

FINANCIAL STANDARD

MONDAY 14TH OCTOBER - SUNDAY 20th OCTOBER, 2024

VOL1. NO 4

www.financialstandardsl.com

The Smartest Way To Think

uk-2.90

IMF Members' Quota Jumps 50% To \$944bn



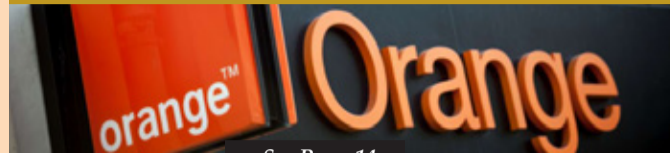
See Page 3

UN Women in Tourism Congress Coming



See Page 13

Orange SL Showcases CSR Achievements



See Page 14

Front Page Comment That \$37m Head Count Bill

It is no longer news that we are bracing up for another head count in Sierra Leone. The relevance and importance of head counts in national planning cannot be over emphasized. Statistics Sierra Leone (Stats SL), the national body charged with conducting

our census is no doubt up to the task. It has expressed its readiness at different times since the announcement was made by government. What is tasking however is the humongous amount the agency has put forward as our bill for that exercise. For it to execute the census

slated for next fiscal year, more like a head count with prospects for serious whopping \$37 million headaches that could take

Sierra Leone is a developing nation with pressing social and economic issues, including poverty, health challenges, and education deficits. Allocating a whopping \$37 million for a head count could lead to a headache.

in funding. Certainly, lots to heal economically.

The need for accurate and up-to-date demographic data is undeniable. Collected data informs decisions on healthcare, education, infrastructure, and electoral processes, helping ensure equitable distribution of resources across the country. It's equally a catalyst in determining aid allocation and

monitoring progress toward development goals. However, the announcement of this huge bill is unsettling. Observers are worried that spending a whopping \$37 million on a census would distract and divert resources from equally

Continued page 3

BSL expresses Worry on Banks And Govt Securities

By Rueben Adewale

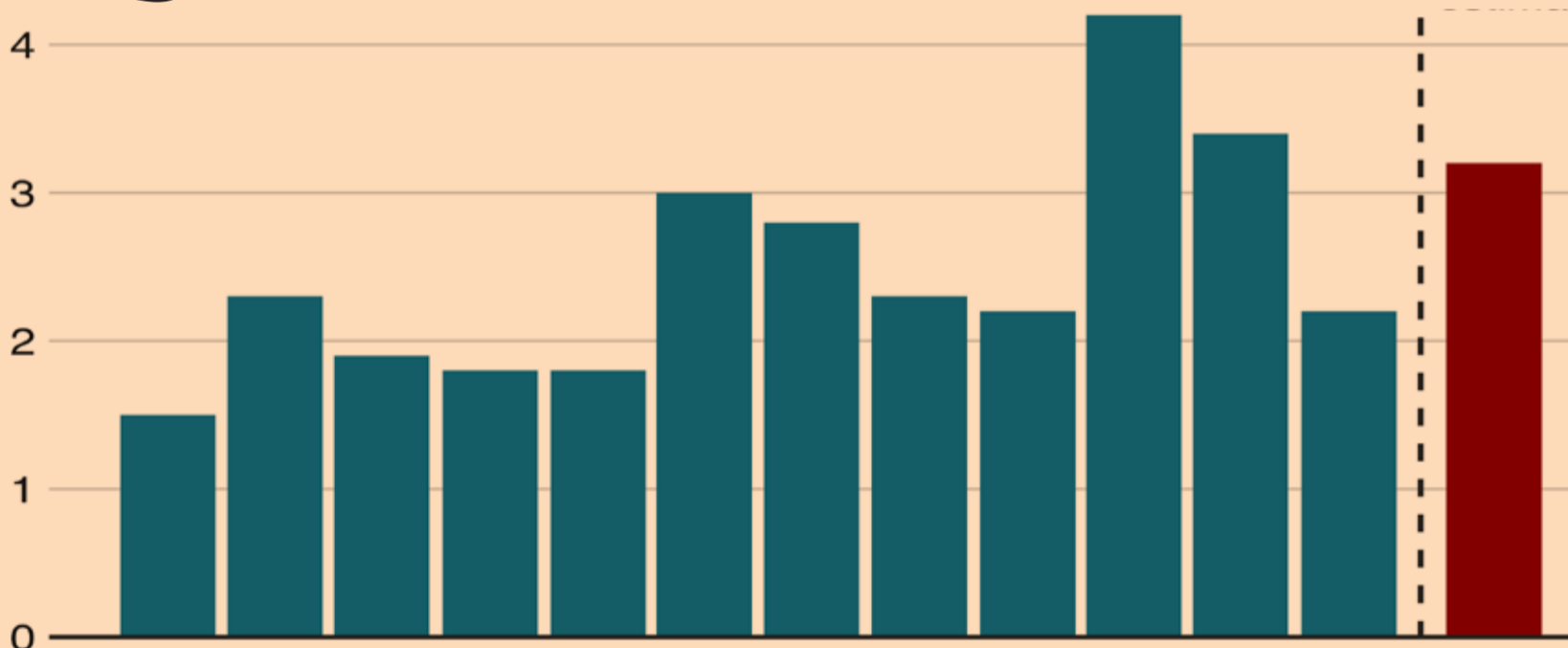
The Central Bank (Bank of Sierra Leone) is worried about banks' dependence on government-issued securities for income in the economy.

This development, if continued, the bank stated, could have a devastating impact on the financial



Continued page 8

Economy Eyes 4.5% Uplift in Fiscal '25



The domestic economic growth for next year is projected at 4.5 percent. The projection is based on anticipated expansion in agricultural activities, a vibrant

mining sector and a continued macro economic stability.

This promising outlook according to the Bank of Sierra Leone is supported by its assessment of business

confidence and the Composite Index of Economic Activity (CIEA) "This promising outlook is supported by the bank's assessment of business confidence

and the Composite Index of Economic Activities (CIEA) which registered an improvement in

Continued page 3

UBA
United Bank for Africa

Transfer Money across Africa with AfriCash

With AfriCash, our fast and secure money transfer service, you can send and receive money from any UBA location across Africa.

AfriCash
Cash transfer across Africa

For more information, contact us on: +23278200200 | +23275142718 | +23231234488 | +23230410943

www.uba.com.sl | Africa's Global Bank

World Business Briefs

Tax Reforms In Türkiye

decisive shift in economic policies over the past year has tightened Türkiye's overall policy stance. The Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye (CBRT) has brought the ex ante real policy rate into positive territory while reducing regulatory complexity. Tax and expenditure measures underpin efforts to restore fiscal prudence and the commitment to stronger incomes policies has strengthened credibility.

The policy turnaround has reduced economic imbalances and revived confidence. Headline inflation has fallen as tighter financial conditions are weighing on domestic demand.

IMF Concludes Visit To Gambia

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) Executive Monetary Fund (ECF) arrangement, led by Ms. Eva Jenkner, conducted a productive discussion with the Gambian authorities from September 30 to October 11, 2024, on the second review of the program supported under the 36-month

by the IMF's Executive Board, the completion of the review will enable a disbursement of SDR 8.29 million (about US\$11.05 million), bringing the total disbursement under the arrangement to about US\$33.2 million.

Window of Opportunities For Kuwait.

