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On Rebound: Economy in Remarkable Show Of Strength

Trade Deficit Narrows \$26m in 3 Months

The economy has recorded significant improvements in export receipts culminating in a healthy trade balance for the country. Export receipts in the second quarter of present fiscal year, according to the Bank of Sierra Leone (BSL) more than offset the

By Rueben Ademiluyi
Finance Reporter

cost of imports.

Consequently, Sierra Leone's trade deficit with its global trade partners narrowed by US\$26.8 million from US\$142.4

million to US\$115.6 million. In the same period, gross foreign exchange reserves of the BSL covered 2.0 months of imports in the second

quarter to June as against 2.3 months coverage recorded in the 3 months to March 2024. According to the bank, outflows in respect of payments for goods and services and external debt service payments accounted for the decline in the gross foreign reserves position.

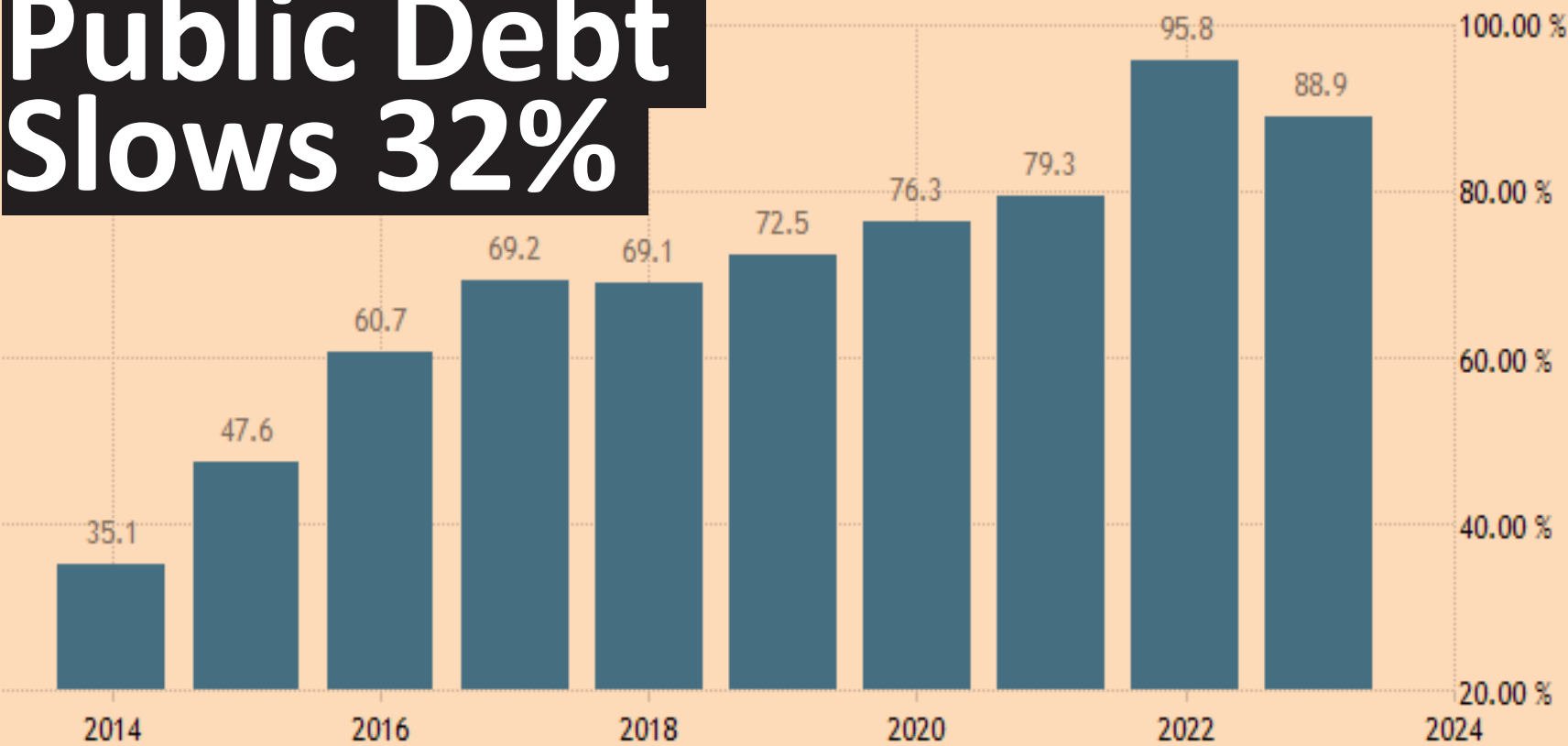
The monetary policy committee of the bank expressed optimism in future improvements and recovery of the economy. "The committee is encouraged by the improvements in the country's trade balance and remains confident of a significant

increase in gross foreign exchange reserves, following the recent staff-level agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the IMF for a new Extended Credit Facility (ECF) programme".

The bank added: "The expected approval of the new ECF programme by the IMF Board is catalytic and would have positive impact on our engagement

Continued page 4

Public Debt Slows 32%



Sierra Leone's total public debt - domestic and external - has decreased to 46 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

This cheering news came on the heels of recent re-evaluation of the country's total debt portfolio. Mathew Sandi, Director of Public debt in the Ministry of Finance (MoF) in an exclusive interview with FS stated

By John Marah
Snr Business Correspondent

the figure was 78.4 percent pre recent evaluation. This development, he said is a sign of growing confidence in the economy. He acknowledged the increase in domestic debt but attributed this

to COVID. Same reason he deduced for revenue shortfalls between 2018 and 2019. "COVID hindered the government's ability to meet its financial targets".

He stressed the need

for funding essential initiatives, such as the Free Quality Education program, which requires significant resources. He stressed the importance of viewing debt not just in the short term but as part of a sustainable, long-term strategy.

He informed that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has categorized Sierra Leone as debt

distressed and explained that the level of public debt and debt service relative to revenue and imports are parameters used by the fund at arriving at that categorization.

He underscored the need for careful management of both domestic and external debt. This, according to him would ensure economic stability and growth.

82% Of Total Population Suffers Food Poverty

By Kongbap Sumner

A staggering 82 percent of the Sierra Leone's population are food insecure. Manti Tarawally, Minister of State in the Office of the Vice President stated this at a Food security parley held recently in conjunction with multi lateral institutions at the Family Kingdom, Aberdeen, Freetown. Addressing the parley which had representatives of the Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in attendance, the minister observed that food systems are complex entities that affect diets, human health and a range of other outcomes including economic growth, natural resources,

Continued page 4

World Business Briefs

BlockChain Platform for Guinea Bissau

Guinea-Bissau, a small nation on the coast of West Africa, has made a quantum leap into the future. In May 2024, the country successfully launched a blockchain platform—as part of the country's program with the IMF, under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF)—designed to revolutionize its public wage bill management.

Following four years collaborating with the Fund and technological

advisor Ernst & Young, and with financial support from selected partners, Guinea-Bissau is moving ahead with implementing this new technology. This initiative, one of the first of its type for Africa, marks a significant leap toward better governance and transparency in government finances. It underscores the country's commitment to tackling governance challenges and enhancing public service delivery.

Growth in GCC Expected to Rebound

Ongoing challenges in MENA, including from protracted conflicts, present risks to economic stability for the region. Nevertheless, GCC economies have demonstrated resilience: the IMF expects overall growth in the GCC to rebound in 2024, and to strengthen to close to 4 percent in 2025 as oil production cuts are gradually unwound, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva stated in Doha last week at the joint annual meeting of the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee and the Committee of Central Bank Governors of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) with the IMF.

Despite the good news, there are risks to the outlook; most notably, fluctuations in oil prices and production could reduce financial buffers and have negative spillovers to the non-oil economy, she noted.

Navigating Shocks In SouthEast Asian Emerging Markets

As relatively small open economies, southeast Asian emerging markets are highly susceptible to external shocks that could induce large capital flows and exchange rate volatility which could trigger foreign exchange market dysfunction. With the exception of Bank Negara Malaysia, ASEAN-4 central banks mostly have flexible inflation targeting frameworks for monetary policy implementation.

Their main policy objectives include medium-term price stability, sustainable economic growth, and

financial stability. Central banks in ASEAN-4 economies (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand) have been early pilots in the operationalization of the IMF's Integrated Policy Framework (IPF) in 2022–23. A new departmental paper takes stock of the experience from these pilots, both from the perspective of country authorities and of IMF country teams. It aims at distilling key lessons that could be used to inform broader IPF operationalization.



8 things successful people do in the first hour of their work day

By The New Diplomat

We all have the same 24 hours in a day but it's how we use those hours that determines our success.

The first hour of the workday, often referred to as the 'Golden Hour', is incredibly important and can set the tone for the rest of the day.

Successful people understand this and use this time wisely to ensure they make the most out of their day.

What do these high-achievers do differently during this crucial time?

Let's dive into 8 things successful people do in the first hour of their work day to stay ahead of the game.

1. Set Clear Goals for the Day

Successful people start their day with a clear direction. They don't simply dive into the day and start working on whatever comes their way.

Instead, they take out time during the first hour of their work to set clear, achievable goals for the day.

This helps them focus their energy on tasks that matter the most, and allows them to easily track their progress throughout the day.

They understand that having a clear roadmap is crucial for productivity and it aids in eliminating unnecessary tasks.

Before you check your emails or start your routine tasks, spend some time creating a list of your goals for the day. It will keep you organized and

focused, ensuring you make the most of your valuable time.

2. Stay Hydrated and Healthy

I can't emphasize this enough – hydration is key! And successful people know this. They often start their day with a glass of water, even before they reach for that first cup of coffee.

Our bodies spend all night dehydrating, so it's important to replenish the fluids first thing in the morning. It not only kick-starts our metabolism but also aids in maintaining focus and energy throughout the day.

But it's not just about hydration. Many successful people also prioritize a healthy breakfast within their first work hour. They

understand that the body needs fuel to function optimally. And no, a donut doesn't count as a healthy breakfast!

Think more along the lines of fruits, whole grains, protein – food that keeps you satisfied and energized without causing a mid-morning crash.

I've personally noticed a huge difference in my productivity and energy levels since I swapped my sugary breakfast for a more balanced meal.

