked on a nationwide inspection and sensitisation of various employers to ensure compliance with the new minimum wage and to assess other working conditions infringements. However, the implementation was affected by a lack of resources, which reduces the ministry's monitoring function.⁴¹

Standard working hours per week is 40 hours and an upward of 60 hours for security workers. This implies eight hours per day for non-security workers, but, the average working hour amounts to 12 hours per day. This especially applies in the informal economy. Workers are permitted to have a mandatory two consecutive days off per week with the law providing 100% pay premium for work done on the rest days (see more on Table 7). Violations of overtime are frequent. For example, it is common among street vendors and market stall workers, rock crushers, and day labourers.⁴² There have been

numerous complaints of unpaid wages and lack of attention to injuries caused by the job. Unfortunately, many victims do not know where to turn for recourse, or their complaints are unresolved. Not to mention, only 34% of young wage and salaried workers have a written agreement.⁴³

Table 7: Working Conditions in Sierra Leone

Fixed-term contracts prohibited for permanent tasks	Yes
Maximum length of a single fixed-term contract (months)	12 months
Maximum number of working days per week	5.5 days
Premium for work overtime work (% of hourly pay)	50 %
Paid annual leave (average for working days with 1, 5 and 10 years of tenure)	19, 22 and 28 days
Minimum length of maternity leave	84 days
Amount of maternity leave benefits	100% of wages
Source of Maternity leave Benefits	Employer

Source: [World Bank, Doing Business, Labour Market Regulation in Sierra Leone](#)

The government did not effectively enforce labour standards in any sectors. As of 2018, Sierra Leone employs eight occupational health and safety officers, 14 labour officers and five labour inspectors – all of whom handle labour inspections.⁴⁴ It suggests a share of one officer handling inspections per 10,333 employees (and one per 93,000 in employment). ILO's technical advice is one inspector for every 40,000 workers in the least developed economies.

The government in collaboration with SLLC has launched the National Employment Policy for 2015-2018. Its main framework is to address and improve labour relations and conditions among service workers in Sierra Leone - especially workers in the informal economy.⁴⁵ This policy's plan has, so far, not been renewed.⁴⁶

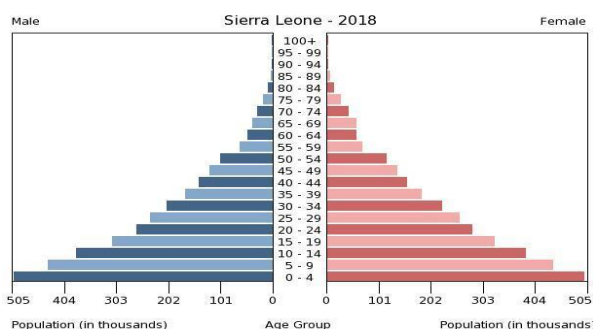
In Sierra Leone, mental health problems are widely believed to be caused by witchcraft or demons. Extreme poverty, one of the deadliest Ebola outbreak in history and traumas from a long civil war, has left an estimated 10% of the population with mental health problems.⁴⁷ Due to an unknown number of unreported cases, the share is likely to be much higher. Almost 99% of those affected go untreated. Instead, spiritual beliefs drive those in need into the shrines of the country's 45,000 traditional healers, who are accused of financial exploitation of families hoping for a cure for relatives, irresponsible use of psychotropic medication mixed with herbs without knowing anything about side-effects and

violence. These facts complicate an effective and including the labour market. Poverty and mental health are interconnected, as lack of financial means has a wide range of negative effects on both society and individuals – including mental health (see section Economic Performance).⁴⁸

WORKFORCE

Sierra Leone has a youthful population driven by a high fertility rate at almost five children per woman, which has declined slightly over the last two decades. In 2018, the population was estimated at 6.3 million – whereas 42% are below the age of 14 years (Figure 3). Only 3.7% of the population is 65 years of older. The working-age population (15-64) form 55%.

Figure 3: Population pyramid on age- and sex in Sierra Leone



Source: [CIA, The World Factbook, Sierra Leone](#)

In 2020, the total employment-to-population ratio (the proportion of a country's working-age population that is employed) for people 15 years or older in Sierra Leone is estimated at 58%, which is slightly lower than the Western Africa average (60%) (Table 8). This ratio has no gender gap in Sierra Leone, except 6 percentage points gap favouring young women than men (Table 8). It was related to that more young men were enrolled in the education system than young women as well as with higher inactivity and unemployment rates.

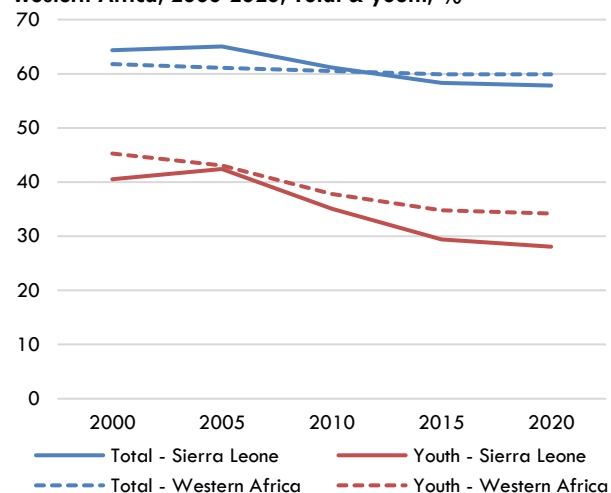
Table 8: Employment-to-population ratio, Age and sex distribution, 2020

Sex	Age	Sierra Leone	Western Africa
Total	Total 15+	58 %	60 %
	Youth 15-24	28 %	34 %
Men	Total 15+	58 %	65 %
	Youth 15-24	23 %	37 %
Women	Total 15+	57 %	54 %
	Youth 15-24	33 %	31 %

Source: [ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\)](#)

The labour force participation rate (people working or actively seeking work as a share of the working-age population) in Sierra Leone is estimated to have experienced a narrow decrease from 64% in 2000 to 58% in 2020. This trend for the youth is estimated somewhat similar, just with overall lower values: 41% in 2000 to 28% in 2020 (Figure 4). Compared to the Western Africa average, Sierra Leone's participation rate is estimated slightly lower both in total and among the youth.

Figure 4: Labour force participation rate in Sierra Leone and Western Africa, 2000-2020, Total & youth, %

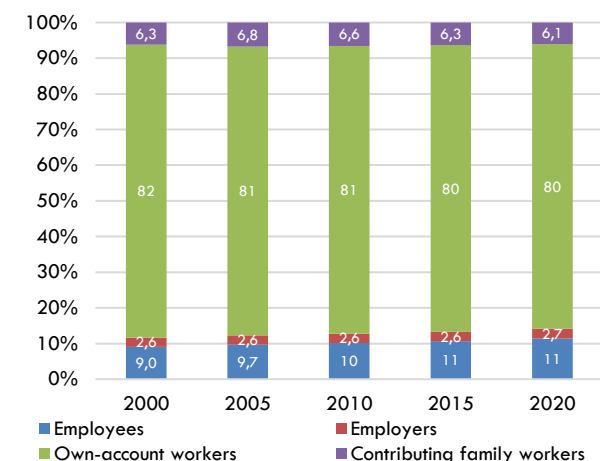


Sources: [ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\), 9th Edition](#)

When it comes to structural changes in the status of employment, only marginal changes have occurred in Sierra Leone since 2000 (Figure 5). First, the vast majority of the employed population is own-account workers. This group is estimated to have decreased two percentage points from 82% in 2000 to 80% in 2020. The second most common form of employment is employees: this group is estimated to have increased on the margin two percentage points from 9.0% in 2000 to 11% in 2020. The development of the two small groups, employers and contributing family workers, have been stagnant and are estimated to form respectively 2.7% and 6.1% of the total workforce in 2020.

Own-account workers and contributing family workers are together known as 'vulnerable employed' and are less likely to have formal work arrangements. The work is characterised by low earnings, low productivity and challenging conditions of work that undermine workers' fundamental rights. This group of 'vulnerable employed' have stagnated at 86% of the total work-force in 2020.