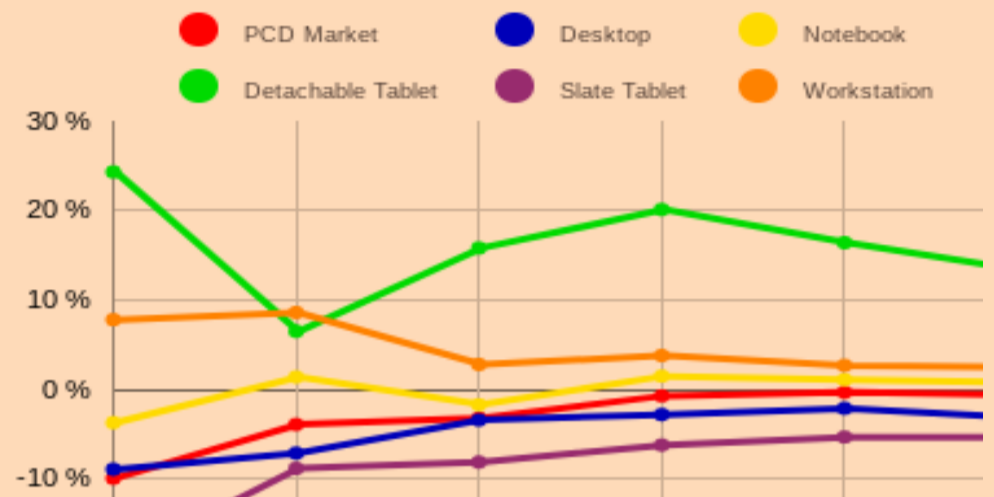
Kuwait has a window of opportunity to implement needed fiscal and structural reforms to boost private sector-led inclusive growth and diversify its economy away from oil: Gradual fiscal consolidation of about 12 percent of GDP is needed to reinforce intergenerational equity. Structural reforms should focus on improving the business environment, attracting FDI, and unifying the labor market. These reforms should be underpinned by continued prudent monetary and financial sector policies. Economic statistics should be strengthened to support well-informed policymaking.

Tanzania Benefits From Climate Change Initiative

The World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are pleased to announce that Tanzania is the second country benefiting from the Enhanced Cooperation Framework for Climate Action (the Framework). This follows the approval of an arrangement under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) in June 2024 by the IMF Executive Board, and the WBG's active engagement on climate action in the country. Tanzania is highly vulnerable to climate change which poses significant risks to its macroeconomic, fiscal, and social development.

Jordan Concludes Staff Level Agreement

IMF staff and the Jordanian authorities have reached a staff level agreement on the second review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF). All commitments for the progress on reforms. Jordan continues to show resilience and maintain macro-economic stability, despite the headwinds caused by the intensifying conflict in the region.

Domestic Revenue Up 9.4% In Qtr2**WW Personal Computing Device Forecast, 2017**
(YoY Growth by Product Category)**By Marilyn Allen**

The economy has recorded an increase in domestic revenue mobilization.

The Central Bank (Bank of Sierra Leone) disclosed this in Freetown and reported that the revenue went up 9.4 percent in the second quarter of 2024. Speaking through its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), the bank stated that the figure was an improvement over the figures recorded in the previous quarter. It reported a marginal increase of NLE0.1 billion in overall deficit during the review period. It attributed it to the government's discretionary spending.

“The primary deficit which excludes net interest payments on public debt also slightly deteriorated to NLE0.3 billion”. On Domestic Economic Development, the bank stated that there has been a gradual moderation in inflationary pressures. “The past ten month the headline inflation decreased by 29.10 percentage points from 54.59 percent in October 2023 to 25.49 percent in August 2024, which account for the decline in the prices of both food and non-food items in the consumer price index basket”. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the bank attributed the tight

Monetary policy stance of the Bank of Sierra Leone to Stable exchange rate, prudent Fiscal policy and the moderating global commodity prices. It noted possible risks in the inflation outlook, including the high production costs which arise from the disruptions in supply chains due to geopolitical tensions trade. Speaking on the rebasing of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the MPC expressed optimism “the GDP growth is always expected to remain strong at 4.0 percent in 2024 though lower than 5.7 percent recorded in 2023, reflecting around the mining sector output in 2024”.

Economy Eyes 4.5% Uplift...

Continued from PAGE 1

2024Q2 to 2024Q1” The bank's Monetary Policy committee observed that irrespective of this positive outlook for 2025 “the possible disruption to trade flows associated with the tensions in the Middle East and other notable geopolitical uncertainties significant factors that could potentially weaken domestic economic activities”.

On inflation, the MPC said the past ten months had witnessed a moderate trend culminating in a decrease in headline inflation. “Over

the past 10 months there has been a gradual moderation in inflationary pressures evidenced by the downward trend in headline inflation. Headline inflation decreased by 29.10 percentage points from 54.59 percent in October 2023 to 25.49 percent in August 2024, on account of a decline in the prices of booth food and non-food items in the consumer price index basket”.

The MPC attributed this to the tight monetary stance of the BSL, the

relatively stable exchange rate, prudent fiscal policy and moderating global commodity prices. “These were primary drivers for the ease in domestic inflationary pressures”. This notwithstanding, the MPC noted possible upside risks to the inflation outlook, “including potentially higher production costs arising from disruptions in supply chains due to geopolitical tensions, trade fragmentation, climate-related risks and an unanticipated depreciation of the local currency”.

OUR COMMENTS

About Us

The Newspaper Financial Standard, a weekly tabloid on business and economy is a publication of the Aba Jo'onu Prudential Group. Freetown, Federal Republic of Sierra Leone.

Motto

The Smartest Way to Think.

Editorial

Editor In Chief/Publisher:

Terry Adewale St Fajembola.

Editor:

Kongbap Sumner

Snr Business Correspondent:

John Kellie Marah

Reporters:

Joan Bannister,
Dolly Jones,
Alusine Kargbo,
Marilyn Allen
Vicky Sawyer

Copy Editor

Mayor A. Adewale

Regional Editor (Europe & Asia)

Ibrahim Mansaray.

Advertorial & Special Projects

Samuel Kargbo

Lead, Advertorial & Special Projects

Alimatu Kargbo

Advertisement and Special Projects Executive

Management & Corporate

Terry Adewale St Fajembola

Publisher/CEO

Sento Conteh

Vice President (Corporate Services)

Ibrahim Mansaray

Vice President (Ombudsman)

Ken Adefolaju Adewale

Company Secretary/Corporate Governance

ID Sola FASH

Vice President (Special Projects & Advertorial)

Editorial philosophy and mission

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.

Contacts:

News: editorial@financialstandardsl.com
Complaints: feedback@financialstandardsl.com

Adverts & Special Projects:

advertisement@financialstandardsl.com

\$37m Head Count Bill

Continued from PAGE 1

tangible but heavily pressing areas of need in the country. The food crisis is universal, but we can devise local means to arrest the trend. Poverty is at a feverish point. A few ideas in terms of palliative and poverty reduction schemes can provide big immediate relief. And many more. Of course, interventionist projects would cost a lot to implement but then a fraction of the proposed head count bill could go into financing some of the aforementioned projects as opposed to expending same

on just a head count. We have heard talks about how crucial the head count is, but how crucial can it really be at this time of economic challenges?

Essentially, the timing of this has been a sore point of contention. Citizens are grappling with the effects of the economy viz: high cost of living, high cost of transportation, high taxations and exorbitant cost of essentials like rice - our staple food, iron, cement etc.

That the government faces

difficulty in meeting basic financial obligations is no secret even as a significant proportion of the national budget is reliant on foreign aid and loans. The census bill therefore is seen by many as a strain on already stretched public resources. It is coming at a time when the country is in dire need of investments in healthcare, education, and infrastructure, sectors that directly impact the quality of life for millions of Sierra Leoneans. Our point is that the state should have proper re-think on this for the following reasons amongst

others:

Sierra Leone is a developing nation with pressing social and economic issues, including poverty, health challenges, and education deficits. Allocating a whopping \$37 million for a head count could lead to a headache. Rather the state should look in the direction of expending that humongous sum on immediate, life-saving interventions, such as improving healthcare services, infrastructure and addressing food insecurity.

Freetown Cable Car Project Gets Underway

By Kongbap Sumner

Plans for the Freetown Cable car project has received a boost as its feasibility study report got to government recently.