3. They Embrace the Tough Stuff

Let's be honest, we all have tasks that we dread doing. The ones that sit at the bottom of our to-do list, constantly being moved

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OUR COMMENTS

About Us

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FS as catalyst for empowerment and development, provides news and information to the reading public. It informs, educates, motivates and provides knowledge; drives financial literacy and seeks to provide a roadmap for initiatives geared towards an enduring organized private sector. We aim at building capacity for a financially literate community and aggregate its benefits for all; whilst investing prudently and taking advantages of the democratic space to assert economic rights and responsibilities.

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Thumbs Up on Inflation

The recent decline reported in Sierra Leone's inflation rate is a good omen. The 3.96% reduction in inflation to 25.49% in the month of August 2024, is a reflection of proactive economic measures of monetary authorities. The resultant cooling of inflationary pressure is suggestive of the fact that government's economic measures are beginning to help in stabilizing prices in the economy. This is significant pleasant development in the economy. Economic pundits are optimistic that this could lead to improved purchasing power for consumers with capacity to reduce costs for businesses.

However, the situation is still fragile and in need of further improvements. While annual inflation has decreased, the monthly

Figure 1: Six episodes of post-WWII inflation



Sources: Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED), Inveo Analytics, USF publications.

inflation rate increased from 0.93% in July to 2.08% in August. This rise, particularly in the cost of food and non-alcoholic beverages,

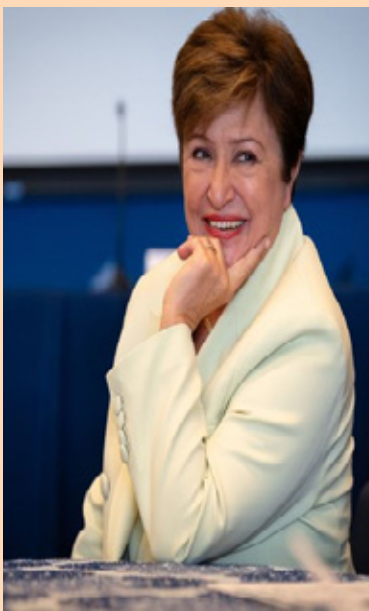
indicated persistent short-term challenges, potentially driven by seasonal factors and supply chain disruptions. The mixed picture shows

that although long-term trends are positive, immediate inflationary pressures in key sectors still need attention for sustained economic stability.

Kristalina Resumes At IMF

Kristalina Georgieva has begun his second term in office as Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Speaking on resumption October 1 Kristalina Georgieva reflected on her first term and looked to the future.

As the world has faced a confluence of crises, the IMF has served as an "anchor of stability in a sea of trouble," she noted. Since the pandemic, the IMF has provided about \$1 trillion in liquidity and reserves to its member countries, supporting critical efforts to save lives and livelihoods. "The other thing we did was to keep the world together,



Kristalina Georgieva

so we can have economic cooperation and dialogue on the policy choices that countries need to make," said Georgieva. "When I look ahead to my next term, I pray that it will be more boring than the first one."

"What we are determined to do at the Fund is, first, help our members build more resilience to cope with a more shock-prone world. Fostering strong policies and strong institutions will be critical. Second, help our members take advantage

of opportunities.

There is a massive technological transformation that, if well-managed, can generate new jobs, new opportunities for businesses. And third, strive to be a voice of reason. Together we are stronger," she concluded.

As well as providing financial support in times of crisis, the IMF is the only institution in the world empowered by its members to carry out regular "health checks" of their economies. Providing impartial analysis and advice is critical, especially in a world of political polarization and geo-economic fragmentation.

By Ruth Bannister

Hope Rises As EGCG Meets With Development Partners

The Energy Governance Coordinating Group (EGCG) has met with development partners under the auspices of the Energy Sector Steering Committee (ESSC).

Chairman of the EGCG, Dr Yumkella stressed the necessity for cohesive collaboration among all stakeholders within the energy system, urging that development partners be included as co-chairs in the committee's structure. This approach, he stated would foster a more integrated effort in tackling the challenges

facing the sector.

The meeting attended by representatives of the World Bank, Mr Abdu Mwonge, its Technical Adviser, Mr Keith Hammond and representatives of the USAID expressed enthusiasm on the revitalization of the EGCG and extolled its potentials to enhance energy generation and distribution across the country.

Dr Yumkella and

key members of the group received accolades for their efforts to resuscitate the energy committee. The meeting expressed their dedication to supporting the Steering Committee's initiatives, with several stating, "we are eager to collaborate with the EGCG."

Additionally, development partners, particularly from the World Bank Group, called for essential reforms at EDSA

Dr. Yumkella and the

Deputy Ministers Mr Eldred Taylor and Mr Edmond Nonie, with other senior officials expressed their commitment to reinvigorating the energy committee. The Energy committee is responsible for crafting policies and implementing projects that address various aspects of energy management viz: electricity generation, transmission, the development of distributed renewable energy, as well as improving energy access, affordability and sustainability

Again, Cold Reception Greeted Efforts On Fuel Price Adjustments

By Joan Bannister

The Petroleum Regulatory Agency (PRA) again, in the past week announced yet another reduction in fuel prices for petrol, diesel, kerosene and fuel oil; a move perceived as a victory for consumers. This may not be so as the impact of the reduction may invariably elude the people.

As the agency celebrates the price reduction, the fourth in a row, many citizens perceive a disconnect between the agency's announcements and the reality they face.

For the month of October 2024, the PRA has set the following prices: petrol at NLe27.30, diesel at NLe27.40, kerosene at NLe25.03, and fuel oil at NLe25.11. The agency attributes these cuts to a stabilization in global oil markets and a stronger Leone against the US dollar, claiming that this marks the fourth reduction in recent months. However, not a few are less enthusiastic about the adjustments especially as they are not reflecting on cost of living and transportation fares.

Cost of transportation is one key area where impact is not being felt. Public transport drivers within Freetown are not moved into adjusting fares downward as expected. According to them,



transportation fares within the city would remain same. This sad reality is a pointer that the benefits of lower fuel prices are not reaching

reduction for petrol and NLe0.18 for diesel—are seen by many as merely symbolic. Critics argue that these changes do little or nothing to alleviate

“This claim of reduction appears hollow. In Liberia, for instance, petrol costs NLe21.50—substantially cheaper than in Sierra Leone. This discrepancy raises questions about why Sierra Leoneans are still paying more despite global market stability

consumers as intended by government.

Many are of the opinion that the announced reductions fail to provide meaningful relief from ongoing economic pressures. “I haven't seen any changes in transport fares or prices at the market,” lamented a Freetown resident. “It feels like we're being fed empty promises.”

The adjustments in prices—NLe0.24

the financial strain that citizens are experiencing. The PRA's detailed breakdown of pricing factors, including various levies, has only fuelled scepticism, with many questioning the effectiveness of these adjustments. They compare fuel prices with what obtains in neighbouring countries.

“This claim of reduction appears hollow. In Liberia, for instance, petrol costs

NLe21.50—substantially cheaper than in Sierra Leone. This discrepancy raises questions about why Sierra Leoneans are still paying more despite global market stability.

This growing disconnect has left many frustrated. “What is the benefit of are these price cuts if we still pay high fares?” one resident expressed. “It seems like the middlemen are pocketing the savings and we're left with nothing.”

With public trust in the PRA waning, there are increasing demands for transparency in how fuel prices are determined and implemented. Citizens are calling for the government to investigate the PRA's effectiveness in monitoring the fuel market and ensuring that price reductions genuinely benefit consumers.

As the agency touts its price cuts as a success,

the broader narrative is one of frustration and unmet expectations for Sierra Leoneans who are still grappling with high costs. Until the PRA can demonstrate that its price reductions are reflected in real-world savings, scepticism will likely remain prevalent.

For Sierra Leoneans to feel the benefits of these adjustments, regulatory bodies must ensure that policies are aligned with the realities of everyday life. Only through authentic efforts to deliver tangible benefits will the PRA regain public trust and confidence in its role as a guardian of consumer interests. Until that happens, the doubts surrounding these fuel price reductions will continue to cast a shadow over the agency's credibility.

Trade Deficit Narrows

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with other development partners”

A review of monetary development during the period revealed that key monetary aggregates were contractionary during the second quarter of the year. This is a decline in Reserve Money (RM) and Broad Money (M2). The decrease in RM was on account of a reduction in Net Foreign Asset (NFA) of the BSL, while the contraction in M2 was due to the decline in the NFA of the banking system. Credit to the private sector by commercial banks noticeably increased during the review period.



STATISTICS SIERRA LEONE



ISSUES & POLICY

TERRY FADE ADEWALE

Arresting the Burgeoning Food Crisis

Like its precursor, the dreadful COVID-19, the burgeoning global food crisis is turning to be another pandemic of a greater proportion. North, South, East and West of the hemisphere the impacts of food shortage are being felt in shopping malls, the marketplace and in homes where lack of food is manifesting in profound hunger. The hunger is translating fast to anger and potential social unrest in many countries. In many countries of the global south not even multibillion dollars in buffers has been able to avert crisis.

That the earlier pandemic of COVID-19 interrupted international supply chain is saying little. The on-going war in Ukraine is another big disruptor. The war has severely disrupted food, fuel and fertilizer outlets. The ripples effect is being felt everywhere both in developing and less developed countries.

The framework equally has potentials to becoming the much needed solutions to the food crisis. Strengthening safety nets for vulnerable households, according to the fund, is urgent and should be top on the list of priorities

As at half year, the World Food Programme (WFP) has estimated the number of acute food insecure people - whose access to food in the short term has been restricted to the point that their lives and livelihoods are at risk - 345 million globally. WFP's estimates covered 82 countries. Reports around the world indicated knee jerk reactions which have seen over 25 countries adopting export restrictions measures. The high costs of inputs such as natural gas are also a contributing factor as it has resulted in escalating the price of fertilizer. The elephant in the room is climate change. This is affecting agricultural productivity especially in agrarian counties where farming and subsistence agriculture are being severely constrained.

This is recipe for disaster. A potential disruptor of progress

already being made towards achieving outcome under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

What next?