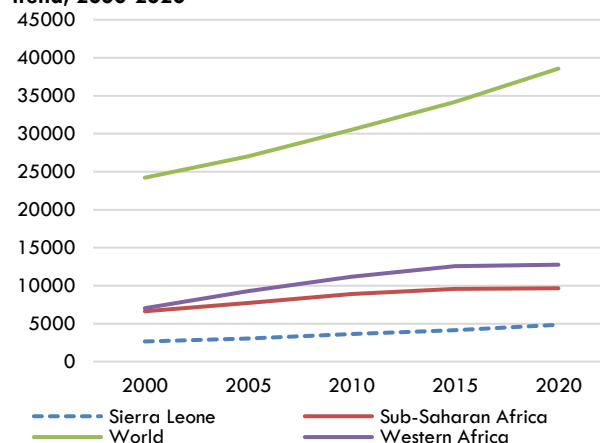
Figure 5: Estimations and projections of status of employment in Sierra Leone, 2000-2020, %



In Sierra Leone, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is central for the private sector, present in almost all sectors and covering about 70% of the workforce. The main activities in the MSME sector include food and agro-processing, light manufacturing for the local market, tourism, and trade. Sierra Leone relies heavily on imports to meet the demands of the local market. A previously mentioned, the depreciation of the Leone currency against major foreign currencies adversely contributes to rising food prices and affecting Sierra Leone's local markets. Besides, high transport costs, poor infrastructure, and an underdeveloped logistics services sector limit Sierra Leone's ability to develop competitive value-added exports and raise the price of imported goods.⁴⁹ The companies' registry shows that 2,300 companies are registered.⁵⁰

Figure 6 illustrates that Sierra Leone's labour productivity has only increased on the margin since 2000. It is furthermore staying below the Western Africa average and far below the sub-Saharan Africa and World averages. Other data suggest that labour productivity growth is lower in 2015/2018 at 2.5% than 4.4% in 2000/2002.⁵¹

Figure 6: Estimations and projections of labour productivity trend, 2000-2020



Note: Labour productivity is defined as output per worker (GDP constant 2011 international \$ in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP))
Source: [ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\)](#)

Unemployment and underemployment

Unemployment and underemployment rates continue to be very high and said to be growing at an alarming rate – especially among the youth and women (see sections Youth and Gender). It was interrelated to a relatively high urbanisation rate at 42% in 2017. It has been argued that youth unemployment was to a large degree a cause of the civil conflict in Sierra Leone in the 1990s. Today, youths' employment situation in Sierra Leone continues to be critical.

ILO estimates that 120,000 workers are unemployed in 2020, which is 38% more than the 87,000 in 2016. This equals 4.4% of the workforce in 2020 (Table 9). Since 2010, the unemployment rate has been between 4.3% and 5.5%. More men than women are unemployed both for the total population and youth. Overall, unemployment rates in Sierra Leone are similar to the Western Africa average (Table 9).

Table 9: Unemployment in Sierra Leone and Western Africa, 2020

Type	Gender	Sierra Leone	Western Africa
Unemployment	Total	4.4 %	4.4 %
	Men	5.2 %	4.2 %
	Women	3.6 %	4.6 %
Youth Unemployment	Total	8.5 %	8.2 %
	Men	13 %	8.0 %
	Women	5.4 %	8.4 %
Underemployment (2014)	Total	11 %	N/a
	Men	11 %	N/a
	Women	10 %	N/a

Source: [ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\)](#)

The 'strict' unemployment rate mentioned above measures those working more than one hour per week.⁵²

This measurement can neglect underemployment, which is an aspect many developing countries are facing. ON international standards, underemployment is defined as people who express a desire to either have additional hours of work in their present job, have an extra job or people who are looking for a new job with extended working hours. In 2014, 11% of the workforce was underemployed with basically no gender gap (Table 9). Among the youth, the underemployment rate is overall 1.4 percentage larger, 3.1 percentage points for men and 0.4 percentage points for women. On a different measure of under- and overemployment, other updated national survey data revealed the underemployment rate (>8 hours per day) at 36% just as overemployment (<10 hours per day) at 26%. In addition, compared to 2011, the amount of paid workers for 7-9 hours per day had declined by 8.2 percentage points to 2018 (see more details in Table 10).

Table 10: Daily working hours, paid working population, %, 2018

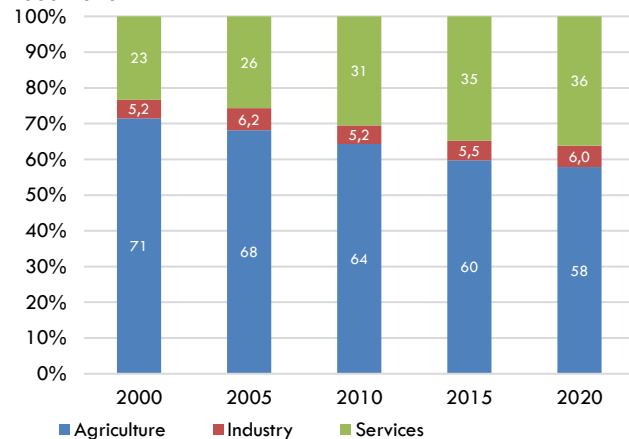
Working hours	Per cent
Less than 4 hours per day	15 %
4-6 hours per day	21 %
7-9 hours per day	38 %
10-12 hours per day	17 %
More than 12 hours per day	9 %

Source: [Sierra Leone integrated household survey \(SLIHS\) report, 2018](#)

Sectoral Employment

Employment in Sierra Leone has experienced some structural changes during the last two decades. Employment in the agricultural sector dropped from 71% to 58%. The industry basically did not change staying at 6% while service sector increased: from 23% to 36% (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Employment by aggregate sector in Sierra Leone, 2000-2020



Source: [ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\)](#)

Table 11 below outlines the employment per sector. Some of the main aspects are summarised below. First, as indicated, the agricultural sector has the highest employment share at 58% of total employment with no gender gap. Overall, agriculture is dominated by smallholders, mainly in subsistence farming with minimal value-added.

Second, the next most extensive employment distribution is in the trade, restaurants and hotels sector covering 27% followed by the community, social and personal services sector of 3.7%. In the former, women present 70%, while in the latter 32%. Men are overrepresented in the rest of major sectors.

Employment in the manufacturing sector covers just 2.8% and is dominated by informal small and medium-sized enterprises using simple technologies. So far, it suggests that Sierra Leone is challenged by reaching the SDG target of significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product (see in SDG Table, Indicator 9.2.2, on Page iv).

Table 11: Employment sector distribution in Sierra Leone, 2020

Sector	Total sector employment	Sector employment share, %	Ratio of women in sector employment, %
Agriculture	1,520,619	58 %	49 %
Mining & quarrying	35,037	1.3 %	4.1 %
Manufacturing	72,577	2.8 %	8.5 %
Electricity, gas & water	16,224	0.6 %	12 %
Construction	33,826	1.3 %	29 %
Trade, restaurants & hotels*	713,583	27 %	70 %
Transport, storage & communication	51,564	2.0 %	4.2 %
Finance, real estate & business services**	40,311	1.5 %	43%
Community, social and personal services ***	96,586	3.7 %	32 %
Other services ****	96,586	1.9 %	45 %
Total	2,629,000	100%	51 %

* This sector includes: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of vehicles and motorcycles and Accommodation and food service activities ** This sector includes: Financial and insurance activities and Real estate; business and administrative activities *** This sector includes: Public administration and Defence; compulsory social security, Education, and Human health and social work activities **** This sector includes: Arts, entertainment and recreation, Other service activities, Activities of households as employers, Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies and Not classifiable by economy activity.

Source: [ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\)](#)

Table 12 below gives an overview of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) share by sub-sector both in total and per worker. On average, the GDP share by sector per worker was estimated at US\$1,543 in 2017. The minority group of mining and quarrying (1.3% of total employment) has the largest GDP share per worker of US\$30,972. The restaurants and hotels group has the lowest GDP share per workers of US\$468 followed by the agricultural workers at US\$1,450. Especially the restaurants and hotels group supports 27% of the total employment, but only contributes to 8.1% of GDP, which indicates a low level of labour productivity in this sub-sector.

Table 12: GDP share by sector and GDP per worker in Sierra Leone, 2017

Sector	GDP share by sector, %	GDP share by sector per worker, US\$
Agriculture	56 %	1,450
Mining & quarrying	12 %	30,972
Manufacturing	2.0 %	64,281
Electricity, gas & water	0.5 %	14,149
Construction	2.0 %	2,721
Trade, restaurants & hotels	8.1 %	468
Transport, storage & communication *	7.3 %	6,205
Finance, real estate & business services **	4.1 %	4,835
Community, social and personal services ***	5.5 %	2,379
Other services ****	3.4 %	2,898
Total	100 %	1,543

Note: GDP share by sector per worker is calculated by the total GDP (current US\$) divided by GDP share per sector origin, which then is divided in the number of workers per sector.