Mayor of the Freetown City Council (FCC), Yvonne Akie Sawyerr presented the report to Vice President Dr. Mohamed Jalloh, Vice President of Sierra Leone at his Tower Hill Offices in Freetown. The report, conducted over a 24-month period was funded by C40 Cities Finance Facility of the United Kingdom and United States governments. Implementation of the Feasibility Study was led by

GIZ with teams based in Germany and Freetown, collaborating closely with the Freetown City Council.

The results of the feasibility study confirm the technical and financial viability of the 3.6km pilot line that will run from Government Wharf to Kissy Ferry Terminal with 5 stations in total and a journey time of just 15 minutes. With full provision of solar power built into the project cost and competitive fares estimated at NLe16 from Government Wharf to Kissy Ferry Terminal, the Cable Car will not only reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions, it will be affordable and will improve economic productivity in the city.

Describing the Cable Car as

an important initiative that will enhance the beautification of Freetown, the Vice President observed the critical role of sustainable urban transportation in promoting economic growth. He expressed appreciation to the team of technical experts for their detailed presentation and assured the Freetown City Council of government's support.

At the presentation ceremony were representatives of GIZ and C40 Cities Finance Facility from Germany, expert technical consultants (HEAT and Ropeway), the head of economic cooperation at the German Embassy in Sierra Leone as well as a representative from POMA, a leading manufacturer of Cable Cars. The Deputy Mayor, Chairs of the FCC Transport and Urban Development Committees, the Deputy Chief Administrator, the City Engineer, Integrated Urban Expert

Digital Face lift for National Revenue Authority

By Kongbap Sumner

The National Revenue Authority (NRA) is strengthening its digital infrastructure to enhance its tax filing system (ITAS) as a strategy to improve compliance.

Mrs. Jeneba Bangura Commissioner General of the

Authority speaking at the recent launch of the "Sierra Leone Economic Update" organized by the World Bank informed of the development saying that the ITAS would help streamline reporting process and reduce opportunities for tax evasion. According to Bangura, improving compliance in all sectors is essential to achieving sustainable economic growth and to cushion the country's debt load.

"compliance improvement is at the forefront of our revenue mobilization efforts and will continue to be our focus In 2025.", she said.

She also highlighted the instrumental role of tax policy reforms in improving revenue and expressed commitment to addressing the critical steps being implemented to close the tax compliance gap and fully operationalize the tax policies introduced in the Finance Acts of 2023 and 2024 affirming that to support this, the NRA would continue to implement series of measures including strengthening digital infrastructure and reinforcing the use of digital tax filing system (ITAS) to streamline the reporting process and reduce opportunities for tax evasion. *Continued to PAGE 8*



africell

NEWS

IMF Members Quota Up \$314bn

By Vicky Sawyerr

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) members' quota is set to increase by 50 percent. The

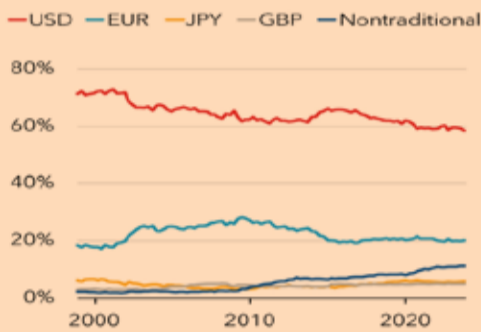
to the fund would reduce its reliance on borrowed resources and would not affect its lending power.

The IMF Board of Governors approved the increase in quota under the 16th General Review of Quotas. It now awaits

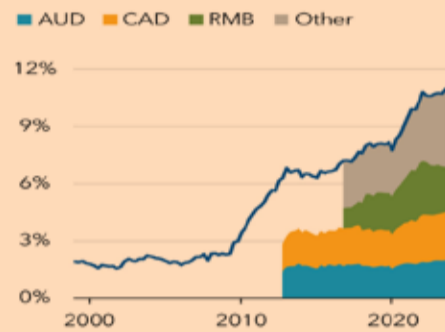
Nontraditional currencies rise

Falling share of "big four" currencies mirrored by increasing holdings of nontraditional reserve currencies.

Currency share of FX reserves



Nontraditional share breakdown



Sources: IMF COFER; Arslanalp, Eichengreen, and Simpson-Bell (2022, updated). Note: The "big four" currencies are the US dollar, euro, Japanese yen, and British pound. Nontraditional are all other currencies. AUD = Australian dollar, CAD = Canadian dollar, RMB = Chinese renminbi. China became a COFER reporter between 2015 and 2018.

IMF

When the quota increase becomes effective, it will reduce the Fund's reliance on borrowed resources with no reduction in its lending power—critical for a strong, quota-based, and adequately resourced IMF.

fund in its 2024 Annual report just released informed that the quota is increasing by \$314 billion to \$943 billion. This increase according

the consent of member countries. "The IMF Board of Governors approved an increase in IMF quotas under the 16th General Review of

Quotas. Once member countries give their consent to this decision, which in many cases involves legislative approval, IMF members'

quotas will increase by 50 percent (SDR 238.6 billion, or \$314 billion), bringing total quotas to SDR 715.7 billion (\$943 billion)".

"When the quota increase becomes effective, it will reduce the Fund's reliance on borrowed resources with no reduction in its

lending power—critical for a strong, quota-based, and adequately resourced IMF."

On Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT), the IMF stated that it is committed to making sure that the Trust continues to provide strong support to low-income countries.

"Having completed this important stage of fundraising, The IMF will now embark on a comprehensive Review of the Fund's Concessional Facilities and Financing to ensure that the long-term financing capacity of the PRGT is placed on a sustainable ground. scaled up emergency financing and program support through the PRGT"

MDAs strategize On Tackling Food Insecurity

A multi disciplinary meeting on the implementation of the Feed Salone Programme, an initiative of the government which aims at tackling food insecurity in the country has held in Freetown.

The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED), through its Public Investment Management Directorate, convened the meeting with key ministries, including that of Energy, Agriculture, Works, and Water Resources. The initiative is a vital component of the government's "Big Five" agenda, which aims at achieving food security and reducing the country's reliance on food imports.

The Feed Salone programme is a cornerstone of government's

efforts to ensure that every Sierr Leonean has access to sufficient food, while also addressing critical infrastructure needs such as energy, road construction, and water systems to support agricultural production. The engagement, therefore, focused on aligning the roles of various ministries to ensure the success of this national initiative.

Alpha Bangura, Director of Public Investment Management at MoPED, emphasized the importance of collaboration between ministries, noting that Feed Salone's success depends on a concerted, multi-sectoral approach. He highlighted several key areas for project implementation, including Gbondapi in Pujehun, Tormabum, Manbolo in Kambia, and Mabgass in



USAID PSP Women Beneficiaries in

USAID's P2P flourishes in Bombali District

The empowerment of over 1,000 women and youth in Bombali District marks a significant leap towards a more equitable and economically vibrant future. Through financial literacy and entrepreneurship training, these individuals are redefining their roles within their communities and paving

the way for generations to come.

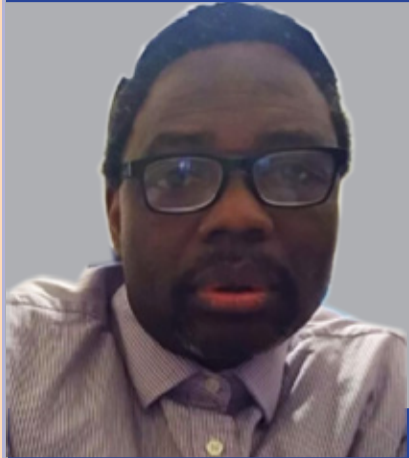
The initiative stands as a testament to the transformative power of education, collaboration, and sheer determination – a model from which many developing regions could draw inspiration. This vibrant renaissance of hope and opportunity, Bombali District is not

just surviving but will thrive, creating a brighter tomorrow for all social challenges persist, particularly for women and youth. Empowering these groups with skills training and also addressing the societal norms that often limit their opportunities, USAID's P2P initiative acknowledges

these challenges and incorporates community dialogues, engaging both men and women to foster a more inclusive environment. The program has taken significant steps toward dismantling gender stereotypes and creating a culture where both women and youth are encouraged to contribute economically.