Heart-warming that the international Monetary Fund (IMF) has come up with a four point framework -that hold promises on this food crisis. The framework equally has potentials to becoming the much needed solutions to the food crisis. Strengthening safety nets for vulnerable households, according to the fund, is urgent and should be top on the list of priorities. One cannot agree less. The subdued anger in many countries as a result of this food crisis needs to be stemmed and nipped in the bud. A hungry man is an angry man.

Facilitating trade and improving on international supply of food should be next. While these can be achieved in the short term, countries of the world and concerned world bodies espe-

cially the World Food Programme (WFP) should begin taking action to encourage farmers and fishers to boost sustainable food production - in both developing and developed countries - and improve the supply chains that connect them to the world's eight billion consumers. Needless to say that this feat would require affordable fertilizers, seeds, and other agricultural inputs.

It is imperative that help gets to many vulnerable countries especially those in the global south in the throes of acute balance of payments problems. Significant assistance with capacity to cover costs of increase in food import bill would minimize risks of social unrest presently brewing up in many countries - Sierra Leone inclusive.

A stitch in time - in this instance - would save millions.

Economic data and projections for Sierra Leone (IMF)^{34 35}

The following table presents economic statistics for Sierra Leone. Projections include assumptions of the effects of COVID-19 and may be subject to change in the future. Estimated data, as well as projections up to 2029, are presented in italics and are subject to revision.

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
TRADE GROWTH									
Change in exports (%)	75.6	4.6	25.5	12.3	1.9	4.4	4.8	1.2	6.3
Change in imports (%)	20.0	-6.5	5.1	10.0	-1.0	1.4	3.4	3.8	4.0
CURRENT ACCOUNT									
Current account balance (% of GDP)	-9.5	-11.0	-4.0	-2.8	-3.7	-4.0	-3.1	-5.1	-4.2
GDP									
Change in real GDP (%)	4.1	3.5	3.4	4.0	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
GDP per capita (1,000 USD)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6
GDP PPP (Int'l Billion)	15.0	16.6	17.8	18.9	20.1	21.5	22.8	24.3	25.9
INFLATION									
Inflation, year average (CPI %)	11.9	27.2	47.7	39.1	21.7	15.2	11.4	8.9	7.5
UNEMPLOYMENT									
Unemployment rate (% of total labour force)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
POPULATION									
Population (million)	8.1	8.3	8.5	8.7	8.8	9.0	9.2	9.4	9.6
INVESTMENT-SAVINGS									
Total investment (% of GDP)	11.2	11.6	11.5	10.7	12.3	13.6	14.0	14.4	14.6
Gross national savings (% of GDP)	1.6	0.7	7.5	7.9	8.6	9.7	10.9	9.2	10.3
BUDGET DEFICIT-DEBT									
General government net lending/borrowing (% of GDP)	-7.3	-10.3	-7.3	-3.0	-3.6	-3.2	-2.9	-5.1	-4.8
General government gross debt (% of GDP)	79.4	94.1	80.0	69.7	67.8	66.2	63.7	63.6	63.4

Sierra Leone was the 161st largest economy in 2023, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). The UK was the 6th largest economy in 2023.³⁶

Figure 3: Impact contributions of the COICOP divisions to inflation rate

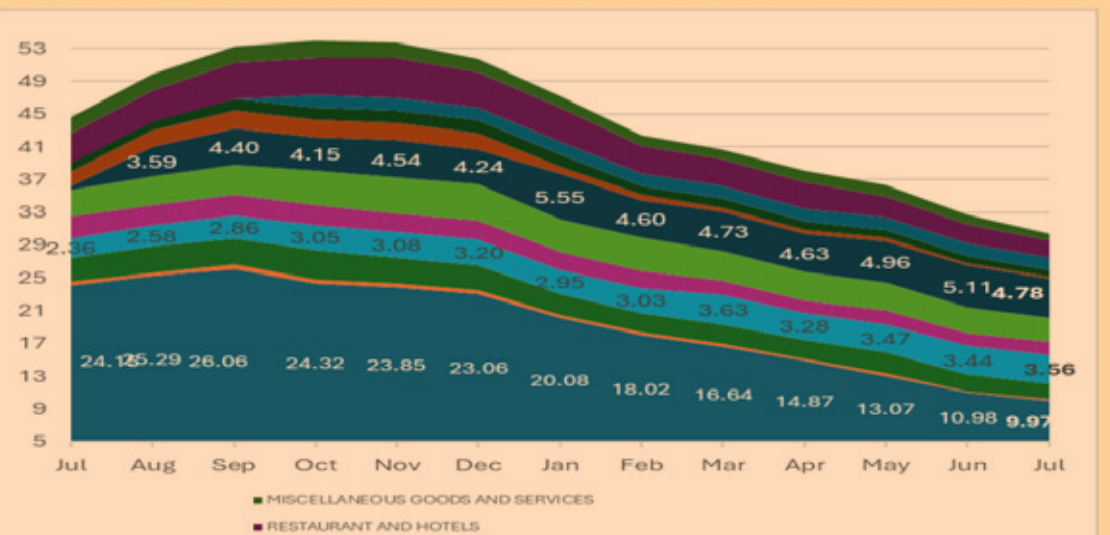


Figure 1A: Regional Year-on-Year (Yearly) inflation rates

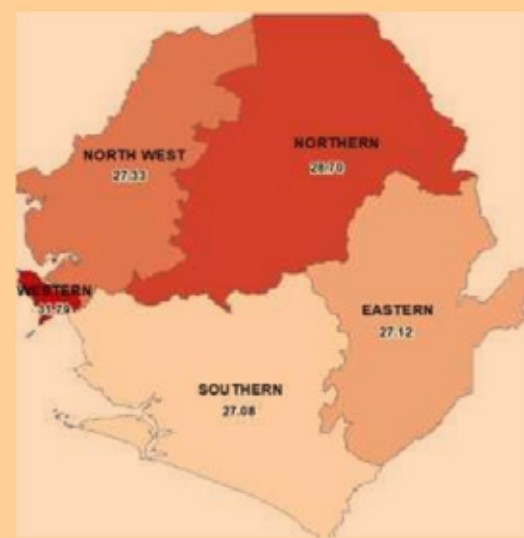


Figure 1B: Regional Month-on-Month (Monthly) inflation rates

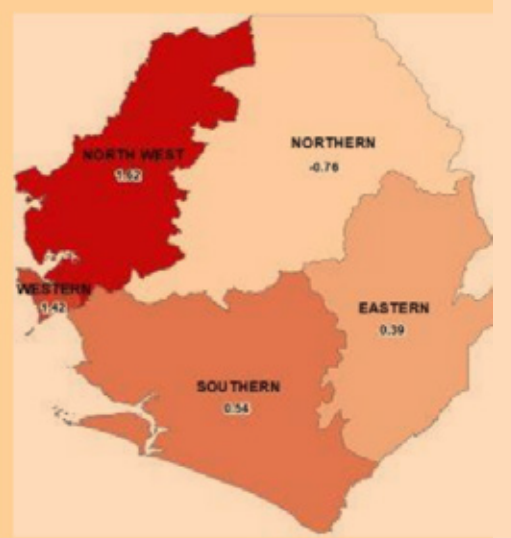
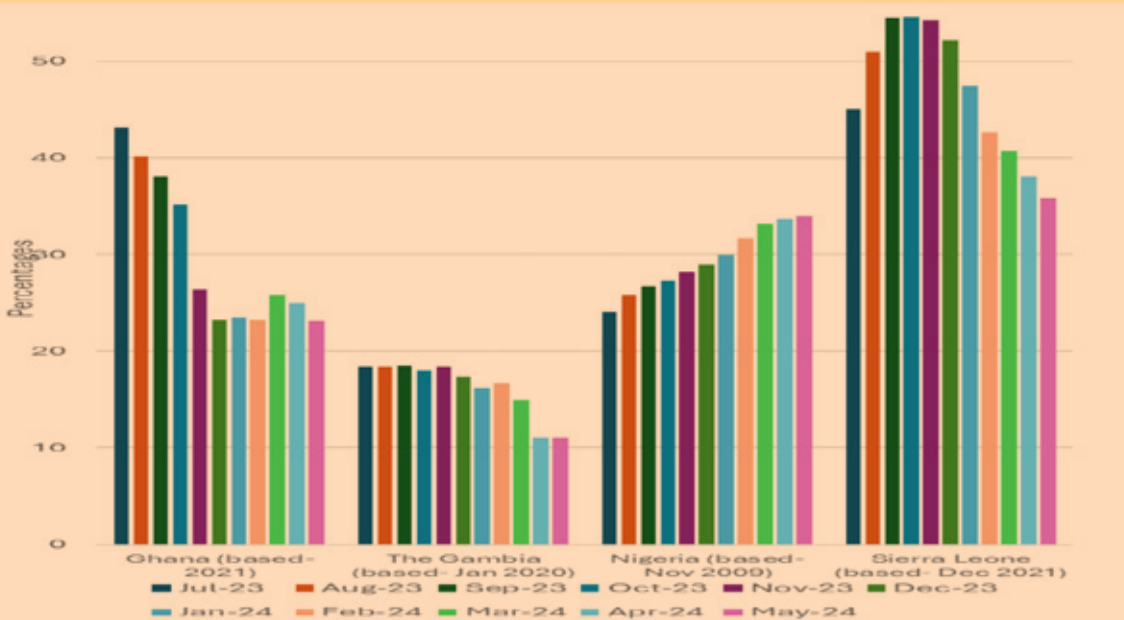


Figure 4: Recent inflation rates of selected ECOWAS countries



INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Things successful people do...

Cont'd from page 2

to “tomorrow.” Successful people, however, have a different approach – they tackle these tasks head-on in the first hour of their workday.

They follow a principle called “eating the frog,” a term coined by Mark Twain which essentially means doing your most difficult task first.

When you start your day by accomplishing something challenging, it gives you a sense of achievement and sets a positive tone for the rest of the day.

I know it’s tempting to put off difficult tasks, but from my own experience, avoiding them only adds to the stress.

It hangs over your head all day long and often causes unnecessary anxiety. By embracing the tough stuff first thing in the morning, you free up your day for more creative and engaging tasks.