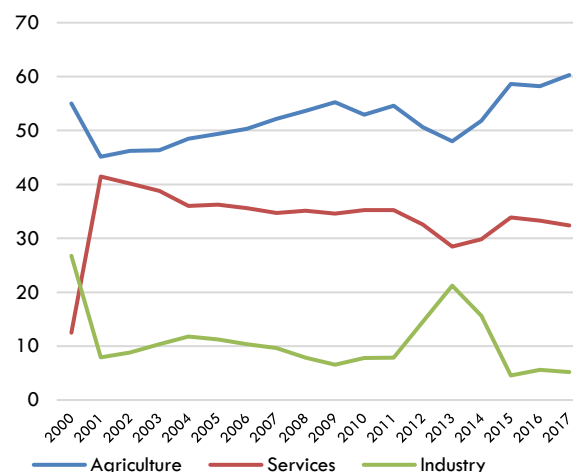
* This sector includes: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of vehicles and motorcycles and Accommodation and food service activities ** This sector includes: Financial and insurance activities and Real estate; business and administrative activities *** This sector includes: Public administration and Defence; compulsory social security, Education, and Human health and social work activities **** This sector includes: Arts, entertainment and recreation, Other service activities, Activities of households as employers, Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies and Not classifiable by economy activity.

Source: DTDA calculations based on data from the [World Bank DataBank](#), [ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\)](#), and [AfDB, African Economic Outlook 2018, Sierra Leone](#)

Data reveal that the industry sector's value-added of GDP share peaked at the beginning of the 2000s due to a mining bonanza of export of diamonds, iron ores and titanium ores. It has slowly decreased during the last two decades, especially a downturn in 2014 and 2015. In 2016 the industry sector slowly recovered but stayed below the level from 2009. Also, the service sector's value-added of GDP share has likewise been on a declining trend. Instead, the agricultural sector's share

experienced a rising trend (see more in Figure 8). One reason for this GDP share's upsurge in the agricultural sector is an impact of the depreciation of the Leone currency against major foreign currencies adversely contributes to rising food prices. This sector's GDP share drop in the middle of 2010s was a result of the Ebola epidemic that stalled many economic activities.

Figure 8: Sectors share of GDP in Sierra Leone, % of GDP, 2000-2017



Source: [World Bank, World Development Indicators](#)

Migration

Migration in Sierra Leone is divided into different aspects such as internal migration (rural-urban, rural-rural, and urban-rural), net migration (in- and out-migration), and refugees.

The Sierra Leone Civil War (1991–2002) caused a vast displacement of population, which has played a role in the distribution of the population across the country. Inter-regional migratory exchanges are very dynamic, especially in the Western and Northern Regions.⁵³ Almost a quarter of the population do not live in the district they were born in. Other reasons for internal migrating include most often marriage, but also work or education.⁵⁴

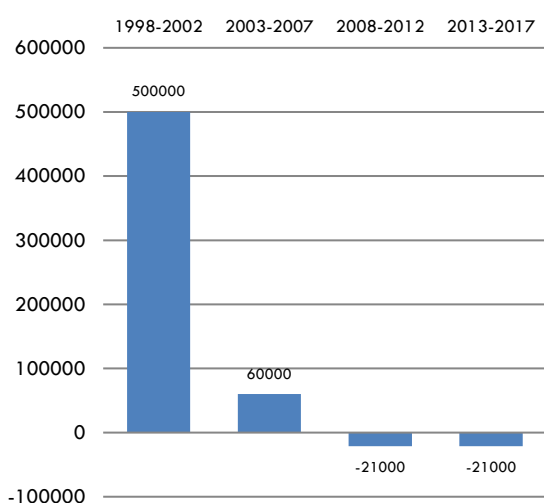
The country is undergoing a relatively slowly urbanisation, partly driven by natural increase and mostly an influx of young people moving into larger cities. In 2017, 42% of the population lived in urban areas, whereas the rate in 2007 was down to 38%. It is on the average level in comparison to neighbouring countries, for example, Benin of 47%, Ghana of 55%, Niger of 16%, and Togo of 41%. In Sierra Leone, the urban areas are not able to generate the supply of jobs

needed in the formal sector, and many thus lack employment opportunities

People with education are more likely to migrate across country borders: according to a study, more than half of university-educated Sierra Leoneans were migrating to more developed countries.⁵⁵ Men are more prone to migrate than women in Sierra Leone. Most migration is caused by economic reasons rather than related to the fear of Ebola epidemic.⁵⁶

While Sierra Leone mostly has been a country of out-migration, it also hosts migrants from other West African countries. The country previously experienced a high influx of migrants when refugees returned to the country after the civil war. In recent years, the migration trend is moving towards that more are leaving than entering the country (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Net migration trend in Sierra Leone, 1998-2017



Note: Net migration is the net total of migrants during the period, i.e. the total number of immigrants less the annual number of emigrants, including both citizens and noncitizens.

Source: [World Bank DataBank](#)

Personal remittances play a limited role in Sierra Leone's economy, providing 1.6% of the country's GDP, which is lower than the Sub-Saharan average on 2.6 % (Table 13).

Table 13: Migration status in Sierra Leone and sub-Saharan Africa

Net migration (2013-2017)	Sierra Leone	-21,000
Remittances received, % of GDP (2014-2018, av.)	Sierra Leone	1.2 %
	Sub-Saharan Africa	2.6 %

Source: [World Bank DataBank](#).

There is a high incidence of illegal migration to Western Europe and the Middle East. Most migrants from Sierra Leone, who reach Europe, eventually return to Sierra Leone – often traumatised and ruined. Here returnees at times furthermore are rejected by relatives and friends as they usually are viewed as failures after having used large amounts of money from their families to pay for their failed journey.⁵⁷

Around 3,475 people from Sierra Leone have fled in 2018 and applied for asylum in other countries. This corresponds to approximately 0.05% of all residents. The most destination countries hereof have been Guinea, Germany and Mauritania. Overall, 89% of the asylum applications have been rejected. The most successful have been the refugees in Guinea and Canada. Many of these people claim to have been persecuted by members of the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP).⁵⁸ In Sierra Leone, just 370 refugees were registered in June 2019, and 96% of them were from Liberia. The country did not register asylum seekers as of December 31, 2018.⁵⁹

In October 2017, the government launched the National Labour Migration Policy of Sierra Leone. This policy tackles a wide range of topics that are relevant to the national context, among others, migration and urbanisation, migration control, migration and development, protection of migrants, and migration data. The policy furthermore aims to strengthen good governance of labour migration, promote the protection of migrants' rights and harness the contribution of Sierra Leone's migrants for national development.⁶⁰ In 2019, the policy was in auditing and regulatory framework for the recruitment of labour for overseas employment.

Informal Economy

Informal economy is pervasive in Sierra Leone, and formal work is privileged to the relatively few most highly educated workers.

Definitions of the informal economy are at times contradictory, and there exists no operational definition. Most often, the term appears as a catch-all for all economic activities that do not belong to the formal economy. Most of the products and services produced in the informal economy are legal, and most is sold in the formal economy. Informal employment is unregistered, most often lower paid and receive less benefits compared to formal employment.

Around 2.1 million are employed in the informal economy, equivalent to 86% of the total amount of employed (Table 14). The informal economy contributed approximately 41% of GDP. Women are overrepresented in the informal economy, taking 57% of the informal jobs. In comparison, they only take up 27% of the formal jobs in Sierra Leone.

Table 14: Status of informal economy in Sierra Leone

Persons employed in the informal economy (2018)	2,076,934
Share of persons employed in the informal economy out of total employed (2018)	86 %
Informal economy share of GDP (2010/14)	Approx. 41 %
Share of women in the informal economy (2015)	57 %

Source: [IMF, The informal economy in sub-Saharan Africa: size and determinants, 2017](#), [Sierra Leone 2015 population and housing census](#) and [Sierra Leone integrated household survey \(SLIHS\) report, 2018](#)

The rural areas have a higher proportion of informal employment than the urban areas. Informal workers are concentrated in the North Western and Eastern Region. This could be because both regions are highly agrarian and engaged in mining, which are two sectors that have a large share of informal workers. The region with the least number of informal workers is in the Northern Region.

A central challenge for the labour market in Sierra Leone is recognising and formalising workers from the informal economy. In practice, the labour legislations and regulations cover close to only one out of ten workers, i.e. employees in the formal sector are more secure of receiving the minimum wage, written employment contracts, and access to health and old-age pensions. (see also the Social Protection and Working Conditions sections).

In a low-income and post-conflict country like Sierra Leone, citizens often pay a range of 'informal' taxes, such as payment to chiefs on community projects or labour services, which differ from statutory policies. This is especially the case in the rural areas and is frequently overlooked in analyses of local systems of taxation.⁶¹

In the status of policy process, there are some establishments of structure at bi-partite level for informal economy unions and local government authorities, which meet and discuss issues on common concerns. However, National Tripartite Informal Economy Forum or other

national forums addressing status of informal economy workers are not functioning.