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.

Untapped tax potential

Countries can raise significant tax revenue with the right policies and institutional reforms. (percent of GDP)



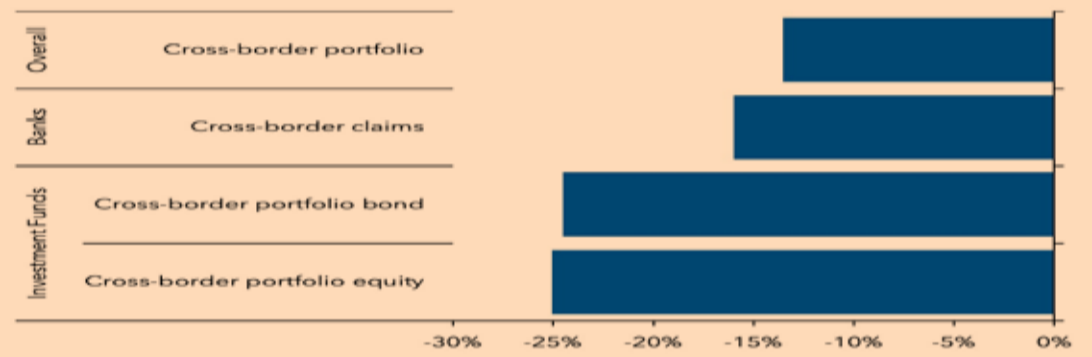
Source: "Building Tax Capacity in Developing Countries," IMF Staff Discussion Note 2023/006. Note: Figures shown exclude social security contributions.

IMF

Geopolitics and capital allocation

Greater tensions are associated with reduced cross-border allocation of portfolio investment and bank claims.

Response to a one-standard-deviation increase in the geopolitical distance between investing and recipient country

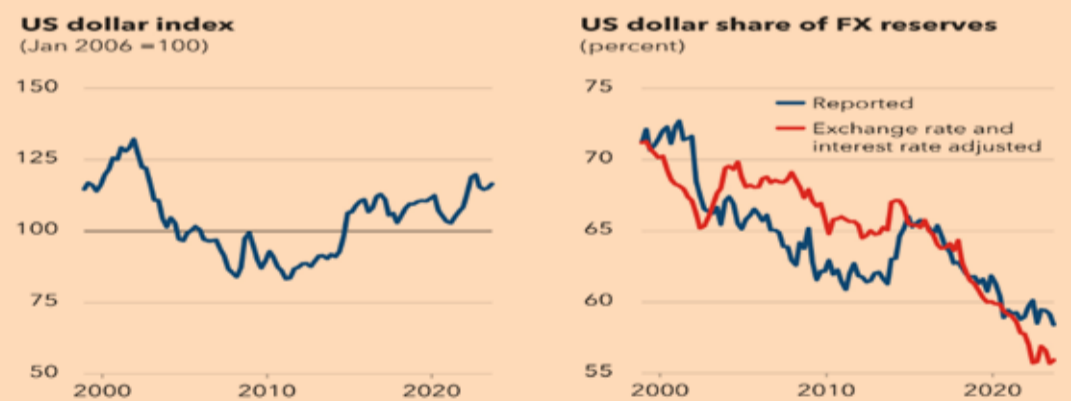


Sources: United Nations; Bank for International Settlements; EPFR Global; FinFlows; IMF, Coordinated Direct Investment Survey; IMF, Coordinated Portfolio Investment Survey; and IMF staff calculations. Note: Distance between an investing and recipient country is based on their votes in the UN General Assembly.

IMF

Stealth erosion

Recent US dollar appreciation has masked the extent of shifts out of dollar reserves.



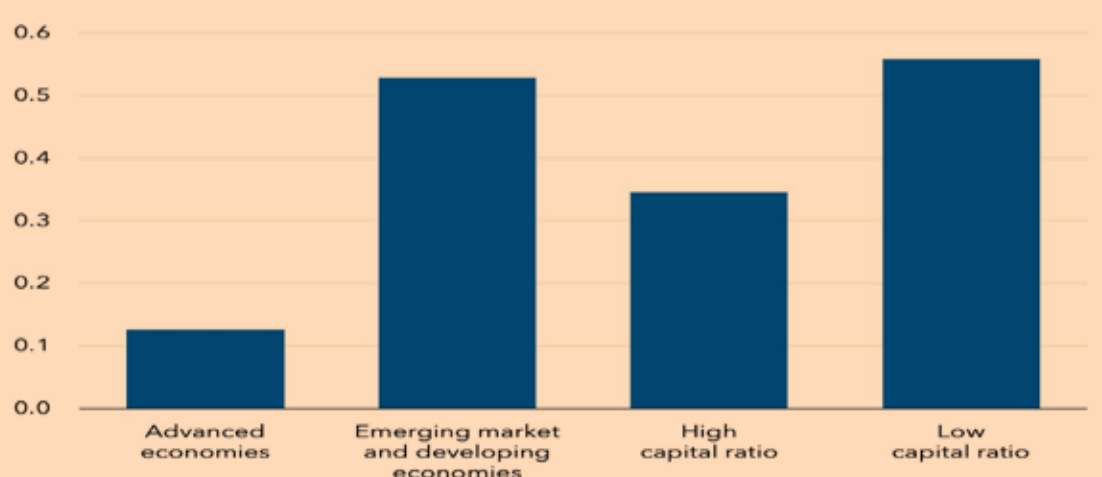
Source: Arslanalp, Eichengreen, and Simpson-Bell (2022, updated). Note: Federal Reserve Board Trade-Weighted Dollar Index (Advanced Economy).

IMF

Tensions and bank performance

Banks experience higher funding costs after an increase in geopolitical tensions, especially in emerging economies.

Response of banks' funding costs to a one-standard-deviation increase in geopolitical distance with foreign lenders (percentage points)



IMF

MARITIME



US, Ports Authority Strengthen Trade Cooperation

The United States outlined the Authority's berth project that is 99% complete. Ambassador in recent milestones, including earning \$4 million from a \$20 million dividend through its African Global Logistics (20% share) partnership. He also highlighted significant reductions in cargo lodging times from weeks to under 48 hours and highlighted the ongoing infrastructural developments, such as the NECTAR expansion

During the visit, SLPHA Director-General, Yankuba Askia Bio

He further mentioned that SLPHA has expanded its regional role, receiving more cargoes that are bound for Guinea and Liberia and winning several awards for improved cargo productivity. Despite these achievements, Bio acknowledged challenges, including maritime piracy, squatters and delays in container exits during

late hours and therefore Ambassador Hunt praised the progress made in Embassy for assistance in infrastructure and port

“ Ambassador Hunt praised the progress made in infrastructure and port operations, expressing optimism about the port's future role in West Africa

improving staff training in operations, expressing optimism about the port's future role in West

Africa and discussed plans to implement a single window system to enhance operational efficiency. This visit highlights growing cooperation between SLPHA and the US Embassy, as the country positions itself as a key player in regional trade.

The visiting team and senior Management of the Authority did a conducted tour of the Port facilities including a visit to ITS' scanning facility, FTL container terminal and the new berth constructed by NSBT.

Sierra Leone has shown a consistent and steady improvement and growth over the years. The Paris MoU Grey list includes Flags with an average performance for the last three years indicating Flag States with high standards of compliance with International Safety and Security Standards.

Mr Alexandros Stylianou, Technical Manager of SLMARAD, the International office of the Sierra Leone Flag, stated that “It is the result of proactive, coordinated and joint efforts that brought us the best performance in 2023 in the whole Sierra Leone Flag's history. Sierra Leone Flag had the best performance amongst main competitors and jumped once again to the Grey List with excellent results, being categorized in the same list with significantly big Registries. Efficient cooperation and coordination, adequate education, knowledge in depth, continuous training of our people and continuous monitoring of our Fleet are key to improving a ship registry. We wouldn't have made it without all our clients and associates who trusted their fleet to Sierra Leone Flag or provided their services to us including but not limited to, shipowners/managers, seafarers, Flag Safety Inspectors, agents, Recognized Organizations and Registration Officers.”