When you start your work, try ‘eating that frog’. It might not be pleasant, but the sense of accomplishment is well worth it.

4. They Don’t Check Their Emails

Yes, you read that right. Contrary to what you might expect, many successful people don’t rush to check their emails as soon as they start their workday. Why? Because it can derail their entire morning schedule.

Emails often come with their own set of demands, which might not align with your planned goals for the day.

Emails can wait. Your most productive time of the day should not be consumed by responding to other people’s agendas.

Successful people often designate specific times during their day for email checking and responding.

It might seem a bit unconventional, and I certainly raised my eyebrows when I first heard about it.

But once I tried it, I realized how much more I could get done in the first hour without the constant



distraction of incoming emails. It’s definitely a game-changer, give it a shot!

5. Practice Mindfulness

In the hustle and bustle of today’s fast-paced world, it’s easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of tasks and deadlines.

Successful people, however, understand the importance of starting their day with a calm and focused mind. That’s why many of them incorporate mindfulness practices into the first hour of their workday.

Whether it’s meditating, journaling, or simply sitting quietly with a cup of coffee, taking time to clear your mind can greatly improve your productivity and creativity. It helps you remain centered throughout the day and reduces stress.

I was initially skeptical about this one – how could sitting quietly possibly make me more productive?

But once I started practicing mindfulness, I was amazed at the difference it made. It gave me a sense of peace and clarity that carried into the rest of my day. It might feel strange at first, but give it a try. You might be surprised at how much more focused and productive you become.

6. They Say “No”
One of the most important things that successful people do in the first hour of their workday is to say “no.” No to distractions, no to unimportant tasks, and sometimes, even no to people.

Saying yes to everything is a surefire way to overwhelm yourself and dilute your productivity. Successful people know their priorities and they’re not afraid to protect their time. They understand that every time they say yes to something insignificant, they’re saying no to something important.

This can be a tough pill to swallow because we’re often conditioned to be agreeable and accommodating.

But remember, your time is your most valuable asset and you have every right to guard it. It might be uncomfortable at first, but learning to say no can be one of the most empowering things you do for your productivity.

7. Continuous Learning

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest,” said Benjamin Franklin. Successful people not only understand this, but they live by it. They value personal growth and

lifelong learning, often dedicating a portion of the first hour of their workday to expanding their knowledge.

This could take many forms – reading industry news, listening to a podcast, or even taking a quick online course. The goal is to stay abreast of the latest trends and developments in their field and to continually improve and expand their skill set.

In today’s competitive world, standing still is the fastest way to move backwards. Continuous learning allows you to stay ahead of the curve and brings fresh ideas and perspectives to your work.

in your professional life.

8. Exercise and Movement
Finally, one of the most common habits of successful people is incorporating some form of physical activity into their morning routine.

Whether it’s a quick workout, a yoga session or simply a brisk walk around the block, getting your body moving in the first hour of your workday can work wonders for your productivity and mood.

Exercise enhances your energy levels, sharpens your focus, and stimulates creative thinking. It also releases endorphins – chemicals

love starting my day with a short yoga session. It helps me clear my mind and prepares me for the day ahead.

So give it a go – find an activity you enjoy and make it part of your morning routine. Your body and your brain will thank you!

Conclusion

By adopting these habits of successful people – setting clear goals, staying hydrated, tackling difficult tasks first, avoiding emails, practicing mindfulness, saying no, continuously learning, and exercising – you can significantly boost your productivity and overall job satisfaction.

However, remember that everyone’s optimal routine may look a little different. It’s about finding what works best for you. Try experimenting with these habits and see which ones resonate with you the most. And remember, consistency is key.

Success isn’t achieved in a day but through daily practices that align with your goals and values. So make the most of that first work hour because as Richard Whately once said, “Lose an hour in the morning, and you will spend all day looking for it.”

“
I know it’s tempting to put off difficult tasks, but from my own experience, avoiding them only adds to the stress.
”

Why not take a page from the book of successful people and dedicate a portion of your morning to learning something new? It’s an investment that’s guaranteed to pay dividends

in the brain that act as natural mood lifters. Now, I’m not saying you need to run a marathon each morning. Even a few minutes of stretching or a quick walk can make a big difference. I personally

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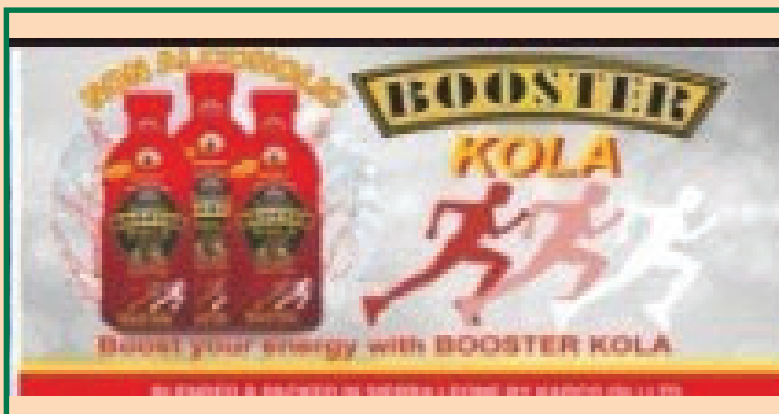
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Threat to Wildlife and Conservation in Sierra Leone

Edited by Alusine Kargbo

1. Habitat destruction and degradation factors

Habitat destruction and degradation is the most potent threat to biodiversity in Sierra Leone. Biodiversity in Sierra Leone has been subjected to serious threats, both direct and indirect. The most obvious threats include habitat loss

The situation was exacerbated by the 1991 - 2001 civil war during which large numbers of rural inhabitants migrated to safer areas in main towns and cities.

and fragmentation of natural habitats due primarily to deforestation, wetland drainage and infrastructural development, overgrazing, poor mining practices, poor farming practices, inappropriate use of agrochemicals, pollution, bush fires, population pressure, civil conflict, poverty, illiteracy, lack of resources, limited trained human power, inappropriate policies, institutional weakness as well as socio-economic factors. The following is a description of various forms of threats to biodiversity from habitat destruction and degradation:

1. Agriculture

The nature of agriculture that has been practiced for centuries in the country is slash-and-burn shifting cultivation, which is considered by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC,

2007) as one of the biggest threats to global biodiversity. In fact, it has been estimated that slash-and-burn agriculture is one of the main factors responsible for the depletion of the country's forest ecosystem to less than 5% its 1900 cover.

2. Wood fuel extraction and logging

Wood fuel (wood and charcoal) is estimated to account for a very high proportion of domestic fuel needs in Sierra Leone. In combination with logging and pole extraction, wood-fuel production is now a leading cause of habitat degradation in various ecosystems, including closed forest, woodlands and mangroves. Many species that depend on these ecosystems are threatened because such activities degrade the micro-ecological integrity of their habitats, distorting their feeding, foraging and breeding activities. In response, some species tend to retreat into deep areas in closed forests or other pristine habitats where they could find suitable alternative habitats for survival. However, for some species, with delicate and rare microhabitat requirement, any distortion could be disastrous to their local populations. The rate of wood, charcoal and log production is so high nowadays that the rate of habitat recovery is hardly keeping pace with the rate of depletion. The recent introduction of the power-saw into wood processing for logs and charcoal is a very potent factor that is accelerating the destruction and degradation of forests. As a result there is always a tendency to extend wood extraction into pristine areas and reserves. Although logging can sometimes be selective, the increasing demand for building poles and logs is causing indiscriminate extraction in recent times.

Increase in population

The accelerated rate of population increase coupled with rural to urban migration in the country, have over the last two decades necessitated the expansion of housing in towns and cities throughout the country. The situation was exacerbated by the 1991 - 2001 civil war during which large numbers of rural inhabitants migrated to safer areas in main towns and cities. Consequently, the numbers and sizes of slums increased, whilst unplanned housing construction in vulnerable areas escalated, putting great pressure on the natural support systems and resources and almost permanently obliterating the natural ecological systems of these locations. Some of these areas were forests and intertidal coastal systems that use to support a diversity of both terrestrial and aquatic birds, respectively.

One typical example is the proliferation of housing on the previously forested hills overlooking the city of Freetown, which use to hold significant number of wildlife species. Another is the expansion of settlements along the Freetown estuarine coast,

where large numbers of migratory water birds used to visit, particularly the Aberdeen Creek. Bird numbers have declined significantly as a result of changing ecological conditions in these sites as with many other sites in the country. Both hillside and coastal erosion events are causing serious sedimentation of once productive coastal habitats important for bird feeding and roosting activities of migrant birds.

Mining

The deleterious effect of mining on the environment and

it has been estimated that slash-and-burn agriculture is one of the main factors responsible for the depletion of the country's forest ecosystem to less than 5% its 1900 cover.

biodiversity is glaring and this is evident in many areas in the country. Mining contributes an average of about 4 to 10% of the country's GDP (depending on the quantity of minerals mined and the global market price), and provides among the highest private sector employment in the country.

The production of iron ore by two large mining companies between 2008 and 2012 was the reason for the dramatic growth in the country's GDP, up to about 20% in 2013. However, by all indications, mining constitutes one of the most significant threats to biodiversity today. Huge areas of land are being deforested and degraded in various parts of the country, resulting from various mining operations. In Kono, large portions of land have been left to waste following diamond mining.

In Mokanji and Rutile, huge areas of land and vegetation are degraded through bauxite and rutile mining, respectively; whilst in Ferrengbiai and Lunsar, similarly destructions are happening as a consequence of iron ore mining. The destructive nature of the mining and the dumping of mine tailings is rendering many viable habitats ecologically redundant, as in most instances, mine tailings are inert and support little or no wildlife. Artisanal is destroying viable habitats and riparian ecology of a number of floodplains, estuarine, river and streams systems around the country. Vast areas of riparian zones and flood plains have been devastated by unregulated artisanal gold and diamond mining, whilst Sierra Leone's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan NBSAP 2017-2026 31 illegal zircon mining threatens the ecology of some parts of the coast. A general observation from various field surveys show that birds that depend on riparian ecologies (such as kingfishers, crakes and ducks), were absent



Types of Electric Cars Explained

Thinking of getting an electric car? You're not alone.