Child Labour

In 2018, Sierra Leone made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.⁶² The President and Vice President donated together with officials from ministries, departments and agencies three months of their salaries to eliminate school fees for more than two million students in primary and secondary education. However, the country has not implemented its national action plan on child labour. This plan includes strategies to address human trafficking through prevention efforts, victim identification, protection and referral of victims to services, training of personnel, and government coordination and monitoring.

According to ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), child labour can be defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and dignity that is harmful to physical and mental development. If a child engages in doing domestic work – especially girls helping their parents at home, it is regarded as light work. Nevertheless, if such work deprives them of education, it could be regarded as child labour, though not the worst form of child labour. Any hazardous work is categorised as being part of the worst forms of child labour.

It is believed that if children are given full access to education, there may be little or no room to resort to doing hazardous work (see Education section). When communities are aware of the social stigma associated with child labour, it creates room for eliminating it.⁶³

In 2017, more than half of all children in Sierra Leone (897,142) were involved in child labour, which is almost double the sub-Saharan Africa average (Table 15Table 15). In 2010, more than half a million children were out of school working in the mines.⁶⁴ Some numbers state that child labour affects up to 72% of children in Sierra Leone.⁶⁵

Child labour was more common among the poorest quintile of households (57%) compared to the richest (34%); just as more common in rural areas (53%) than urban (42%). Many children ages 7 to 14 were combining work and school, estimated at 43%.

Table 15: Working children Proportion of all children

Region	Year	Type	Proportion
Sierra Leone	2017	Children in employment	51 %
		Child labour	39 %
		Hazardous work	31 %
Africa	2016	Children in employment	27 %
		Child labourers	20 %
		Hazardous work	8.6 %

Note: Children in employment include all children who conduct some kind of work, whereas child labourers are a narrower term without mild forms of work. Hazardous work is the worst form of child labour as defined in ILO C182.

Source: [MICS, Sierra Leone multiple indicator cluster survey 2017](#), [U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018: Sierra Leone](#), [UNICEF, Sierra Leone Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2010, 2011](#) and [ILO, Accelerating action against child labour, International Labour Conference, 99th Session 2010](#)

Child labour is most prevalent in the age group of 5-11 years (63%). It is primarily due to the measurement, as more than one hour of economic work a week for 5-11-year olds is considered child labour, while the age group 12-14 has to do more than 14 hours of economic work for it to be considered a child labourer. Lower child labour numbers for the age group 12-14 does therefore not necessarily reflect economic inactivity.

In the agricultural sector, child labour activities include the production of cassava, coffee, cocoa, palm oil, peanuts and rice, fishing, including deep-sea fishing, mending nets, and working on boats in the open sea. Within the industry sector, some children are mining, quarrying, constructing and manufacturing. Finally, in the service sector, child labour occurs within dumpsite scavenging, domestic work, street work, portering, auto-repair and vehicles.

Within the worst forms of child labour, activities include forced work within begging, domestic work, stealing, and forced work in commercial sexual exploitation at times a result of human trafficking. Of child labour in the mines, it is mostly boys (5-17 years) who are forced to long hours in hazardous conditions, sometimes without pay.

Sierra Leone has ratified the ILO core Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the Convention on Minimum Age. The government has several policies, programs and actions that cover child labour issues.

The Child Right Act sets the minimum age for light work at the age of 13. However, it is not specific enough to prevent children from involvement in child labour because it does not limit the number of hours per week

for light work, determine the activities in which light work may be permitted, or specify the conditions in which light work may be undertaken. The act identifies areas of hazardous work prohibited for children such as portering of heavy loads, going to sea, work in places in which machines are used. Types of hazardous work identified are not included, such as street work as there is evidence that street work is conducted in unhealthy environments that may expose children to hazardous substances, agents, or processes, to temperatures, and to the noise of vibrations damaging their health.

The act requires the establishment of a Child Welfare Committee in each village, chiefdom and district. However, due to a constraint budget, committees have only been established in a few parts of the country.

Criminal law enforcement in Sierra Leone is challenged by a lack of coordination, limited funding, lack of personnel training. The government is withholding the number of violations found, prosecutions initiated and convictions.

The government has a complaint line for issues related to child protection. However, it is uncertain whether it was operational in 2018. The Ministry of Mines and Mineral resources can conduct inspections of mines and fine those who are found using child labour, but these laws have not been adequately enforcing due to a limited number of labour inspectors and a lack of funding (revisit Working Conditions section).

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security have employed 20 labour inspectors to address child labour. Nevertheless, the government does not effectively enforce child labour-related laws. This is related to a lack of funding and untrained inspectors in areas where child labour is prevalent.⁶⁶

Gender

For centuries, Sierra Leone has been entrenched in a patriarchal system depriving women in the social, legal, political, religious and economic sphere.⁶⁷ Gender problems include a weaker attachment to the labour market, different kinds of violence and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM).⁶⁸ The voice of women is ignored and drowned in the debate about their sexual and reproductive health by the resistance of conservative religious groups and reluctant government officials.

Table 16 below shows that gender gaps in central labour indicators are quite narrow except among employees that favour men and vulnerable employment that favour women. Women have traditionally engaged in low-income activities such as petty trading.

Table 16: Estimation on workforce key indicators gender gaps in Sierra Leone, 2020

	Women	Men	Men/women gap, percentage point (p.p.)
Employment	57 %	58 %	0.8 p.p.
Unemployment	5.2 %	3.6 %	-1.6 p.p.
Underutilisation *	14 %	13 %	-0.9 p.p.
Employees	5.4 %	18 %	12 p.p.
Vulnerable employment **	92 %	80 %	-12 p.p.

* Underutilisation constitutes of: i) insufficient of the volume of work (time-related underemployment), ii) low remuneration (low earnings), and iii) incompatibility of education and occupation (skills mismatch).

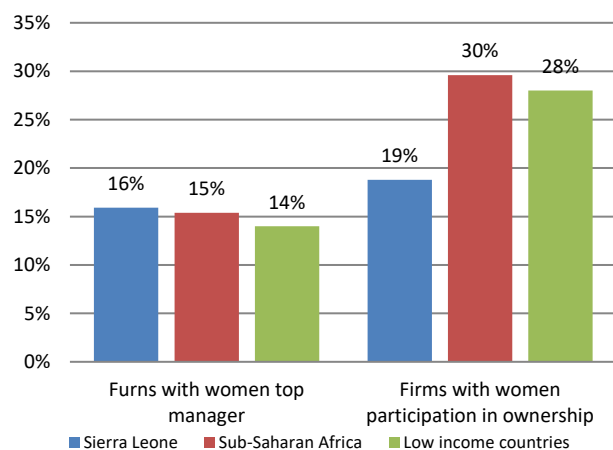
** Aggregate own-account workers and contributing family workers.

Source: [ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\)](#)

Although the country has made progress in mitigating the vulnerabilities for women and girls, women continue to experience discriminatory practices. Meanwhile, Sierra Leone is a country with a high rate of teenage pregnancy.⁶⁹ The government has tried to reinforce the discriminatory policy of excluding pregnant girls from school, jeopardising them their right to education, which since 2015 has been the case. However, the regional court has ruled that the ban has to be uplifted in 2019 (see Youth and Education sections).⁷⁰

The latest Enterprise Survey from 2017 reported that 16% of firms had women participation in ownership, which is slightly larger than the sub-Saharan Africa average on 15%; and 19% of the participation in ownership are female (Figure 10). This is 11 percentage points lower than the sub-Saharan African level on 30%.

Figure 10: Women in Management and Ownership, 2017



Source: [World Bank, Sierra Leone Enterprise Survey - 2017](#)

The Global Gender Gap Index 2018 – measuring gaps and women’s empowerment – ranked Sierra Leone as number 114 out of 144 countries (1 is best) in 2018. On the indicator of economic participation and opportunity, Sierra Leone scores best (62). The lowest scorings are in educational attainment (128), health and survival (124) and political empowerment (124).⁷¹

The other international Gender Inequality Index – measuring health, empowerment and economic status – ranked Sierra Leone with low human development as number 153 out of 162 countries (1 is best).⁷² What maintains this low ranking is, among other things, a relatively high maternal mortality.