Sierra Leone Flag had the biggest improvement among its main competitors, which indicates that the Sierra Leone Flag remains steadfastly committed to its mission of ensuring compliance with the national and international responsibilities and obligations so as to operate and govern the Registry in accordance with the national and international Laws. Sierra Leone Maritime Administration is dedicated to keep working on enhancing the safety and security standards and continuously improve the fleet's performance with the final aim to move up to the Paris MoU White list in the years to come.

Sierra Leone Flag in the Paris MoU Grey List



BUSINESS TO BUSINESS

BUY A SPACE HERE TO ADVERTISE YOUR GOODS, PRODUCTS & SERVICES

**ADVERTISE
HERE**

**ADVERTISE
HERE**

**ADVERTISE
HERE**

**ADVERTISE
HERE**

**ADVERTISE
HERE**

**ADVERTISE
HERE**

**ADVERTISE
HERE**



**ADVERTISE
HERE**



**ADVERTISE
HERE**



**ADVERTISE
HERE**

**ADVERTISE
HERE**

**ADVERTISE
HERE**

**ADVERTISE
HERE**

**ADVERTISE
HERE**

**ADVERTISE
HERE**

**ADVERTISE
HERE**



CONSERVATION & ENVIRONMENT

Understanding Conservation and Wildlife in S/Leone

Scope of the Conservation and Wildlife Policy

Three important definitions for interpretation of this policy comprise:

- Wildlife refers to all species of indigenous terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna (including micro-organisms) and their natural habitats.

- Wildlife conservation is the means by which these plants, animals, micro-organisms and habitats, and the ecosystems that contain them, are maintained indefinitely through protection and sustainable use.

- Wildlife management refers to the application of scientific and traditional knowledge and technical skills and the implementation of relevant laws and policies to conserve indigenous species and their habitats. This policy does not cover all aspects of biodiversity conservation as defined under the international Convention on Biological Diversity.

The convention has a scope

including issues such as agricultural biodiversity, biosafety, intellectual property rights and genetically modified organisms that fall outside the core mandate of the wildlife sector, but within the scope of other government agencies, though the wildlife sector remains an important stakeholder in those issues. Therefore, the scope of this policy covers those aspects of biodiversity conservation traditionally covered by government bodies charged with wildlife management as defined above. In framing the policy two characteristics were emphasised.

First, the policy language and concepts should be simple, so that the main principles and themes can be presented to and understood by all stakeholders, if presented in suitable ways. Second, that the policy should be implementable in the Sierra Leone context, while recognizing that some aspects need time and resources that are



not immediately available. By issuing a clear and complete policy, the government can better assess its own financial priorities and seek support from its development partners.

2. Background The current status of Sierra Leone's wildlife resources is not well-known as a result of the recent conflict, land use change, uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources, and a lack of recent comprehensive inventory.

However, what is known is summarised in several national documents most notably the national Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (2003). Two

recent donor documents also assess the status of wildlife and its management in Sierra Leone: the US Agency for International Development's Biodiversity and Tropical Forestry Assessment (2007) and the Global Environment Facility's Sierra Leone: Biodiversity Conservation Project Document (2009).

This policy, developed by the process described in Section 1, takes account of these initiatives, international obligations, existing and evolving national policies and laws, and numerous other documents and consultation as well as the

guiding principles outlined below. Wildlife Resources Sierra Leone's predominant natural vegetation is the western extremity of the Upper Guinean Forest formation, though much of the forest is now degraded and occupied by agricultural land, savannas and other secondary vegetation. Approximately 70% of the country was formerly covered by forest, but less than 5% of original intact forest remains. Nevertheless, the country contains rich indigenous flora and fauna including important endemic species, and internationally rare and threatened species.

Indigenous flora and fauna exceeds 2000 species of vascular plants, 46 amphibians, 69 reptiles and 600 bird species. Almost 200 species of mammals includes 15 primates and 18 antelopes. Of these at least 27 vertebrate species and 47 vascular plant species

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT EDITION

Digital Face lift for National Revenue Authority

Cont'd from page 3

"These measures will make it easier for individuals and businesses to comply with tax policies," recounted the Commissioner-General.

Mrs Bangura also emphasized that stakeholder engagements and public awareness campaigns are necessary steps being undertaken to reinforce and increase voluntary compliance and stressed the importance of collaborating

with civil society and business associations.

She committed to simplifying complex tax laws, policies and regulations to canvass and encourage voluntary participation articulating, "we are dedicated to closing compliance gaps and fully implementing the 2023 and 2024 Finance Acts to strengthen our economy and ensure fair taxation and together we can build a more prosperous Sierra Leone."



Appointment

Yan Liu Appointed Fund's General Counsel

Ms Yan Liu has been appointed General Counsel and Director of the Legal Department at the IMF.

Liu joined the Fund in 1999 as Counsel and has risen through the ranks to Deputy General Counsel—the current role in which she leads key strategic initiatives to ensure that the Legal Department continues to fulfill its mandate and contribute to the Fund's policy work and operations. Additionally, as a well-recognized expert in sovereign debt, Liu has played a key role in shaping the Fund's policies in this area and supporting the Common Framework and the Global Sovereign Debt Roundtable.



"She is a thought leader and a trusted advisor who is also well known for her dedication to mentoring and supporting staff in their career journeys. The hallmark of Yan's work is her collaborative and constructive approach in service to the institution."

Worry on Banks And Govt Securities

Cont'd from page 3

stability of the economy.

"The high dependency of banks on government securities for income could impact profitability and undermine financial stability," BSL noted. Rising from its recently held Monetary Policy Committee meeting in Freetown, BSL expressed fears that banks could run into troubled waters in the event of a drop in the yield of government securities.

Even as the banking system is stable, profitable, and

well-capitalized presently, with the quality of assets seeing positive improvement and the ratio of non-performing loans (NPLs) remaining below the statutory limit of 10%, there are still potential risks and concerns.

As the Bank of Sierra Leone noted above concerning banks' high dependency on government securities for income, it is also important to note that this reliance could limit lending to the private sector, which in turn could slow down the country's economic growth. Another important risk highlighted is cybercrime and fraud within the banking system, which shouldn't be overlooked but should be further strengthened, with a close watch kept on banks to

Freetown Cable Car Project

Cont'd from page 3

and other FCC staff were also present.

FCC will continue to raise local awareness of the results of the Cable Car Feasibility Study. There will also be a public presentation at the Freetown City Council.

The next phase of the project is raising the finance required to construct, operate and maintain the Cable Car mass public transit system for which the Mayor reported that some progress has already been made in this regard and that the FCC is confident that full financing will be secured.



MOTORING

A striking and rugged off-roader

There's a new off-roader top to town (and country)." says Andrew English in The Daily Telegraph the Ineos Grenadier, an eagerly awaited true utility four wheel drive as opposed to mere "festive SUV that "aim to take up where Land Rover's Defender left off fr makes driving off road effortless and it is in i element in the "rough, rough worlds of constructions, agriculture, and the armed and rescue services

The Grenadier looks striking too: "ruggedly handsome and undeniably imposing with "shades of the G-Wagon and Jeep Wrangler stys Vince Jackson on CarsGuide. Its unwieldy bulk may "cause a few car park palpitations for urban buyers", but there is an "uncluttered honesty about its styling" and "you instinctively know this isn't some poseur chanot" the car was built "primarily as a working tool The interior is built on similar principles, with a "blend of contemporary tech and no-nonsense hardy minat "the Grenadier feels like a vehicle milay", says Yousuf Ashraf for AutoDaily

There is a 12.3-inch infotainment system and a "It any good to drive? In a quagmire in Abace not far from where it's being made in former Smart factory, most assuredly," says Jason Harlow in Top Gear. The BMW-sourced 10 me powertrain makes light work of even the most his conditions and is a truly "The Grenadier could hold its own in Mad Max: Fury Road. It feels apocalypse-

The old Land Rover is dead. Long live the Ineos Grenadier. Jasper Spires reports



proof" navigation "pathfinder" function that will help those who like to adventure off-road.