There are around 239,000 zero-emission Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) on the UK's roads - with more than 100,000 registered in 2020 alone - along with 259,000 plug-in hybrids and 629,000 conventional hybrids.

Last year demand for new BEVs nearly trebled, while diesel and petrol sales slumped by 56 per cent and 40 per cent respectively.

The surge in demand for electric vehicles looks set to continue as we head towards the 2030 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans.

More of us are planning on going electric when we next change our car, highlighting a growing willingness to opt for a zero-emissions model.

If you're considering an electric vehicle for the first time, you might be confused by the terminology and array of acronyms you're faced with. We're here to help.

Whether you're bamboozled by BEVs, perplexed by plug-in hybrids or you can't tell the HEVs from the HEV-nots, our handy guide to the different types of electric vehicles should ensure you enter the world of zero emissions with zero fuss.

Electric vehicle (EV)

There are many different types of electric vehicles. This is an umbrella term for any kind of electrified car, from pure electric to one that uses a battery to boost efficiency or performance.

But it's most commonly associated with a battery electric vehicle (BEV).

Battery electric vehicle (BEV)

A BEV is probably the first thing that springs to mind when you think of an electric car.

Rather than a petrol or diesel engine, they feature an electric motor powered by batteries, which can be recharged at home using a domestic socket or dedicated home charge point, and on the move using the public charging network.

They are zero emissions, so have no tailpipe.

The electric driving range depends on a number of factors, not least the size of the battery.

For example, the MINI Electric has a 32.6kWh battery to deliver a range of up to 145 miles, while the 100kWh battery in the Tesla Model S Long Range could achieve as much as 412 miles.

Examples: Nissan Leaf, Renault Zoe, Tesla Model S

Pros: Zero tailpipe emissions in use, lower running costs, tax benefits, quiet running, government grant available.

Cons: Still relatively expensive, long charging times compared to filling up a petrol and diesel but more rapid chargers on the way, limited choice but new models coming out all the time.

Plug-in hybrid (PHEV)

A plug-in hybrid vehicle, commonly referred to as a PHEV, uses batteries to power an electric motor, and either petrol or diesel fuel to power an engine.

The batteries can be charged in the same way as a BEV - by plugging in - although you shouldn't expect much more than 40 miles of electric range, depending on the vehicle.



Many people see PHEVs as a kind of stepping-stone on the road to going pure electric.

With a full charge, you could find you have enough range to complete your daily commute on electric power, with the petrol or diesel engine available should you need to travel further afield.

A PHEV will typically start in electric mode and will run

on electricity until the battery pack is depleted. You can also choose to save the electric range for urban use.

Examples: Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV, Volvo XC60 Recharge, Volkswagen Passat GTE

Pros: Ability to complete shorter journeys in electric mode, safety net

often shortened to hybrids, or referred to as 'self-charging hybrids' in some advertisements, are powered by electricity and a petrol or diesel engine.

Unlike a PHEV, a HEV cannot be plugged into the mains, as the engine is still the main power source.

With a full charge, you could find you have enough range to complete your daily commute on electric power, with the petrol or diesel engine available should you need to travel further afield

A PHEV will typically start in electric mode and will run on electricity until the battery pack is depleted. You can also choose to save the electric range for urban use

of a conventional engine for longer trips, lower CO2 emissions than a petrol or diesel model.

Cons: More expensive than conventional cars, weight of batteries puts a dent in overall efficiency, especially on motorways; smaller fuel tank can mean more frequent fill-ups on longer journeys, only limited electric range.

Hybrid (HEV)

Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEVs),

The battery is significantly smaller, so you shouldn't expect to achieve any more than a couple of miles of pure electric range at low speeds.

A hybrid will produce less CO2 than a petrol or diesel model, so there are still tax benefits associated with running these cars.

The Toyota Prius is arguably the most famous HEV in the world and is now available as a plug-in hybrid, too. It could even be considered the poster child for eco-driving.

Prius, Hyundai Ioniq Hybrid

Pros: Excellent efficiency in towns and cities, regenerative braking recharges the batteries, cheaper than BEVs and PHEVs, no need to plug in.

Cons: Can be inefficient on longer journeys, severely limited electric range, sales of most new hybrid vehicles will end in 2030.

Mild hybrid electric vehicles (MHEV)

Some manufacturers erroneously refer to mild electric vehicles, also known as mild hybrids, as hybrid vehicles.

This is a bit cheeky because these aren't hybrids in the traditional sense. Most owners will be unaware that they're driving a MHEV.

Despite having 'electric' in the name, these aren't really EVs in the same way as the previous vehicles on this article, and can't ever be run with zero emissions.

A mild hybrid vehicle features a small battery pack with an integrated starter-generator, which is designed to improve efficiency and to deliver a tiny boost in acceleration.

Fuel economy is improved and there's a small reduction in CO2 emissions, while some models feature tech that allows the engine to switch off when coasting.

Examples: Suzuki Swift, Ford Puma, Audi Q8

Pros: Feels the same as a conven-

tional car, roughly the same price as a car without mild hybrid technology, small boost in fuel economy.

Cons: Not a proper hybrid, no opportunity to drive in electric mode, still reliant on a petrol or diesel engine.

Hydrogen vehicle (FCEV)

A fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV) is powered by hydrogen. When you mix hydrogen with oxygen you create electricity, which can be used to power vehicles.

They take no longer to refuel than a conventional car and only emit water from the tailpipe. On paper, a FCEV is the best alternative to a BEV.

There are one or two drawbacks. Only a few manufacturers have invested in the technology, so choice is extremely limited.

The Toyota Mirai offers a driving range of 400 miles, but it's the only hydrogen fuel cell car available in the UK. Then there's the infrastructure: there are currently only around 20 hydrogen stations in the UK.

Examples: Toyota Mirai, Hyundai NEXO

Pros: Excellent driving range, zero-emissions, can be refuelled in just a few minutes.

Cons: Expensive technology means expensive cars, lack of filling stations, limited choice of fuel cell vehicles.

By Joan Bannister

In a striking revelation, Lands Minister, Mr Tamba Dauda recently announced that less than 30% of homes in Freetown obtained required permits before they were erected. A development that has raised serious health and safety concerns the capital's rapidly expanding urban landscape.

Speaking in an interview over the radio - Radio Democracy, Mr Dauda highlighted the alarming implications of unauthorized construction in a city originally designed to accommodate just 5,000 residents, yet now housing over 2 million. "This exponential growth has placed immense pressure on our housing infrastructure and planning," he explained, pointing out the need for urgent regulatory oversight.

The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning, he said is grappling with numerous challenges, including a limited workforce and the vast geographical area it oversees. The ministry's staff, he stated further often encounter difficulties in reaching remote construction sites, thereby hindering effective monitoring and regulation of building activities. "We are stretched thin," he acknowledged, "and this limits our ability to enforce compliance with building codes."

The recent collapse of a building in Shell, Freetown, underscores the dangers posed by unregulated construction. "Securing a building permit is essential for ensuring safety and structural integrity," Minister Dauda stressed, urging residents to prioritize compliance for their own protection.

In response to the ongoing crisis, the Ministry is implementing a series of reforms aimed at enhancing building safety. One significant measure is the introduction of a comprehensive building code that sets standards for construction materials, structural loads, and soil

Freetown's Housing Crisis: High Time for Compliance and Safety



bearing capacity. "This new law is crucial for ensuring that buildings can withstand natural

grow, it is crucial for both the government and citizens to engage in collaborative efforts to

regulations becomes increasingly urgent. The Ministry of Lands is calling on residents to

landscape following the recent announcement of a \$480 million grant from the American Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). This development hold promises to reshape the future of the nation by addressing its long-standing energy challenges which in turn would stimulate socio-economic growth.

With potentials to provide reliable, affordable, and sustainable electricity to millions of citizens; this grant is expected to improve electricity generation and distribution, making a tangible impact on the daily lives of Sierra Leoneans.

Currently, only 27.3% of the population has access to electricity, with rural areas suffering the most, where access drops to a staggering 4.9%.

The government has emphasized the importance of access to energy as a catalyst for growth, innovation, and poverty alleviation. Reliable electricity is essential not only for illuminating homes but also for powering industries, enhancing educational opportunities, and improving healthcare

services. This aligns with his broader development agenda, which seeks to uplift communities and create a more prosperous nation.

As the nation gears up to implement this grant, the Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority (EDSA) has announced scheduled power outages for maintenance work on critical power lines. While this may cause temporary inconveniences, it is a necessary step towards enhancing the reliability and efficiency of the electricity supply. According to a press release, EDSA is committed to completing these repairs swiftly to ensure that the nation's energy infrastructure can support future growth.

The \$480 million grant from the MCC signifies more than just financial assistance; it embodies hope for a nation yearning for progress. As Sierra Leone embarks on this transformative journey, it is crucial for all stakeholders—government, civil society and citizens—to work collaboratively to ensure the grant's effective implementation.

“
the government should enhance its outreach efforts to educate the public about the importance of building permits and safety regulations. By fostering a culture of compliance and community involvement, we can work together to build a safer, more resilient Freetown
 ”

elements and potential hazards," Minister Dauda asserted.

The initiative seeks not only to improve construction practices but also to instill a culture of compliance among builders and homeowners. Minister Dauda emphasized the ministry's commitment to public safety, urging citizens to understand the importance of securing permits before undertaking any construction projects.

From my perspective, this situation reflects a broader issue of urban planning and community responsibility. As Freetown continues to

ensure sustainable development. Residents must recognize that building without permits not only endangers their own safety but also poses risks to their neighbors.

Moreover, the government should enhance its outreach efforts to educate the public about the importance of building permits and safety regulations. By fostering a culture of compliance and community involvement, we can work together to build a safer, more resilient Freetown.

As Freetown continues to expand, the necessity for proper housing

cooperate in creating a safer urban environment. "We all have a role to play in ensuring that our city grows sustainably and safely," Minister Dauda concluded.

With heightened awareness and proactive measures, there is hope that Freetown can address its housing challenges and foster a safer living environment for its residents, he assured. The ministry's commitment to reform and public safety could mark the beginning of a new chapter in responsible urban development.