The government has concluded the drafting of the Gender Quality and Women’s Empowerment Policy, National Gender Strategic Plan and the Sierra Leone National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and 1820 all of which are aligned to the National Development Plan (PRS IV).⁷³ The government has furthermore declared combating rape and sexual abuses a national priority. Here law enforcement and health officials are working together to ensure justice and proper care for victims. However, even with legal protection, such as the Domestic Violence Act, very few women, especially married women, feel genuinely protected by this law.⁷⁴

In 2018, Sierra Leone held its national general election, and despite all efforts to improve women’s chances of being elected, the result showed a drop in women’s representation in parliament and local councils; out of the 146 elected parliamentarians, only 18 were women.⁷⁵

Youth

Sierra Leone is with 42% of its population below the age of 14 years, a youthful nation. As depicted in Table 9 above, youth unemployment and youth underemployment rates are higher than for the total workforce. The youth unemployment was a leading factor in the prolongation of the civil war; in the 1990s as they with few job prospects joined rebel groups and engaged in criminal activities and armed conflict.⁷⁶ Among the soldiers were children, who today are recovering as they gradually have earned greater acceptance from families and communities as they try to overcome their childhood trauma.⁷⁷

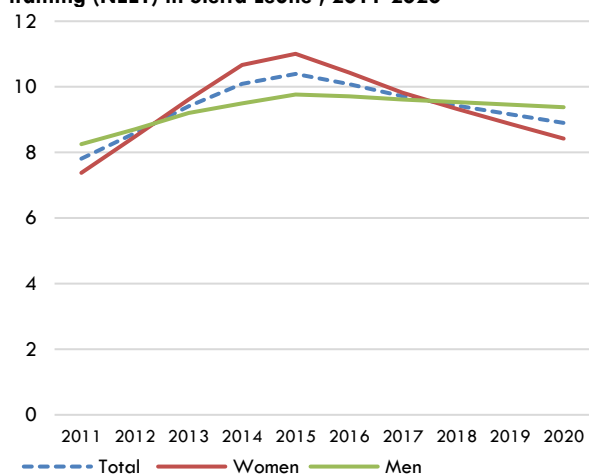
Illiteracy remains a persistent challenge as 41% of those aged 15-19 in rural areas, 14% in urban areas.⁷⁸ The youth lacks skills and education, making it even more difficult to obtain limited formal jobs available. Two in

five young people 35 years and below have never attended school (see section Education).⁷⁹

The government has recently implemented new legislation for youth-friendly initiatives that aim to provide youth development, employment, and empowerment (see also Appendix Table 23).

The NEET rate – the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training – has been relatively low. It has decreased on the margin from 10% in 2015 to an estimated 9% in 2020 (Figure 11). For women, the trend has been slightly steeper with a decrease in three percentage points in the same period.

Figure 11: Share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) in Sierra Leone, 2011-2020



Source: [ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\)](#)

In 2018, a national youth service scheme was launched to reduce the high youth unemployment rate in the country.⁸⁰ The scheme promotes youth participation in governance and to provide newly qualified graduates with opportunities to obtain practical job experience in public and private sectors of the economy. Furthermore, in 2019, the Ministry of Youth Affairs has launched a review process of the Revised National Youth Policy 2014.⁸¹

EDUCATION

The government has prioritised education and free quality education as one of its flagship programmes and has increased the budgetary allocation to education to 21% of the national budget.⁸² In 2018, an initiative of universal education up to secondary school was launched dubbed Free Quality School Education initiative (FQSE). Parents who neglect to send their children to school are announced to be convicted by the 2004 Education Act.

Despite the government's initiative, substantial barriers remain, including a lack of schools, teachers, lack of transportation to schools, and sexual abuse by teachers.⁸³

The government has not stopped to prohibit girls who were pregnant from attending regular public schools or taking secondary and post-secondary school entrance exams, making them vulnerable to the worst forms of child labour. In 2019, however, the regional court ruled to uplift the ban allowing pregnant girls to attend school.

Data about employment by education in Sierra Leone is scarce, as the education level for 66% of all employed is not stated. Therefore, Table 17 below must be interpreted with caution; while a fifth of the employed population has a basic education, only 4.5 % have education on an advanced level. Education levels for employed men are slightly higher than for women.

Table 17: Employment by education in Sierra Leone, % of employment distribution, age 15+, 2014

	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Level not stated
Total	19 %	11 %	4.5 %	66 %
Men	22 %	16 %	6.3 %	56 %
Women	17 %	6.3 %	3.0 %	74 %

Source: [ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\)](#)

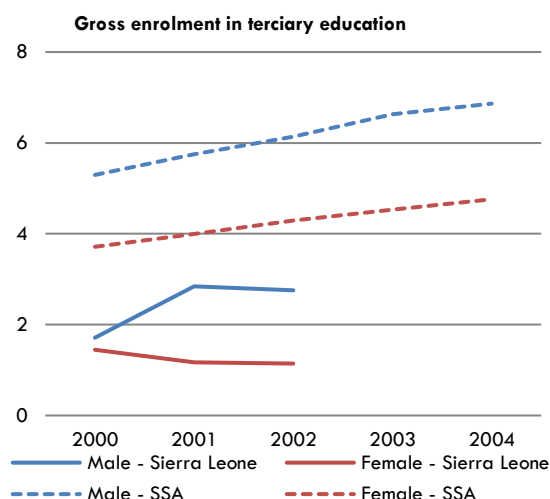
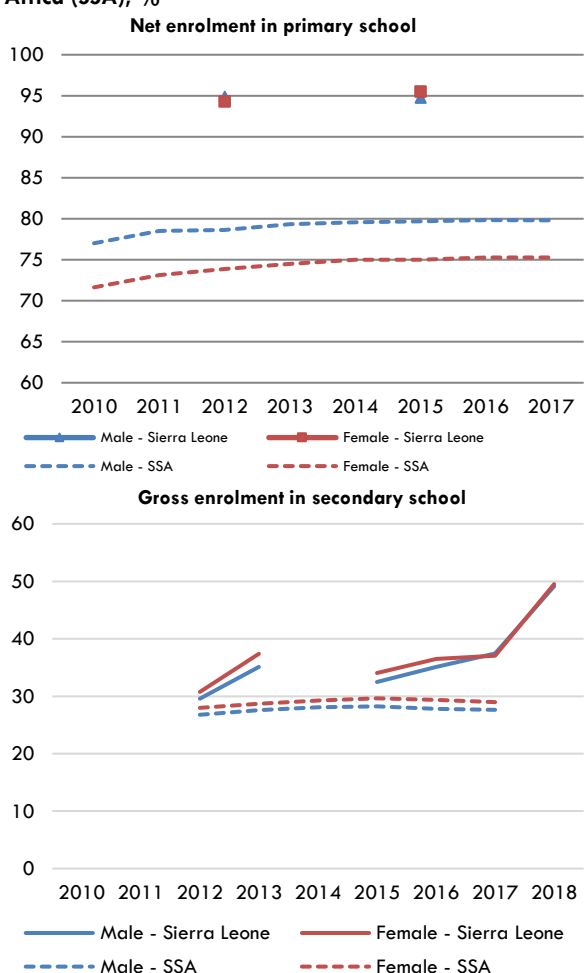
The education system has demonstrated improvements: based on the latest survey data from 2014, literacy rates were higher among youth than older people (36-64 age group), 52% vs 22%, respectively. This change has been a positive trend in the aftermath of the Civil War (1991-2002). It also explains that many in the age group 15-35 had no schooling background. The gap is not only among ages but also gender: young men had a higher literacy rate than young women, 65% vs 41%, respectively.⁸⁴

Figure 12 below shows the school enrolment rate on all levels. Net enrolment in primary education is high; close to 100% for both males (95% in 2015) and females (95% in 2015). It has stayed much higher than the sub-Saharan Africa average, which has been steady at around 80% for males and 75% for females. Other data outlined that many young people have not finished their schooling; youth who completed primary school is low at 18%.⁸⁵ Half of the children under 10 years have never attended school, and the proportion of males is higher than for women.⁸⁶ Gross enrolment in secondary education has from 2017-2018 been increasing drastically from 37% for both sexes to 49% for males

and 50% for females. The 2017 numbers are substantially above the regional enrolment rate on 28% for males and 29% for females in 2016.

While enrolment rates for both primary and secondary levels are higher in Sierra Leone for both sexes compared to the average in sub-Saharan Africa, it is contrary when it comes to the tertiary education level. With gender gaps favouring males (two percentage points for both the country and region), Sierra Leones enrolment rate is down to 2%. Latest data available is from 2002 and rather outdated. Based on the Sierra Leone 2014 Labour Force Survey Report, 0.4% of youth had tertiary degrees.

Figure 12: Enrolment in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary schools, male and female, Sierra Leone and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), %



Note: Net enrolment is the ratio of children of official school age, who are enrolled in school to the population of the corresponding official school age. Gross enrolment is the ratio of total enrolment, regardless of age, to the population of the corresponding official school age.
Source: [World Bank, DataBank, Education Indicators](#)

Another survey from 2015 investigated the levels of education and young people’s labour market transition. It suggested that the higher the educational attainment, the more likely a young person was to complete his or her labour market transition to stable and/or satisfactory employment. Instead, with relatively low levels of educational attainment; around three out of four (75%) of employed youth in Sierra Leone were undereducated for the job they were doing in 2015. The overqualified occupation was rare (2.9%).⁸⁷ This signals challenges of matching the labour market and the education system demands.