Inside, Ineos has traded luxury for a hard wearing plastic construction, but it looks almost charming, with an aircraft cockpit-like appearance and chunky centre consoles that you can operate even with gloves on, says James Drujon for CarWow. "In whats new quite a crowded segment of

dedicated off-roaders, the Ineos Grenadier has the might to compete with the best of them." Prices from 148,000, See mosgrenadier.com. G0546 VB

Wine of the week: a secret list of beauties for your cellar.

The Grenadier looks striking too: "ruggedly ving off-road effortless handsome and undeniably imposing" with in the

even interior is built on similar principles, with additions" and is a truly "blend of contemporary tech and no-nonsense enadier feels like a vehicle utility", says Yousuf Ashraf for AutoDaily.

There is a 12.3-inch infotainment system and a navigation "pathfinder" function that will help those who like to adventure off-road.Land Rover's Defender Devices.

In a quagmire in Inside, Ineos has traded luxury for a hard wearing plastic con-

"rough, tough "shades of the G-Wagon and Jeep Wrangler", on, agriculture, and the says Vince Jackson on CarsGuide. Its unwieldy bulk may "cause a few car-park palpitations for urban buyers", but there is an "uncluttered here it's being made in honesty about its styling" and "you instinctively, most assuredly," says know this isn't some poseur's chariot": this car Gear. The BMW-sourced was built "primarily as a working tool". The makes light work of

struction, but it looks almost charming, with an aircraft cockpit-like appearance and chunky centre consoles that you can operate even with gloves on, says James Drujon for CarWow. "In what is now quite a crowded segment of dedicated off-roaders, the Ineos Grenadier has the might to compete with the best of them." Prices from £48,000.

Are electric cars 'green'? The answer is yes, but it's complicated

As electric cars become more popular, some question if they are as environmentally friendly as advertised — with some saying that greenhouse emissions during the manufacturing process and battery-charging have to be considered.

•The number of electric cars, buses, vans and heavy trucks on roads is expected to hit 145 million by 2030, the International Energy Agency predicts.

•Experts broadly agree that electric vehicles create a lower carbon footprint over the course of their lifetime than do cars and trucks that use traditional, internal combustion engines.

The number of electric vehicles on the world's roads is

surging, hitting a record number last year. That would seem to be good news, as the world tries to wean itself off fossil fuels that are wrecking the global climate. But as electric cars become more popular, some question just how environmentally friendly they are. The batteries in electric vehicles, for example, charge on power that is coming straight off the electric grid — which is itself often powered by fossil fuels. And there are questions about how energy-intensive it is to build an EV o Are electric vehicles greener? The short answer is yes — but their full green potential is still many years away. Experts broadly agree that electric vehicles create a lower carbon footprint over the course of their



lifetime than do cars and trucks that use traditional, internal combustion engines. Last year, researchers from the universities of Cambridge,

Exeter and Nijmegen in The

Netherlands found that in 95% of the world, driving an electric car is better for the environment than driving a gasoline-powered car. Electricity grids in most of the world are still

powered by fossil fuels such as coal or oil, and EVs depend on that energy to get charged. Separately, EV battery production remains an energy-intensive process.

Investing in Sierra Leone's Real Estate: Prospects, Reward & Risks



By Joan Bannister

Sierra Leone's real estate market is emerging. It's another promising opportunity for investors. With a growing population of approximately 8 million, the demand for housing is equally growing rapidly as urbanization increases. While the potential for profit is abundant, it is essential that one is equipped with sound understanding of the real estate market; its dynamics especially. It is therefore important that potential investors should conduct due diligence before diving into its murky waters.

One of the significant challenges facing Sierra Leone is the shortage of available housing. Industry experts estimate that the country would require around 500,000 new homes to meet the growing demand of the people. This gap presents a unique opportunity for

investors, as many are looking to purchase or rent homes. However, developing properties require substantial investment and careful planning regarding location and market timing.

The Sierra Leone real estate market offers various investment opportunities. Residential properties, such as homes and apartments, can yield steady rental income. There's also great potential in letting commercial properties for use as offices and shops. Investing in land, particularly undeveloped plots, is equally promising. Undeveloped lands would also appreciate significantly in value over time.

Freetown: The Hub of Opportunity

Freetown, the capital and largest city in the country, stands out as a hotspot for real estate investment. As Sierra Leone's commercial heartbeat, Freetown continues to experience

population growth, leading to increased demand for housing. Affluent individuals are actively seeking modern homes, making it an attractive market for real estate development. However, prospective investors should be prepared for high property prices and the competitive nature of this vibrant market.

Government Support and Initiatives

The Sierra Leonean government recognizes the financial potential of the real estate sector and is taking steps to support it. Efforts include creating favorable laws to protect property rights, offering tax incentives for real estate investments, and streamlining the property registration process. Additionally, initiatives aimed at providing affordable housing are underway, which could mitigate risks and simplify investment in the sector.

The Role of Technology

As in many parts of the world, technology is transforming the real estate landscape in Sierra Leone. Digital platforms are making it easier to buy, sell, and manage properties. Virtual tours and online listings allow potential buyers to explore options without the

and better investment outcomes.

Navigating Risks

While there are ample opportunities in Sierra Leone's real estate market, investors should be aware of certain risks. Issues such as land ownership disputes and security

avoid potential pitfalls.

Key Considerations for Success

When considering real estate investments, location is critical. Proximity to essential amenities such as schools, hospitals, and transportation can significantly impact property values. A well-located property is likely to appreciate more quickly and provide a reliable rental income.

Investing in real estate can be a powerful tool for wealth accumulation. With careful planning and informed decision-making, Sierra Leone's growing market holds the potential for significant returns. As the sector continues to develop, investors who adapt to market changes and leverage new technologies will be well-positioned to succeed.

Overall, while challenges remain, the Sierra Leonean real estate market offers numerous opportunities for those willing to invest strategically and patiently.

“One of the significant challenges facing Sierra Leone is the shortage of available housing. Industry experts estimate that the country would require around 500,000 new homes to meet the growing demand of the people.”

need for in-person visits. Property management apps are also emerging, assisting landlords in rent collection and maintenance. Embracing these technologies can lead to more efficient transactions

challenges can complicate transactions. The legal landscape may also present hurdles, as navigating the system can be slow and complex. Investors should be cautious and conduct thorough research to

ENERGY

Producing electric vehicles leads to significantly more emissions than producing petrol cars

Which is mostly from the battery production



Florian Knobloch
Cambridge Centre For Environment,
Energy and Natural Resource Governance

A study from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Energy Initiative found that the battery and fuel production for an EV generates higher emissions than the manufacturing of an automobile. But those higher environmental costs are offset by EVs' superior energy efficiency over time.

In short, the total emissions per mile for battery-powered cars are lower than comparable cars with internal combustion engines. "If we are going to take a look at the current situation, in some countries, electric vehicles are better even with the current grid," Sergey Paltsev, a senior research scientist at

the MIT Energy Initiative and one of the study's authors, told CNBC.

Paltsev explained that the full benefits of EVs will be realized only after the electricity sources

"Currently, the electric vehicle in the U.S., on average, would emit about 200 grams of CO2 per mile," he said. "We are projecting that with cleaning up the grid, we can reduce emissions from electric vehicles by 75%, from about 200 (grams) today to about 50 grams of CO2 per mile in 2050." Similarly, Paltsev said MIT research showed non-plug-in hybrid cars with internal combustion engines currently emit about 275 grams of CO2 per mile.