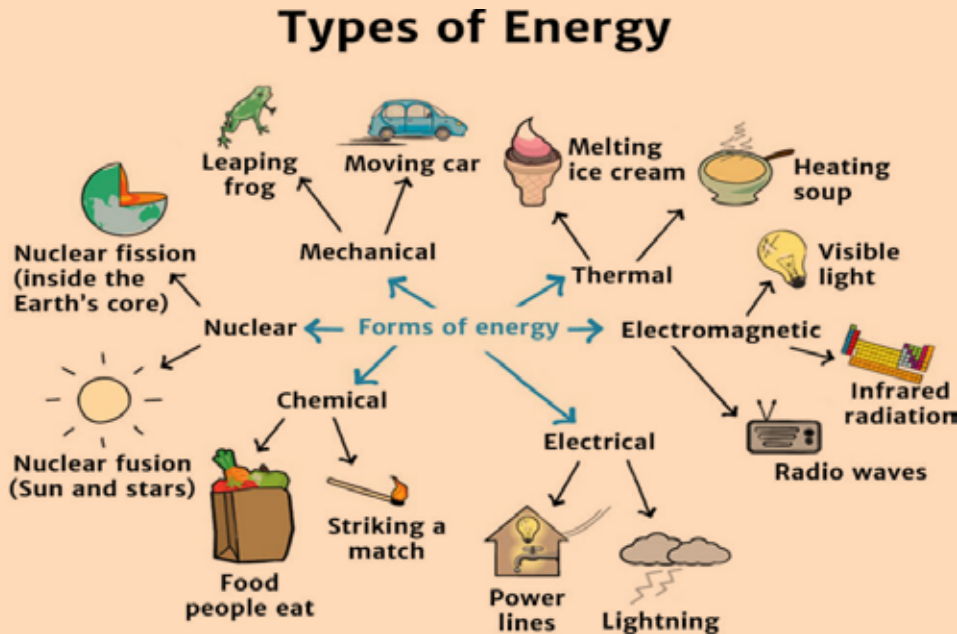
Sierra Leone stands on the brink of a significant transformation in its energy

ENERGY

PRA Announces New Pump Prices

The Petroleum Regulatory Agency (PRA) has announced another price cut at the pumps.

The downward review, fourth in recent time according to the agency came about after the completion of the collation and computation of the maximum retail prices of petroleum products for the month of October. Accordingly, the PRA adjusted the prices of Petrol and Diesel by NLe0.24 and NLe0.18 respectively.



The amounts of Fuel Oil nLe25.11, NLe0.20 and NLe0.60. The agency attributed the development to the stable global oil prices among others. “The oil market recorded a strong recovery during the start of September 2024, a stable global oil prices and a stronger Leone versus the US dollar further affected the domestic pump prices for petroleum products”. Effectively 2nd October, all petroleum dealers are not allowed to sell above the following prices: Petrol nLe27.30, Diesel NLe27.40, Kerosene NLe25.03 and fuel oil and kerosene.”

World Bank Meets Freetown On Energy Crisis

A team from the World Bank, led by its Senior Energy Specialist Paul Kagaba has called at Electricity House in Freetown to update the Deputy Minister of Energy Dr. Eldred Taylor, on World Bank funded projects and to reiterate the bank's commitment to supporting the country's energy aspirations.

Paul Kagaba told Deputy Minister of Energy that the team had paid what he described as a courtesy call because they wanted to have frank discussions with the Ministry

of Energy on a variety of World Bank funded projects like ESLEAP and RESPITE.

"Specifically for ESLEAP, this project has been running for some time and has experienced budget shortfalls. So we are here to discuss how best we are going to reallocate some monies from certain components to other components," he said, adding that they were also considering providing support to the mini grid domain.

Paul Kagaba went on to say that, the World

with relevant institutions and had explored areas of intervention including the 33KV line noting that they had positively engaged the Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority (EDSA) on this.

Chairman, Energy Governance Coordination Group, (EGCG), Dr. Kandeh Yumkellah, reckoned that the country was in an energy crisis and that stakeholders were not oblivious of the dire need to put mechanisms in place ahead of the critical period of the dry season.

He pleaded with the World Bank to continue to support the country's energy sector assuring that some concrete steps were

the dry season. Responding, Deputy Minister of Energy I, Dr. Eldred Taylor, commended the team for the visit and the frank and fruitful discussions.

He also catalogued a number of projects that are currently being implemented and spoke about steps taken by the Ministry to improve EDSA's financial and technical viability by connecting mining companies to the grid.

Director General of EDSA, Dr. Joe Lahai, spoke about the operations and challenges of EDSA and the World Bank projects.

He said EDSA was



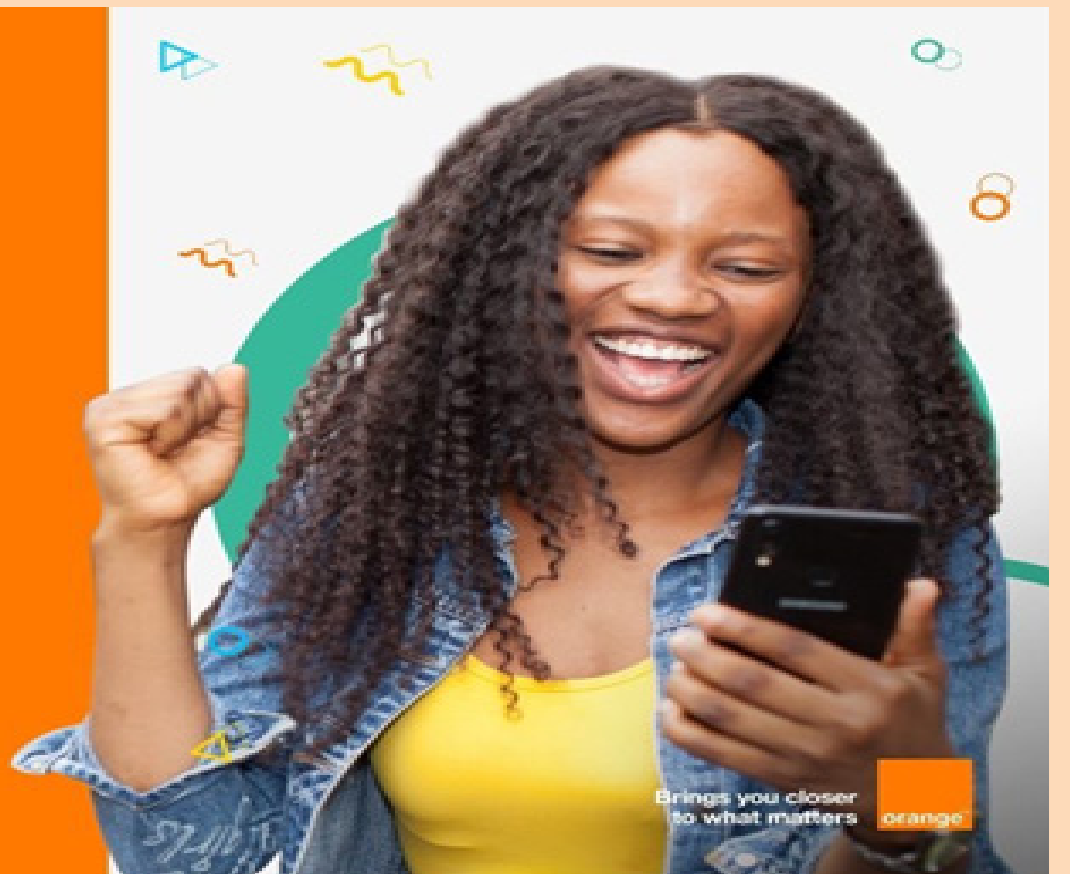
committed to scaling up nationwide access to electricity and commended the bank for its untiring support intimating that with the energy sector and the 'Feed Salone' agenda being inextricably linked, reforms continue in the sector.

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TRAVEL, TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

MV Bai Bureh: Linking S/Leone With The World

By Alusine Kargbo

Ferry services are essentials in linking Freetown – capital city of Sierra Leone to the outside world. Travels through Ferries are the second nature for travellers visiting the country after their flights touch down at the international airport in Lungi.

Lungi which harbours the airport is the gateway to Sierra Leone. The ferries complete the long air trips for visitors as they continue the waterway to link the capital city of Freetown. By far amongst the safest and most convenient of these ferries is MV Bai Bureh – a government owned ferry which commenced operations in 2021. It accommodates 500 passengers and 60



MV BAI BUREH

vehicles per trip.

Francis Jamal Martins, General Manager of the ferry in an interview with FS said the ferry is health and safety compliant and its being operated by qualified crew. According to him, the ferry was purchased by the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT) as a form of investment for

government.” This ferry is operating from government wharf terminal to Lungi Tagrin terminal. It covers 7 miles at sea between Tagrin and government wharf in Freetown. The ferry helps ease heavy traffic at Kissy Road and Fourah Bay while travelling to Lungi”.

MV Bai Bureh’s harbour was strategically located in Freetown near the Central Business District (CDB) in the proximity of the



General Manager, Francis Martins

State House, Markets, PZ Market, the Banks and Commerce. “The location of the harbour in the CBD help passengers to save travel time, fuel consumption

city”. “Equally important to note is that this ferry also caters for government workers in the morning and evening hours. It

“**The location of the harbour in the CBD help passengers to save travel time, fuel consumption whilst ensuring safe travel**”

whilst ensuring safe travel”. Mr Martin explained that the ferry’s schedule is flexible but strategically configured to align with flight schedules. “So that constrains from late landing flights at the Freetown International Airport will have a space for the passengers to cross easily to Freetown the capital

further caters for local traders plying the Port Loko District (North West Region) and the capital city of Freetown”. The Ferry is being managed and operated by Eterna Ship Management SL Ltd as part of the government’s effort at promoting sea transportation.



Menace of Seaweed Blight Aberdeen and Lumley Beaches

By John Marrah

In recent times, the beautiful beaches of Aberdeen and Lumley, located in Freetown, Sierra Leone, have been overwhelmed by an invasive spread of seaweed. The Lumley and Aberdeen Beach are one of the finest land scape in the world and the beach stretch over one thousand miles with fine clean sand.