The government has re-introduced civic education into the country’s educational curriculum. Among others, the National Commission for Democracy (NCD) was working on developing a national, non-formal curriculum on Civic Education.

Vocational Training

Vocational education and training (TVET) coverage in Sierra Leone has increased recently. The Western Region has the highest educational attainments on the vocational level on 49%. The attainment rates for the other four regions are between 36 and 39 percentage points lower.⁸⁸

In 2014, only 5% of youth had participated in vocational training, and only 6% had ever served apprenticeship. Among youth who had undertaken vocational training, the average number of years spent in training was 2.1 years.⁸⁹ In 2018, 14% completed vocational training as the highest level of education.

The education system, which includes vocational training, has apparent weaknesses in preparing the young population for entering the labour market. It is coupled with a general low public interest in TVET, as it by many is considered as using outdated equipment and poor funding. Many of the institutions do not have reliable internet connections, which is problematic for training providers, as online digital technologies are part of daily life.⁹⁰

The public budgetary allocation to the education sector is lowest for TVET, declining from 4.2% in 2008 to only 2.0% of the sector budget in 2010.⁹¹ In 2008, there were 370 TVET institutions registered with the Ministry of Education with a total enrolment of 27,055 students. However, it is estimated that about one hundred or more institutions were not registered and outside the scope of ministerial regulation and quality control. In 2011, the number of TVET students enrolled was approximately 29,000.⁹²

As an answer to the growing youth population, formal job creation and economic growth require a stronger emphasis on upgrading and expanding TVET. Debates in the media in Sierra Leone in recent years argued that the National Schools Curricula must be geared towards making students 'employable', which includes a realignment of curricula in the current government's Agenda for Prosperity, Local Content Policy and the Agriculture Development Policy.⁹³

In 2019, the government invested US\$22 million to develop TVET, with recognition of the area being neglected for a long time.⁹⁴ In the same year, a new national policy has been developed. In 2010 and 2014, it has been attempted, but they were left in the preliminary stages.⁹⁵ The new policy aims at meeting the needs of the job market.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Social protection deals with preventing, managing and overcoming situations that affect people's wellbeing. It plays a role in narrowing inequality through the distribution of social entitlements for those who are left behind. Social protection consists of policies and programmes targeting labour market interventions, social insurance and assistance for parents of new-borns, those injured at work, surviving relatives to deceased breadwinners, and retired, unemployed, disabled, and sick persons. Generally, social protection initiatives are ad-hoc and fragmented. Numerous labour regulations that seek to balance job creation and social protection

do exist. They remain weakly enforced and with very low coverage, though.

Table 18 provides an overview of the coverage of diverse social protection aspects in Sierra Leone. Among others, 30% of the population is covered by at least one social safety net programme. The same goes for the specific coverage of labour programmes. In general, low health protection coverage is reflected in the fact that the country has one of the world's highest rates of child and maternal mortality. Notwithstanding, health systems in the country are undergoing considerable changes, including health sector reforms that aims at extension of coverage to informal workers and decentralisation of health services.

Data availability from the 2000s suggested that just few (2.0%) of persons above retirement age received a pension. Most depend on family members, service institutions, government social assistance programmes, or begging for their daily survival. Pension schemes are still relatively new, which also explains their low coverage. In 2019, the government increased over 10,000 pensioners who were receiving less than Le15,000 (US\$1.7) per month as pension to Le 250,000 (US\$28).

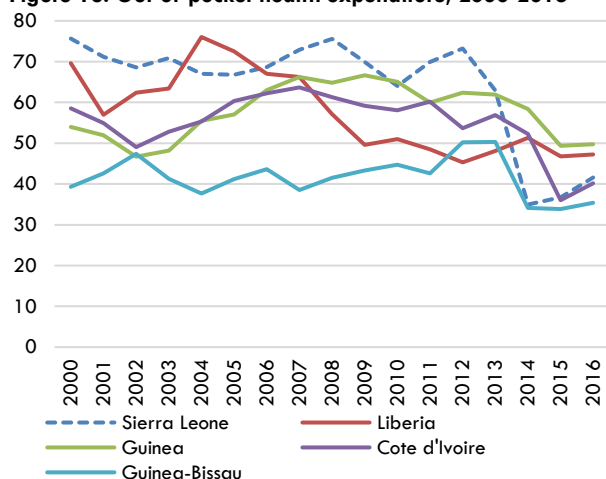
Table 18: Social protection coverage in Sierra Leone, %

Group	Year	Coverage
Coverage of social safety net programmes (% of population)	2011	30 %
Coverage of social protection and labour programmes (% of population)	2011	30 %
Persons in the labour force covered in the event of work injury (mandatory coverage)	2013	6.1 %
Persons above retirement age receiving a pension	2000	2.0 %
Active contributors to a pension scheme in the working-age population (15-64)	2007	4.6 %

Source: [ILO, SDG labour market indicators](#), [ILO, Social Protection, Statistics and indicators](#) and [World Bank, World Development Indicators](#)

The average out-of-pocket expenditure on health has since 2012 decreased drastically from 73% down to 35% in 2014 to increase slightly up to 42% in 2016 (see more in Figure 13). It was an impact of the Ebola virus epidemic in 2014. Compared to its neighbouring countries, Sierra Leone is placed in the middle, somewhat above Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau, and below Liberia and Guinea.

Figure 13: Out-of-pocket health expenditure, 2000-2016

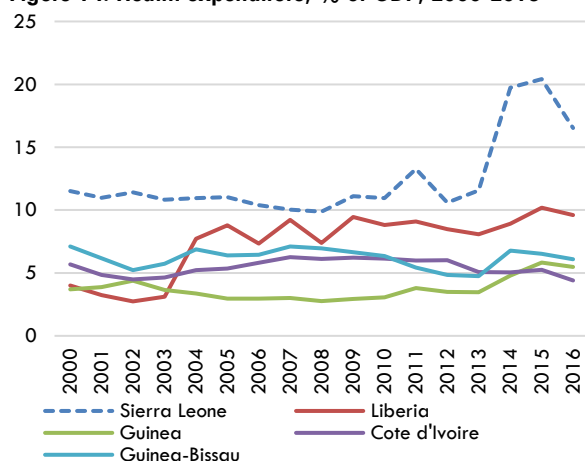


Note: Out-of-pocket expenditure is any direct outlay by households, including gratuities and in-kind payments, to health practitioners and suppliers of pharmaceuticals, therapeutic appliances, and other goods and services whose primary intent is to contribute to the restoration or enhancement of the health status of individuals or population groups. It is a part of private health expenditure.

Source: [World Bank, World Development Indicators](#)

Figure 14 depicts the trend in health expenditure in Sierra Leone, together with other countries in the region. It shows how health expenditures in Sierra Leone are consuming a more substantial chunk of national GDP on 17% in 2016. From 2013 to 2014, the share jumped eight percentage points, which, again, was an impact of the Ebola virus epidemic.

Figure 14: Health expenditure, % of GDP, 2000-2016



Source: [World Bank, World Development Indicators](#)

As previously mentioned, few systematic health care services exist, and those that do are largely donor-funded and supported by NGOs. It includes that most big industrial companies, do not have medical and health insurance policies and where they exist, they are of the barest standards.⁹⁶ However, a free and universal health care service for pregnant and breastfeeding and children under the age of five was introduced in 2010.⁹⁷

The length of maternity leave with full wage covered is three months in Sierra Leone, whereas the employer is the source of financing.

Social protection programs likewise depend heavily on external financing. It is estimated that external resources finance 85% of social assistance expenditures. It includes several cash transfer programs, e.g. the government runs several Social Safety Net (SSN) programs. A study from 2013 argued that such programs risk crowding-out resources for existing programs and the traditional welfare services.⁹⁸

In 2001, at the end of the civil war, Sierra Leone established a social security scheme and the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT), with a tripartite board of trustees. The institution provides pensions to old age, disability and survivors. NASSIT is voluntary for self-employed or informal workers. The insured population increased from 179,000 in 2011 to 223,000 in 2014. Of these, 39% were in the public sector and 61% in the private sector.⁹⁹ On average, each pensioner received 961,000 Leones (US\$220) a year.¹⁰⁰ Recently it was revealed that there were many shortcomings and flaws in the payment of retirement benefits to pensioners of the NASSIT.¹⁰¹ The Trust lacks a file tracking and retrieving system. Not to mention, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) remains to be the largest provider of pensions.