In 2050, their projected emissions are expected to be between 160 to 205 grams of CO2 per mile — the range is wider than EVs, because fuel standards

vary from place to place.

Decarbonization is the process of reducing greenhouse gas emission produced by the burning fossil fuels.

Efforts to cut down pollution across various industries are expected to further reduce the environmental impact of EV production and charging over time. "When you look forward to the rest of the decade, where we will see massive amounts of decarbonization in power generation and massive amount of decarbonization in the industrial sector, EVs will benefit from all of that decarbonization," Eric Hannon, a Frankfurt-based partner at McKinsey & Company, told CNBC.

Batteries are the biggest emitter

EVs rely on rechargeable lithium-ion batteries to run. The process of making those batteries — from using mining

raw materials like cobalt and lithium, to production in giga factories and transportation — is energy-intensive, and one of the biggest sources of carbon emissions from EVs today, experts said. Gigafactories are facilities that produce EV batteries on a large scale.

"Producing electric vehicles leads to significantly more emissions than producing petrol cars.

Depending on the country of production, that's between 30% to 40% extra in production emissions, which is mostly from the battery production," said Florian Knobloch, a fellow at the Cambridge Centre for Environment, Energy and Natural Resource Governance. Those higher production emission numbers are seen as "an initial investment, which pays off rather quickly due to the reduced lifetime emissions."

Google, Chevron in \$1.2bn nuclear fusion startup

Google and Chevron were part of a \$250 million funding raise announced past week for TAE Technologies, a nuclear fusion start-up with an unconventional strategy that has now raised a total of \$1.2 billion.

A Japanese investment company, Sumitomo Corporation of Americas, also participated in the round, and will help TAE bring its fusion technology to the Asia-Pacific region. TAE was founded in 1998 and aims to have a commercial scale fusion reactor delivering energy to the grid in the early 2030s.

Nuclear fusion is often referred to as the holy grail of clean energy because of its promise of generating nearly unlimited emission-free energy without the equivalent harmful, long-lasting radioactive waste that nuclear fission produces.



Nuclear fission is the process by way conventional nuclear power plants generate energy in which a larger atom is split into two smaller atoms, thereby releasing energy.

Nuclear fusion reverses that process, with energy produced when two smaller atoms slam together to form one larger atom.

Nuclear fusion is often referred to as the holy grail of clean energy because of its promise of generating nearly unlimited emission-free energy without the equivalent harmful, long-lasting radioactive waste that nuclear fission produces

NEWS

IMF Members' Quota Jumps 50% To \$944bn

The Board of Governors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved an increase in IMF members' quotas under the 16th General Review of Quotas.

The IMF member quotas will increase by 50 percent, totaling SDR 477 billion (approximately \$314 billion), bringing the total quotas to SDR 1,422.7 billion (approximately \$944 billion).

According to the IMF,

By John Marah
Snr Business Correspondent

when the quota increases become effective, it will reduce the fund's reliance on borrowed resources without reducing its lending power, which is critical for a strong financial base. The Board of Governors has called for work to develop this by June 2025.

Following the achievement of the SDR 2.3 billion first-stage

target under the July 2021 fundraising round for PRGT (Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust) subsidy resources during the Annual Meeting in Marrakech, in December 2023, the IMF Executive Board approved a temporary increase in the annual access limit under the PRGT from 145 percent of quotas to 200 percent of quotas

and a temporary increase in the cumulative access limit from 435 percent of quotas until the end of 2024.

Moreover, the IMF Executive Board approved an increase in the PRGT cumulative borrowing from SDR 68 billion to accommodate the better-than-ever mobilization outcome for additional loan pledges under the fundraising for FY 2024. Seven PRGT lenders provided SDR 5.9 billion in new loan resources,



either through PRGT borrowing agreements or by amending existing ones. loan resources, either through PRGT borrowing agreements or by amending existing ones exist.

UN Women in Tourism Congress Coming

Sierra Leone is to host the UN Women in Tourism Africa Regional Congress in Freetown from October 29-31, 2024. Under the theme "Beyond Empowerment to Education, Innovation, and Finance Access," the event is being organised in collaboration with UN Tourism and supported

By John K. Marah

by UN Women and the African Union.

The three-day congress will gather prominent leaders, policymakers and women entrepreneurs from across Africa to discuss practical strategies for



Hon Tunis, Minister for Tourism.

advancing women's roles in the tourism sector.

The three-day event will feature high-level panel discussions, mentorship opportunities, and case studies on gender-responsive policies and a workshop on financial access. Emphasising innovation and education, the congress will also offer sessions on integrating new technologies, digital

tools and business strategies to support women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector. The event aligns with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 4 on quality education, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities.

EPASL Upgrades Drivers' Skill

By Alusine Kargbo

In a bid to improve efficiency and promote safety, the Environmental Protection Agency of Sierra Leone (EPASL) recently organised a refresher training for its drivers in Freetown.

Drivers drawn from all its regional stations and its headquarter benefitted

from the training which Magdalene Bio, EPA's Director of Human Resources explained was a top most priority for the agency. "When the driving skills of drivers are intact, we can save lives, manual Labouré, and also resources for future expenditure", she said while speaking to

FS about the training adding that the all EPA's employees are deem

most valuable resource, "therefore, their safety are prioritised as they carry out the agency's mandate.

The agency's success, she stated depends on the performance of its staff including its drivers.

"They are in charge of transportation and logistics for other staff members", she said adding that the agency spends a lot of money on vehicle maintenance due to poor

EPA she said is providing periodic training to its drivers equipping them with necessary skills to detect problems and manage simple repairs..

Engineer Robert Brima Lamin Ngobeh demonstrated how skilled drivers must be when they become acquainted with their vehicles and road signs. The roadways communicate with us through traffic signs, and we must be responsive to

practise defensive driving. To avoid accidents, we must respect the road, other road users, and on-road property. Drivers must demonstrate professionalism in their driving actions.

The senior fleet officer, Brima Lamin Ngobeh, supplemented the trainer engineer's session by explaining automobile engine components and how the instrument panel dashboard conveys what is happening in the component. How

we intercept indication messages improves road safety and preserves government assets.

The drivers' refresher training, which included instructional slides and demonstrations, addressed how responsible driving, safety and security measures, road traffic signs, driving knowledge and abilities and attitude, and safeguarding and taking care of government vehicles must be improved for the benefit of all



CORPORATE NEWS

Orange SL Showcases CSR Achievements

By Alimatu Kargbo

Orange Sierra Leone has showcased landmark achievements in its just released Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Report for 2023.

The report outlines Orange Sierra Leone's contributions to environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and economic development, emphasizing its broader commitment to society beyond profit-making.

environment," he stated. Orange Sierra Leone has integrated environmental and social concerns into its operations, with a focus on sustainability, in alignment with the Orange Group's global goal to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2040.

The CSR report highlights significant progress in reducing the company's carbon footprint through energy-efficient measures. In 2023, 72% of Orange Sierra Leone's sites were powered by solar

energy, contributing to the company's goal of solarizing its operations. Additionally, the company planted 3,000 trees at the Mortomeh Mudslide site as part of its environmental action plan.

On the social front, Orange Sierra Leone has continued its support for vulnerable communities, donating food supplies to disaster victims and launching the "Mi Farm Padi" initiative to support local farmers. In the area of education, the company

made strides in health initiatives, particularly in reducing maternal and child mortality. Partnering with multi-screening facilities for pregnant women and children, linking 296 women to antenatal

breast cancer and autism, reaching thousands of Sierra Leoneans.

Orange Sierra Leone remains one of the top employers in the country, creating over 217 direct jobs and supporting 52,000 indirect employment opportunities. The company also contributed to digital inclusion through the Orange Digital Center, which trained 1,809 youths in 2023. Orange's efforts to foster entrepreneurship were highlighted by its annual OSVP competition, where young innovators received funding and mentorship to expand their businesses.