The sudden influx of seaweed has sparked concern among residents, environmentalists, and local authorities, affecting not only the natural beauty of these famous coastlines but also local businesses that rely on beach tourism

The seaweed is a brown reddish rotten plant that has gone deep to more than one feet.

The invasion is part of a broader issue seen in various coastal regions across the world, where changes in ocean

currents, water temperatures, and nutrient levels contribute to the excessive growth of marine algae. In Sierra Leone, the accumulation of seaweed is often seasonal but seems to be intensifying. Environmental experts are pointing to possible links with climate change, ocean pollution, and shifts in marine ecosystems.

For locals and tourists, the dense layers of seaweed are more than just an eyesore. They interfere with swimming, fishing, and other recreational activities. Beachfront businesses, which thrive on a steady flow of tourists, are suffering from the reduced attractiveness of the coastline, as the decaying seaweed produces an unpleasant odor and makes the area less welcoming.

Efforts are underway to manage the situation. The local government, in collaboration with environmental groups, has organized beach clean-up campaigns. However, these efforts face challenges, as the seaweed keeps washing ashore in large quantities, and sustainable solutions to the problem are still under discussion.

The seaweed takeover is a stark reminder of the delicate balance of marine environments and the far-reaching impacts of environmental changes on communities dependent on natural resources. If the situation persists, it could have long-term economic and environmental implications for Sierra Leone's coastal areas.

Freetown Big Market

By Dolly Jones

The Big Market, a vibrant market in the heart of Freetown, is one of Sierra Leone's oldest trading posts, dating back to the 18th century.

Today, both locals and tourists meet at this historical market to purchase an incredible array of goods and commodities ranging from arts and craft, traditional herbal medicine, wooden carvings, drums, and jewellery to paintings and woven crafts like the Sierra Leone's celebrated Shi Kublai, a basket traditionally made by the Temne to keep possessions safe, the Kongobru drums made by the Mende to play traditional music amongst many other traditional wares.

The market is an excellent place to find unique souvenirs and traditional attire.

However, some traders have expressed concerns about selling their products in the market.

Chair lady of the market, Mammy Isata, told FS that they have been experiencing low patronage/ sales since January and would want the

government to intervene and help them out.

She noted that officials of the ministry of Tourism had visited few months ago and made promises yet to be implemented. The traders would like the government to outlaw street trading of goods that are traditionally being sold in the Big Market.

Mabinty Kabba, a beads trader, said this would force tourists to come into the market to purchase their souvenirs such as traditional and local attires and not get hijacked by street hawkers as is happening presently on the street because it stops tourists and buyers from going to their business place to buy from them.

Speaking in similar vein, Mr Idrissa Bangura, Deputy Director of tourism informed of the coming of 'Tourism Business Na All Man Business,' tourism initiative being planned by the government. Saying the project would work hand in hand with partners including traders in the Big Market.

NEWS

BSL Jerks Up Rates

By John Marrah

The Bank of Sierra Leone – aka the Central Bank has announced an upward jerk in rates viz: the Monetary policy rate (MPR) to 24.75 %, the standing Lending Facility rate (SLFR) to 27.75% and the Standing Deposit Facility Rate (SDFR) to 18.25%

Speaking through its Monetary Policy Committee, the Bank stated that the new rates becomes effective 1st

October 2024.

The Committee noted that even though global economic conditions, as assessed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), are improving-including global headline inflation, global political and military instability poses a serious threat to sustaining that outlook.

With respect to Sierra Leone, the Committee recognized that headline inflation has declined from 54.59% in October 2023 to 25.49% in August

2024, due mainly to the Bank's tight monetary policy stance. However, the Committee was cautioned by the potential risks posed by global political and military instability, mainly due to the Russia-Ukraine war and the on-going conflict in the Middle East to inflation in Sierra Leone and globally.

The committee was optimistic about the potential for economic growth in Sierra Leone. They recognized that the country's trade deficit

with the rest of the world was reducing, its foreign reserve was growing and the exchange rate of its currency against other major currencies in the world was stable.

The committee concluded that thought inflation was declining it was still too high for the people of the country and therefore still adversely affects the prices of goods and services. Because of these factors, the committee recommended a continued tight monetary policy stance.



The Ministry of Health (MoH) has announced a groundbreaking partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to implement a \$24 million project aimed at transforming the National Rehabilitation Centre (NRC) and strengthening rehabilitation services nationwide.

This initiative will enhance NRC operations across six critical areas, including data and clinic management, education and training,

supply chain improvements and infrastructure development among others. The project is poised to significantly improve rehabilitation services for thousands of Sierra Leoneans with disabilities, enhancing their quality of life.

However, the ongoing illegal occupation of NRC premises has posed a major obstacle to the project's implementation. Unauthorized occupants have established makeshift structures on the center's grounds and informal trading

\$24m To Rehabilitate Health Projects Nationwide

activities along nearby roads, disrupting daily operations and creating security risks.

In response, the Ministry has taken proactive steps, holding four stakeholder meetings with the squatters and community leaders to resolve the issue peacefully. Despite those efforts, including the latest meeting on September 6, 2024, the

squatters have yet to vacate the premises.

Key resolutions from

the meetings include the demarcation of roads, a resurvey of NRC land and

The project is poised to significantly improve rehabilitation services for thousands of Sierra Leoneans with disabilities, enhancing their quality of life.

the immediate eviction of unauthorized occupants. The Ministry stresses that the success of the MIT project and the continued provision of essential rehabilitation services depend on restoring NRC operations in a secure environment.

The Ministry is urging all stakeholders to adhere to the agreed-upon actions. Failure to comply may result in intervention by security forces to safeguard the project's future.

EPI, Health Coalition target unvaccinated children

A civil society health advocacy network, Health For All Coalition Sierra Leone (HFAC-SL), in partnership with the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) and the Ministry of Health and with support from Global Alliance for Vaccine on Immunization (GAVI) recently engaged Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Councillors, Traditional and Religious Leaders, various women and youth groups in an interactive session that aims at an increased utilization of immunization services.

The event which has as its theme "Immunization

is the Cheapest means of saving lives of Children, Young Girls and Women from Preventable Diseases" is targeting the Western Area Urban, Koinadugu and Falaba Districts in the Northeast Region and Kono and Kailahun Districts in the Eastern Region.

The objective of this exercise, according to HFAC Executive Director, Charles Mambu, is to ensure that the remaining 10% children and girls get the vaccine and are immunized enlightening that stakeholders want to make sure that nobody is left behind in the immunization and vaccination process.



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CAREER & WORKPLACE



Working From Home Is Powering Productivity

A fivefold increase in remote work since the pandemic could boost economic growth and bring wider benefits. Working from home was not an option for most people before March 11, 2020, when work and home life suddenly collided. Stanford University's Nicholas Bloom was studying the potential impact of remote work long before the pandemic launched it into the mainstream and now has data to suggest businesses should stick to the hybrid working model.



By
**Nicholas
Bloom**

Economics is famous for being the dismal science. Sadly, recent work highlighting the slowdown in productivity growth stretching back to the 1950s is no exception. But I take a more cheerful view because of the great productivity gains promised by the pandemic-induced jump in working from home.

Working from home (WFH) increased about tenfold following the outbreak of the pandemic and has settled in at about five times its prepandemic level (see Chart 1). This could counter slowing productivity and deliver a surge in economic growth

over the next few decades. If AI yields additional output, the era of slow growth could be over.

The decomposition of economic growth by Nobel laureate Robert Solow, one of the most famous economists of all time, guides my

promote faster growth.

Labor

The easiest way to see labor's impact is the survey evidence from across the United States, Europe, and Asia that shows hybrid work is worth about an 8 percent increase in salary. Hybrid work is the typical pattern for office workers, managers, and other professionals, involving usually two or three days a week away from the office. To understand why employees would consider this to be worth

and commute time.

Most people really dislike commuting, and so place even greater value on this time savings. See, for example, another famous paper, by the Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman. This research found that commuting is the most detested activity in the day, disliked even more than work itself. This makes it easy to understand why the average employee values working from home so much—with its ability to save hours of painful weekly commuting, alongside the flexibility of being able to live farther from work.

This value of working from home has a powerful impact on labor supply. In the global economy there are tens of millions of people who are on the edge of the workforce. So small changes in the attractiveness of work can bring many millions of them into employment. This marginal labor force includes those with childcare or eldercare responsibilities, those close to retirement, and some folks in rural areas.

One example of this WFH impact on labor supply is the approximately 2 million more employees with a

CHART 2

Patent shift

Patents related to technologies that support working from home surged post-pandemic.



SOURCES: US Patent and Trademark Office new patent application files. Data to May 12, 2024. Details in Bloom, Nicholas, Steven J. Davis, and Yulia Zhestkova. 2021. "COVID-19 Shifted Patent Applications toward Technologies that Support Working from Home." AEA Papers and Proceedings 111: 263-66.

disability who are Another example working in the US is prime-age female following the pandemic. employment in the US, which has risen about 2 percent faster than prime-age male high-WFH occupations. employment since the

“
Most people really dislike commuting, and so place even greater value on this time savings. See, for example, another famous paper, by the Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman.
”

Employees with a disability benefit in two ways: first, by avoiding long commutes and second, by the ability to control their work environment at home. pandemic. Women's larger role in childcare could be driving this rise in female labor force participation via WFH, according to recent research.

CHART 1

Working from home

Working from home in the US has stabilized at about 25 percent of days.



SOURCE: Barro, Jose Maria, Nicholas Bloom, and Steven J. Davis. 2021. "Why Working from Home Will Stick." National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 26791, Cambridge, MA.

analysis. Solow's 1957 classic paper highlights how growth comes from both the increase in factor inputs like labor and capital and from raw productivity growth. I hang my analysis on his framework by highlighting in turn how each of these factors will

8 percent of their salary, note that typical workers spend about 45 hours a week in the office, yet they spend close to another 8 hours a week commuting. So working from home three days a week saves them about five hours a week, about 10 percent of their total weekly work

COMMENTARY

Changing The Nature Of Growth

The pursuit of economic growth is one of our most treasured ideas, but it's also one of the most dangerous



By Daniel Susskind

One of the few things politicians agree on is that we need more economic growth. Almost every country sputtered into the 21st century: Japan and Germany in the mid-1990s, the United States and United Kingdom in the mid-2000s, China from the mid-2010s. After two decades of successive crises, most economies are sluggish shadows of former selves, and leaders have thrust growth to the top of their priorities.