The enactment of the Insurance Act 2016 mandates all employers to insure employees as long as they exceed five in number. For most small and medium scale enterprises, insuring employees has been a novelty. In addition, free health insurance was granted to children from 0 to 18 years old and to people from 60 years old to above. Tripartite stakeholders are calling to review the Health Insurance Act to provide for defined contributions from members and other areas.

In 2018, the government launched the Sierra Leone Social Health Insurance Scheme to ensure universal health coverage in public hospitals. In the first stage, it covers primary health care, including cholera, malaria; later it is extending to secondary health care. The scheme is not free. To be eligible, people in the informal economy would be required to pay US\$2 per month, while those in the formal sector would be paying 6% of their monthly salaries. Not to mention, it provides free health-care for children under 12, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

The main social protection initiative in Sierra Leone is targeting the extremely poor population reaching 30,000 households in nine districts.¹⁰² Around 95% of the beneficiaries are women. In 2016, the government initiated a school feeding programme for all children in public primary schools, providing them with school food three days a week.

The traditional 'osusu' savings mechanisms provide income, which can be used in times of illness, unemployment or maternity. The arrangement focuses mostly on microfinance savings and credit schemes rather than broad social security coverage schemes. They provide very little protection for individuals and families that face recurring life risks.¹⁰³ The rotating savings scheme operates not only among informal sector operators but also among formal sector workers. In addition, SLIC has established relations with micro-finance institution and secured informal economy members the possibility of accessing loans.

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

From 2005-2006 onwards, the government has been keen to rebrand Sierra Leone from its war-torn image to a country that is ready for investment. The Ebola outbreak in 2014-2016, combined with falling global commodities prices, caused a significant contraction of economic activity in all areas in Sierra Leone.¹⁰⁴ The experience of epidemic challenges rebounded in 2020 by the global Corona epidemic. Learning from Ebola, the country is routinely tackling the potential global outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the beginning of 2020s. The government announced year-long 'state of emergency' in March 2020 despite no confirmed coronavirus. In April 2020, some Corona cases were officially registered in the country. Across the Africa region, economic growth will be hit hard, but how hard is still difficult to assess. In an initiative to tackle the potential economic challenged spurred by the Corona epidemic, the International Monetary Fund has approved debt relief in April 2020 for Sierra Leone to allow them to focus resources on fighting the coronavirus.

The country's primary exports are iron ore, diamonds, and rutile, and its biggest trading partner is China both when it comes to export and import. The economy is dependent on mineral exploitation – of which the majority of the products end up being exported illegally. Governments have neglected large-scale agriculture.

The local revenue generation by Government through tax harmonization has increased substantially and this

has given government an opportunity to invest in social services, like health, education, sport, among others.

The average GDP real growth in the period from 2014 to 2018 was negative on -0.5% due to a nosedive in 2015 in the time of the Ebola virus epidemic. The country has one of the lowest per capita incomes: Sierra Leone's GDP per capita measured in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) is below the sub-Saharan Africa average; the country is ranking 219 out of 228 countries (1 is highest).

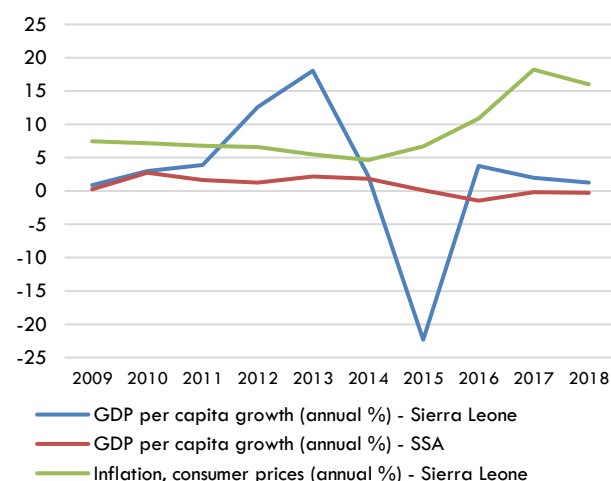
Table 19: Key economic data in Sierra Leone, 2018

GDP	US\$ 4.1 billion
GDP per capita (current US\$)	US\$ 534
GDP real growth (2014-2018, av.)	-0.5 %
Inflation (2019)	15 %

Sources: [World Bank, World Development Indicators](#)

Figure 15 shows how devastating the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone has been; from an annual GDP per capita growth on 18% in 2013, this value tumbled down to staggering -22% in 2015. The economic growth rebounded since 2016 and hovers above the sub-Saharan regional average.

Figure 15: GDP per capita and inflation growth, %, 2009-2018



Source: [World Bank, World Development Indicators](#)

Since the Ebola epidemic in 2014, inflation has steadily increased from 4.6% in 2014, peaking at 17% in 2017, to 15% in 2019. It was also driven by the fact that the Leone currency was falling in value in comparison to other international currencies. It triggered rising inflation in consumer prices, which has weakened workers income's purchasing power and the rising cost of living (see Figure 15 above). The country's inflation rate is much larger than the sub-Saharan Africa average at 3.7% (Table 19).

According to the Gini Index, the inequality in the distribution of family income was in 2011 34%, which ranks Sierra Leone as number 106 out of 158 countries.¹⁰⁵ Since 1990, the Human Development Index (HDI), a statistic composite index of life expectancy, education and per capita income indicators, which are used to rank countries, in Sierra Leone has improved and increased with 62%. In this period, the life expectancy at birth has increased by 16 years, mean years of school increased by two years and expected years of schooling increased by five years. The gross national income (GNI) per capita has increased by about 24%. However, the country is still among the lowest scoring, ranking 181 out of 189 countries and territories (1st is best), placing it below the average of the low human development group.¹⁰⁶

Poverty remains widespread in Sierra Leone. The latest measurements of working poor in Sierra Leone reveals that 44% were 'extremely poor' – even as employed with less than US\$1.9 per day. On the positive side, this group has shrunk with 22 percentage points from 66% in 2000 and 55% in 2010. In contrast, the three other groups have increased – 'moderately poor' mostly with 10 percentage points from 2000-2020. See more in Table 20. It is worthwhile to mention that two out of five (42%) in the population (aged +15) is inactive on the labour market and excluded from the measurement of the employment by economic class. Thus, the country remains quite challenged to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 (see SDG table, Indicator 1.1.1, on Page iv).

Table 20: Estimation and projection of employment by economic class in Sierra Leone, 2000-2020

Year	Extremely poor (<US\$1.90)	Moderately poor (>=US\$1.90 & <US\$3.20)	Near poor (>=US\$3.20 & <US\$5.5)	Middle class (>=US\$5.5)
2000	66 %	21 %	8.7 %	4.7 %
2010	55 %	28 %	12 %	4.7 %
2020	44 %	31 %	16 %	8.4 %

Note: Data in this table exclude the economically inactive population that cover around 42% of the population (aged 15+). Data in this table is measured at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).

Sources: [ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\)](#)

The business milieu is not easy in Sierra Leone. The country ranks 163 out of 190 countries (1 is best) in 2020, in the Doing Business Index, providing measures of business regulations for local firms (Appendix Table 25). Compared to 2019, Sierra Leone takes the same rank position. Out of the ten indicators, the country still scores quite low on dealing with construction permits (181), getting electricity (181) and registering property (169). Best scoring is in the indicators starting a business

(starting a business) and paying taxes (93). It is worth mentioning that this index provides a snapshot of the cost of complying with formal regulations for companies that are not small enough to loophole the law or large enough to curve it, according to media.¹⁰⁷

Export Processing Zones (EPZ)

Sierra Leone is a latecomer to SEZ development. In 2005, investors, especially Chinese private enterprises, initiated their interest in starting the Export Processing Zone (EPZ)/Special Export Zone (SEZ).¹⁰⁸ Later on, in 2010, the first law was promulgated regarding Special Economic Zone (SEZ). In 2011, First Step, an agency, established an Economic Opportunity Zone, which is also known as SEZ. This zone has a goal of providing potential private investors with facilities with guaranteed access to the logistic support and the utilities necessary to operate their business. It is furthermore an element of a programme to transform the manufacturing sector to enhance competitiveness and industrialisation for job creation.¹⁰⁹

In the SEZ, all investors can take accelerated depreciation of 40% for plants and equipment for the first year and 10-15% for most other items. It also offers a loss carry-forward of 50% of the previous tax year's taxable income.¹¹⁰ To encourage investment in timber and rice, a 10-year corporate tax holiday is granted to qualified investors. Export licenses are not required for locally produced goods. The Government has also committed to allowing investors in the SEZ to use international arbitration forums to resolve disputes that may occur between them and the Government.

