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the People of Japan



Press Release

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Government of Japan Partners with UNOPS and WHO to Accelerate Digital Growth, Youth Empowerment and Mpox Response under JSB and TICAD Initiative

The projects are signed in partnership with the Government of Japan to support the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education and the Ministry of Health.

Freetown, Sierra Leone:- The Government of Japan signed a partnership agreement with two United Nations Agencies (WHO and UNOPS) to implement one-year projects to support the Government of Sierra Leone. The projects aims to achieve youth empowerment and scaling up detection, diagnosis, case management, and community engagement for vulnerable people affected by Mpox to curb the Outbreak across the country respectively.

The Government of Japan signed two new strategic partnerships with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the World Health Organisation. The UNOPS project will support the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary School Education to accelerate digital economic growth and youth empowerment in Sierra Leone and the WHO project will support the Ministry of health to curb the risk of Mpox outbreaks in the Country. These two projects will be implemented for 12 months starting March 2026.

The UNOPS project directly supports the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) pillars by co-creating an enabling environment for digital transformation in Africa. By providing high-quality ICT skills and infrastructure, the project aims to bridge the persistent skills gap and address high youth unemployment, which exceeded 60% in 2025. The intervention will equip five secondary schools across five



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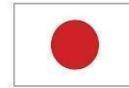
regions with advanced ICT laboratories and provide 600 youths with training in digital transformation and entrepreneurship. Additionally, an e-learning platform will be launched to assist students preparing for national examinations.

Hon. Conrad Sackey, Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, stated: *"This partnership aligns perfectly with our national priority of developing human capital. By integrating modern ICT infrastructure into our schools, we are ensuring that our students are not just learners, but future-ready innovators who can compete in the global digital economy. We are grateful to the Government of Japan and UNOPS for their commitment to Sierra Leone's education sector."*

Natalia Garcia Romero, UNOPS Sierra Leone Officer in Charge, added: *"UNOPS is dedicated to delivering infrastructure and procurement solutions that make a difference. This project is a direct response to the urgent needs identified in the 2025 Status of Youth Report. By providing the tools and training necessary for entrepreneurship in sectors like agriculture and health, we are helping youth become drivers of economic growth rather than victims of exclusion".*

The WHO project will build the capacity of health care workers in Emergency Preparedness and Response across all 16 districts, in readiness for Mpox outbreaks. Particularly, the project will strengthen stakeholder coordination and engagement; collaborate with the National Public Health Emergency Operational Centre to conduct coordination meetings; investigate at least 320 alerts/suspected cases of Mpox across 16 districts; isolate and treat any confirmed cases when cases are detected; and follow up with all contacts for 21 days. This project will also enhance health education, community engagement, and knowledge for 1,600,000 people on Mpox prevention and management through community outreaches, social media, posters, leaflets, radio, etc.

The Government of Japan is committed to strengthening Sierra Leone's health systems by building the capacities of health care workers nationwide in Emergency Preparedness and Response to rapidly contain the risks of Mpox outbreaks. In 2025, Sierra Leone registered an outbreak of Mpox that resulted in 5,442 confirmed cases and 60 deaths. Through its partnership with WHO, the Government of Japan's support enhances the scaling up of detection, diagnosis,



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case management, and community engagement for vulnerable people. "Mpox remains a risk in Sierra Leone exacerbated by cross-border movements and trade, increasing the likelihood of cases being detected in the Country," said Dr. George Ameh, the WHO Representative. "WHO thanks the Government of Japan, because these funds will boost preparedness and further strengthen the capacity of health teams at the frontlines," added Dr. Ameh.

On behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone, we extend our appreciation to the Government of Japan for its generosity in supporting the health of Sierra Leone people. Mpox remains a public health threat, and these funds would not have come in handy now more than before. Although the number of Mpox came down to zero cases in 2025, the risk of re-establishment of transmission cannot be ruled out. There is therefore a need to be more vigilant, which calls for strengthening Sierra Leone's surveillance system, making these funds timely, said Professor Foday Sahr, the Executive Director of the Public Health Agency.

H.E. Hiroshi Yoshimoto, Ambassador of Japan to Ghana and Sierra Leone, noted:

"Japan is proud to support Sierra Leone's digital journey through the TICAD framework and to contribute to keeping the people of Sierra Leone free from epidemic prone diseases. Our commitment to 'partners in growth together' is reflected in these projects, which leverages Japanese expertise to future-proof the youth ecosystem and improve the health and wellbeing of the general population in Sierra Leone. We believe that empowering the younger generation with digital tools is essential for sustainable economic development and national stability. At the same, a healthy population has high investment returns for the country's economy."

These project contributes significantly to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Goal 3 (health and wellbeing), Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure)

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About the Government of Japan

Japan's Country Development Cooperation Plan to Sierra Leone addresses basic social infrastructure development in health, nutrition, education, job training and capacity development in the priority areas. In addition, at the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9) held in August 2025, Japan stressed the importance of driving Africa's digital transformation.

About UNOPS

UNOPS aims to help people build better lives and countries achieve peace and sustainable development. We help the United Nations, governments and other partners to manage projects, and efficiently deliver sustainable infrastructure and procurement. Read more: www.unops.org

About WHO

The World Health Organization is the directing and coordinating authority on international health work, establishing and maintaining effective collaboration with the United Nations, specialized agencies, governmental health administrations, professional groups and such organizations as deemed appropriate to assist the governments, upon request, in strengthening health services. For more information, please visit <https://www.who.int/countries/sle> .