We have been building up to this moment. Over the past few decades, the pursuit of growth has relentlessly emerged as one of the defining activities of our common life. Our collective success is determined by how much we can produce in a given period. The fortunes of our political leaders

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depend overwhelmingly on the rise or fall of one number: gross domestic product (GDP).

Yet we seldom stop to ask how this all-conquering ascent happened and, most important, whether it's a good thing. Because there's a big problem. When we look at the most serious challenges our planet faces today—from

climate change and the destruction of the environment to the creation of powerful technologies like AI whose disruptive effects we cannot yet properly control—growth's fingerprints are everywhere. Yes, it may be one of our most treasured ideas. But it's turning into one of the most dangerous, too.

New obsession

Our obsession with growth gives the impression that it must have an illustrious history, that great thinkers once debated its worth and elevated it to the unrivaled position it now holds. But it does not. It's an extremely new preoccupation. For most of humanity's 300,000-year history, life was stagnant. Whether a Stone Age hunter-gatherer or an 18th century farm laborer, you would have lived a similar economic life, stuck in a relentless struggle for subsistence.

Most classical economists would have found it unimaginable to actively pursue growth as a policy priority. The field's founding fathers—Adam Smith, David Ricardo, John Stuart Mill—all took

for granted the prospect of an impending "stationary state" when any period of material flourishing would come to an inevitable end. And even if the idea had occurred to those early thinkers, it would have been impossible in practice: reliable measures of the size of the economy emerged only in the 1940s. Those classical

figures were not alone in neglecting growth. Almost no politician, policymaker, economist—not anyone—talked about the pursuit of growth before the 1950s. So why did the idea of growth, ignored for so long, see a sudden surge in popularity in the mid-20th century? One of the most important reasons was war.

A basic question when waging war is how large a slice of the economic pie can be redirected toward conflict. Yet at the start of World War II, that information was not available. And so in Britain up stepped the great economist John Maynard Keynes to design the first reliable measure, alongside the efforts of

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an American economist, Simon Kuznets. But GDP is not the same thing as growth: the former is a snapshot of how much the economy produces in a given period; the latter involves increasing that output over time. So how did GDP growth come to matter so much? Again, the answer lies in war—albeit of a different type.

As World War II ended, the Cold War began. There was no grand theater where the main adversaries clashed head-on. None of the numbers of traditional conflict—territory gained, soldiers lost, weapons destroyed—were available to tell who was winning. In their absence, other measures took on significance. The most important was economic: how rapidly the US and Soviet economies were growing.

For the most part, the Cold War was defined by

preparation for a grand potential conflict, by the conspicuous accumulation and demonstration of military might. To that end, growth was critical: if a country's economy were larger, it could spend more on the military. At the same time, outgrowing the enemy came to be seen as the definitive way to convince citizens that their side had the upper hand in the broader battle of ideas: the market system versus central planning. An era of "growthmanship" was underway.

Growth dilemma

As the 20th century unfolded, the demands of war faded. Yet the pursuit of growth stubbornly persisted. For growth,

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it turned out, was also associated with almost every measure of human flourishing. Growth freed billions from the struggle for subsistence, with extreme poverty dropping from 8 in 10 people in 1820 to just 1 in 10 today. It made the average human life longer and healthier—turning obesity, rather than famine, into the rich world's main problem. And it dragged humankind out of ignorance and superstition: 9 in 10 were illiterate in 1820, but 9 in 10 are literate today.

The list of growth's benefits goes on. But politicians and policymakers found it particularly useful. To begin with, it helped pay for grand postwar ambitions: the New Deal, social insurance, five-year plans. Then it promised to make day-to-day politics far easier. Everyone, it seemed, could benefit from it.

Economic data and projections for Sierra Leone (IMF)^{34, 35}

The following table presents economic statistics for Sierra Leone. Projections include assumptions of the effects of COVID-19 and may be subject to change in the future. Estimated data, as well as projections up to 2029, are presented in italics and are subject to revision.

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
TRADE GROWTH									
Change in exports (%)	75.6	4.6	25.5	12.3	1.9	4.4	4.8	1.2	6.3
Change in imports (%)	20.0	-6.5	5.1	10.0	-1.0	1.4	3.4	3.8	4.0
CURRENT ACCOUNT									
Current account balance (% of GDP)	-9.5	-11.0	-4.0	-2.8	-3.7	-4.0	-3.1	-5.1	-4.2
GDP									
Change in real GDP (%)	4.1	3.5	3.4	4.0	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
GDP per capita (1,000 USD)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6
GDP PPP (Int'l \$ billion)	15.0	16.6	17.8	18.9	20.1	21.5	22.8	24.3	25.9
INFLATION									
Inflation, year average (CPI %)	11.9	27.2	47.7	39.1	21.7	15.2	11.4	8.9	7.5
UNEMPLOYMENT									
Unemployment rate (% of total labour force)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
POPULATION									
Population (million)	8.1	8.3	8.5	8.7	8.8	9.0	9.2	9.4	9.6
INVESTMENT-SAVINGS									
Total investment (% of GDP)	11.2	11.6	11.5	10.7	12.3	13.6	14.0	14.4	14.6
Gross national savings (% of GDP)	1.6	0.7	7.5	7.9	8.6	9.7	10.9	9.2	10.3
BUDGET DEFICIT-DEBT									
General government net lending/borrowing (% of GDP)	-7.3	-10.3	-7.3	-3.0	-3.6	-3.2	-2.9	-5.1	-4.8
General government gross debt (% of GDP)	79.4	94.1	80.0	69.7	67.8	66.2	63.7	63.6	63.4

Sierra Leone was the 161st largest economy in 2023, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). The UK was the 6th largest economy in 2023.³⁵

And growth also made it seemingly possible to escape the conflicts and disagreements that so often plague society. The process becomes, in the words of one economist, "both the pot of gold and the rainbow."

The promise of growth was—and still is—undeniable. But this led to complacency. Political leaders, economists, and many others, blinded by the ways growth appeared to make life better, started to believe that growth was not only good but came at little or no cost. "In the West, although growth has its price," declared one British economist to a gathering of eminent scientists in the early 1960s, "that price may not be so terribly high after all." How wrong that turned out to be.

The relentless pursuit of growth has come at a huge price, with destructive consequences we do not yet fully understand. That price

is often put in environmental terms: that we are growing our way toward an ecological catastrophe, that the past eight years have been the hottest eight years in human history, and that climate change is now a climate emergency. But growth is also related to many of the other big concerns people have about the future.

The growth-promoting technologies we have relied on have also been inequality-creating: making humankind more prosperous, but more divided as well. They have been work-threatening and politics-undermining: AI and other technologies are disrupting labor markets and political life in ways it's not clear we can control. And they have been community-disrupting: bolstering some industries but destroying others and decimating traditional

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Threat to wildlife...

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from river systems in the east of the country that have experienced years of sedimentation from both artisanal and industrial mining activities.

- **Natural factors**
(Climate Change)

Climate change has become one of the most important discussions in international agenda on the environment. It is a natural phenomenon that has been scientifically proven to be accelerated by human activities, and has been blamed for a number of extreme weather conditions, including floods, heat waves and bush forest, with devastating consequences on people and nature. A report

by Karim and Okoni-Williams in 2007 for the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), indicates that climate change has the potential to distort a range of ecosystem processes that may lead to permanent changes to bird diversity and bird habitat in future. Although the evidences are not immediately apparent, the long dry spells with intense solar heat and the changes in annual precipitation period coupled with irregular strong winds and heavy rainfall are enough signs of changing climatic conditions that may affect birds and their habitats. As birds are considered indicators of ecological change, it



Changing The Nature...

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sources of shared meaning.

Growth now presents us with a dilemma. It is associated with many of our greatest triumphs, but also many of our greatest problems. The promise of growth pulls us toward pursuing ever more of it, but its price pushes us powerfully away from that chase. It's as if we cannot go on—and yet we must.

Degrowth's folly

The “degrowth” movement proposes a radical response: if growth is the problem, then less growth—or even no growth—is the solution. This proposal,

which started among a handful of ecologically minded academics a few decades ago, has spread and now draws support from leading environmentalists and activists.

Degrowthers get one thing right: we cannot continue on our current growth path. If anything, environmentalists underestimate the damage growth has done given all the additional problems it presents. That said, degrowthers also make several mistakes.

The movement builds on a misunderstanding of how economic growth really works. The mistake is reflected in the slogan “infinite

growth is not possible on a finite planet.” But this is wrong—it is possible. The problem is that this way of thinking is rooted in an old-fashioned view of economic activity: one that pictures the economy as a material world where what really matters are the things that can be seen and touched, such as farm equipment or factory machines.

This material focus is a distraction. Growth does not come from using more and more finite resources, but from discovering more and more productive ways of using those finite resources. In other words, it comes not

from the tangible world of objects, but from the intangible world of ideas. And the universe of those intangible ideas

about the future of economic growth.

Moreover, degrowth shows us how catastrophic it would be to abandon the pursuit of growth altogether. Freezing GDP per capita at current levels would, as

billion—to say nothing of forgoing all the other benefits of higher living standards.

Powerful ideas

The starting point must be that we need more growth. Without it, we don't stand a chance of meeting our most basic ambitions for society—from eradicating poverty to providing good health care for all—never mind the grander hopes we ought to have for the future. It's deeply unimaginative to believe that the present moment is some sort of economic peak, and that humankind ought to press pause on growth—not simply for the next 10 years, or even 10,000 years, but for all time. So how do we get more growth?

“Growth now presents us with a dilemma. It is associated with many of our greatest triumphs, but also many of our greatest problems.”

is unimaginably vast: as good as infinite. In other words, our finite planet is not the constraint that matters when thinking

others have noted, require either abandoning 800 million people to extreme poverty or slashing the income of the other 7.1