Furthermore, Sierra Leone developed a Special Economic Zone policy in 2013 and also established an Export Processing Zone (EPZ). It sets a roadmap for the development and management of SEZs. It defines the country's EPZ, Free Trade Zone (FTZ) and benefits, and explains how they operate. It outlines permissible potential partnership arrangements and the sectors to which EPZ and FTZ can be applied.

The SEZ encounter multi-activities at Newton near the main port of Freetown. The main activities are agricultural goods, apparel manufacturing, mineral resources, marine resources, and export processing. There is no data/information available on the number of workers in the SEZ and their work conditions.

Under the ECOWAS Protocol, exports by EPZ enterprises to other ECOWAS countries are not eligible for

preferential treatment. They are subject to customs duties at applicable rates.¹¹¹

The Coffee Mills trains farmers' agronomic practices are within the EPZ and has over 4,000 registered farmers who are UTZ and Organic certified 2016.¹¹²

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL DATA

Table 21: SLLC trade union declared members, 2019

No.	Trade unions	Number of members	Number of effective CBAs	Approximate number of workers covered by effective CBAs
Formal				
1	Artisans Public Works of Services Employees Union	2,600	6	12,000
2	Clerical Banking Insurance Accounting Petroleum Union	3,010	7	15,000
3	Construction Workers Union	2,500	1	8,000
4	Electricity Employees Union	2,200	1	20,000
5	Hotel Food Drinks Tobacco Entertainment Workers Unions	4,500	2	14,000
6	Union of Mass Media, Financial Institutions, Chemical Industries & General Workers	1,500	2	13,000
7	Martime & Waterfront Workers Union	1,500	1	4,500
8	Municipal & General Government Employees Union	1,500	2	3,000
9	National Union of Civil Servants	1,500	1	8,000
10	National Union of Forestry & Agricultural Workers	1,500	3	8,000
11	Sierra Leone Fishermen's Union	1,600	1	3,000
12	Sierra Leone Dockworkers Union	1,500	1	4,000
13	Sierra Leone Health Services Union	3,010	1	16,000
14	Sierra Leone National Seamen's Union	1,550	1	1,500
15	Sierra Leone Teachers' Union	36,000	1	40,000
16	Sierra Leone Union of Postal & Tel. Employees Union	1,054	1	2,500
17	Sierra Leone Reporter Union	450	-	-
18	Sierra Leone Union of Security, Watchmen & Gen. Workers	3,200	2	5,000
19	Skilled & Manual Productive Workers Union	810	4	1,300
20	United Mine Workers Union,	1,602	1	6,000
21	Union of Railway Plantation, Minerals, Industry & Construction	300	-	-
22	Sierra Leone Port Authority Senior Staff Association	82	-	-
Informal				
23	Indigenous Petty Traders Association	12,500	-	-
24	Indigenous Photographers' Union	500	-	-
25	Sierra Leone Artisanal Fishermen's Union	235,000	-	-
26	Sierra Leone Traders Union	36,000	-	-
27	Sierra Leone Musicians Union	250	-	-
28	Sierra Leone Bike Riders Union	120,000	-	-
29	Motor Drivers & General Transport Workers Union	1,000	1	1,000
30	Commercial Tricycle Riders Association	-	-	-
31	Union of Timber Factory Owners & Workers	1,500	-	-
32	Sierra Leone Commercial Tricycle Riders Union	2,237	-	-
33	Sierra Leone Technicians Union	1,000	-	-
34	Home and General Workers Union	700	-	-
35	Omolankay & Whellbarrow Riders Union	5,000	-	-
36	Sierra Leone Film Industry, Labour and Marketing Guild	-	-	-
37	Sierra Leone Keke Riders Union	-	-	-
Total		484,155	39	185,800

Source: SLLC, Template for SRO data-collection for verification of Global Key Indicators and input to Labour Market Profiles, Danish Trade Union Development Agency, 2019

Table 22: Status of Collective Bargaining Agreements in Sierra Leone, 2015-2017 (May)

Collective Bargaining Agreements	Signed Year or on-going
The hotel and tourism, Agriculture and Industrial sectors	2015
Commercial Collective Agreement	2015
Banking Collective Agreement	2016
Fishermen Collective Agreement	2016
Public Utility Collective Agreement	2017
Mine Collective Agreement signed	2017
Services Collective Agreement	On going
Agriculture Collective Agreement	On going
Industrial Collective Agreement	On going
Construction Collective Agreement	On going
Teaching Collective Agreement	On going

Source: SLIC, Template for SRO data-collection for verification of Global Key Indicators and input to Labour Market Profiles, Danish Trade Union Development Agency, 2016

Table 23: List of approved labour related legislations in Sierra Leone, 2014-2019 (September)

Type of legislation	Legislation
2014	
General provisions	Sierra Leone Correctional Service Act, 2014 (No. 5 of 2014).
	Companies (Amendment) Act, 2014 (No. 9 of 2014).
Education, vocational guidance and training	Polytechnics (Amendment) Act, 2014 (No. 7 of 2014).
	Universities (Amendment) Act, 2014 (No. 6 of 2014).
Specific categories of workers	Petroleum Regulatory Act, 2014 (No. 3 of 2014).
	Petroleum (Exploration and Production) (Amendment) Act, 2014 (No. 2 of 2014).
2015	
General provisions	National Commission for Social Action (Amendment) Act, 2015 (No. 3 of 2015).
2016	
General provisions	National Civil Registration Act, 2016 (No. 14 of 2016).
	Local Government (Amendment) Act, 2016 (No. 11 of 2016).
	Constitution of Sierra Leone (Amendment) Act, 2016 (No. 10 of 2016).
	Sierra Leone Small and Medium Development Agency Act 2016 (No. 2 of 2016).
Elimination of child labour, protection of children and young persons	National Youth Service Act 2016 (No. 4 of 2016).
Social security (general standards)	National Social Security and Insurance Trust (Amendment) Act, 2016 (No. 7 of 2016).
2017	
General provisions	Local Government (Amendment) Act, 2017 (No. 2 of 2017).
2018	
None	None
2019	
General provisions	Anti Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2019
	Anti-Money Laundering and Combating of Financing of terrorism (Amendment) Act, 2019 (No. 3 of 2019)

Source: [ILO, NATLEX, Sierra Leone](#)

Table 24: Ratified ILO Conventions in Sierra Leone

Subject and/or right	Convention	Ratification date
Fundamental Conventions		
Freedom of association and collective bargaining	C087 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, 1948	1961
	C098 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949	1961
Elimination of all forms of forced labour	C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930	1961
	C105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957	1961
Effective abolition of child labour	C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973	2011
	C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999	2011
Elimination of discrimination in employment	C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951	1968
	C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	1966
Governance Conventions		
Labour inspection	C081 - Labour Inspection Convention, 1947	1961
	C129 - Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969	Not ratified
Employment policy	C122 - Employment Policy Convention, 1964	Not ratified
Tripartism	C144 - Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976	1985
Up-to-date Conventions		
Wages	C094 - Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949	1961
	C095 - Protection of Wages Convention, 1949	1961

Note: Fundamental Conventions are the eight most important ILO conventions that cover four fundamental principles and rights at work. Equivalent to basic human rights at work. Governance Conventions are four conventions that the ILO has designated as important to building national institutions and capacities that serve to promote employment. In other words, conventions that promotes a well-regulated and well-functioning labour market. In addition, there are 71 conventions, which ILO considers "up-to-date" and actively promotes.

Source: [ILO, NORMLEX, Sierra Leone](#)

Table 25: Ease of Doing Business in Sierra Leone, 2020

Topics	2019	2020	Changes
Overall	163	163	0
Starting a Business	55	58	+3
Dealing with Construction Permits	182	181	-1
Getting Electricity	178	181	+3
Registering Property	167	169	+2
Getting Credit	161	165	+4
Protecting Minority Investors	89	128	+39
Paying Taxes	88	93	+5
Trading Across Borders	166	165	-1
Enforcing Contracts	105	108	+3
Resolving Insolvency	161	162	+1

Note: Doing Business 2019-2020 indicators are ranking from 1 (top) to 190 (bottom) among other countries. The rankings tell much about the business environment, but do not measure all aspects of the business surroundings that matter to firms and investors that affect the competitiveness of the economy. Still, a high ranking does mean that the government has created a regulatory environment conducive to operating a business.

Source: [World Bank & IFC, Ease of Doing Business 2020 in Sierra Leone](#)

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¹¹¹ [World Trade Organization, Trade policy review, 2017](#)

¹¹² [Sierra Coffee Mills and WTO, Trade Policy Review, Sierra Leone, Minutes of the Meeting, WT/TPR/M/303/Add.1, May 16, 2017](#)