As Orange Sierra Leone continues to align its operations with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the company reaffirms its commitment to building a sustainable future for Sierra Leone

with ICAP and the clinics. Additionally, Mama Pikin Foundation, the company launched Orange provided awareness campaigns for

As Orange Sierra Leone continues to align its operations with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the company reaffirms its commitment to building a sustainable future for Sierra Leone. CEO Sekou Amadou Bah concluded, "We are deeply committed to evolving our CSR approach, working collaboratively with our stakeholders to make a meaningful and lasting impact on society and the environment."

With ongoing initiatives in clean energy, education, healthcare, and entrepreneurship, Orange Sierra Leone is paving the way for responsible business practices and sustainable growth in the region.



Sekou Amadou Bah, CEO Orange Sierra Leone, in his message, underscored the company's mission to positively impact Sierra Leoneans' daily lives through

responsible digital solutions. "At Orange, our success is measured not just by financial performance but by the positive difference we make in society and the

donated digital school kits to primary schools and trained over 1,800 youths in digital skills, with a 23% job insertion rate.

Orange Sierra Leone's

focus on gender equality saw the establishment of three Women Digital Centers in Freetown, Makeni, and Kenema, providing training for over 1,000 women. In

partnership with STEM Women, the "TekGal" project was launched to mentor and support young women pursuing tech careers.

The company also

Attempt To Defraud ROKEL Foiled

By Alimatu Kargbo

A Chinese businessman, Zhou Wenjie has been arraigned for trial in Freetown.

Accused of conspiracy to defraud and other two count charge of alteration and forgery of documents., he is brought before Court 2, Pademba Road.

According to the particulars of offence on the 9th December 2020 in the western area in Freetown the accused

person planned to defraud a company-PioneerPower Engineering Company Sierra Leone Limited. Zhou conspired together with other persons (names unknown) in the preparation of a forged document to defraud Rokel commercial through a transaction purporting to have been signed by the authorized signatories of the pioneer engineering company SL Limited.

Count two further stated that on the same date and place the

accused person with intent to defraud forged the signature of Zhang Ke and Youg Yining on certain documents to wit Rokel commercial Account opening from with account number 11-1014871 dated December 2020 purporting to have been signed by the authorized signatories of Pioneer Power Engineering Company SL Limited the account holder at Rokel commercial Bank

Count three and four further stated that on

the same date and place the accused person with intent to defraud uttered a certain Forged document to wit Rokel commercial Bank account opening from with account number 11-1014871 dated 9th December 2020 purporting to have been prepared and signed by Zhang Ke and Youg Yining the majority shareholders of pioneer power engineering Company SL Limited held with the said Rokel commercial bank. When the charges were read and explained to the accused person No plea taken. An adjournment was granted for a later date.



Humanity First We exist to make a difference

COMMENTARY

IMF Report

Overview Of FY 2024 Policy Initiatives

IMF
ANNUAL
REPORT
2024

IMF financing helps member countries tackle balance of payments problems, stabilize their economies, and restore sustainable economic growth. It can also be made available in response to natural disasters and pandemics. The IMF further provides precautionary financing to countries with sound policies that may have some remaining vulnerabilities to help prevent and insure against future crises, and it continues to enhance the tools available for crisis prevention.

IMF lending has traditionally fallen into two categories: General Resources Account (GRA) loans at interest rates determined by an average of those prevailing among the world's main currencies and loans to low-income countries on concessional terms. All loans under the IMF's PRGT are currently provided at zero interest. With the operationalization of the RST in 2022, there is now a new third lending pillar, which encompasses a tiered interest rate structure differentiated across country groups, with low-income members benefiting from more favorable terms.

The IMF has continued to respond quickly to economic challenges stemming from the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war in Ukraine, and new conflicts in

the Middle East, mostly through lending under IMF-supported programs.¹ These activities helped protect the lives and livelihoods of people and facilitate adjustment to shocks. In FY 2024, many countries, especially low-income countries, continued to face persistent headwinds and an uncertain global economic environment, while dealing with reduced policy buffers and tight financing conditions. On May 18, 2023, the Executive Board approved the introduction of an interest rate cap for the RST's lowest-income borrowers to better support members, especially low-income countries, in coping with these headwinds. This decision followed the April 2023 review of RST resource adequacy. The interest rate cap, set at 2¼ percent, applies to Group A RST-eligible countries that are part of the PRGT-eligibility list, but that do not blend their borrowing with GRA resources. In June 2023, the IMF Executive Board approved a six-month extension until the end of March 2024 of the Food Shock Window under its emergency financing instruments.

This window, which was originally approved for 12 months in September 2022, provided an additional channel for emergency financing to member countries that had urgent balance of payments

needs as a result of acute food insecurity, a sharp increase in their food import bills, or a shock to their cereal exports. Because balance of payments pressures persisted throughout 2023, the extension aimed to allow the Food Shock Window to continue serving as a contingency tool during the extension period. In June 2023, the IMF Executive Board also approved an extension of the temporarily higher cumulative access limits under the IMF's emergency financing instruments, the

are still in the process of repaying emergency financing received during the pandemic. The higher limits under the RFI will be maintained until the end of June 2024, when most RFI recipients will have repaid a significant part of their past emergency financing. The higher limits under the RCF will be maintained until the completion of the 2024 review of PRGT facilities and financing, given the longer repayment schedule for RCF financing.

“
All loans under the IMF's PRGT are currently provided at zero interest. With the operationalization of the RST in 2022, there is now a new third lending pillar, which encompasses a tiered interest...
”

Rapid Credit Facility (RCF) and the Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI), which were set to expire in June 2023. The temporarily higher limits ensure that the IMF will have the capacity to support countries in the event of renewed emergency situations while countries

In addition, in June 2023, the Executive Board decided to postpone the next review of the PRGT interest structure by two years to the end of July 2025.

The deferral of the review reflects the difficult environment and high uncertainty facing low-income countries

as well as the intention to consider all policies regarding low-income country facilities during the 2024 review of the PRGT facilities and financing. This effectively maintains the zero percent interest rates on all PRGT credit. The interest rate on outstanding RCF credit had been permanently set at zero in 2015 and is not subject to review under the interest rate mechanism.

In October 2023, the IMF Executive Board completed the review of the Flexible Credit Line (FCL), the Short-Term Liquidity Line (SLL), and the Precautionary and Liquidity Line (PLL). The Board endorsed staff proposals for reforms, with the aim of further strengthening the global financial safety net and ensuring that the IMF's precautionary facilities toolkit remains fit for purpose as external risks become more prevalent, protracted, and diverse. Recognizing that crisis prevention in the current shock-prone environment requires strengthening the qualification framework under the precautionary instruments as well as other reforms of the toolkit, the review took a threepronged approach.

First, to preserve the precautionary instruments' strong signaling power, the review proposed to reinforce safeguards and ensure a robust

Cont'd to page 16

ISSUES & POLICY



IMF ANNUAL REPORT: OVERVIEW OF FY 2024 POLICY

qualification framework of the FCL, SLL, and PLL. Second, the review sought to make IMF precautionary instruments more useful for qualifying members by ensuring the instruments have the flexibility and firepower needed for confronting sizable and persistent systemic risks. In view of these factors, key reforms included (1) raising the SLL and PLL access limits, (2) introducing explicit provisions on concurrent use of the FCL and SLL to allow members to better respond to a wider variety of shocks, and (3) not requiring FCL members to discuss strategies to exit from financing under this instrument when the arrangement involves low access and is precautionary. Third and finally, the review maintained the IMF's sound management of its precautionary toolkit by streamlining administrative procedures related to the use of precautionary instruments. It also assessed risks and potential implications for the IMF from implementation of key reforms.

In October 2023, the Executive Board of the IMF also completed the review of the Policy Coordination Instrument (PCI) and endorsed the proposal to eliminate

the Policy Support Instrument (PSI). The PCI is a non-financing instrument supporting policies that meet upper-credit-tranche standards and is designed to help countries demonstrate commitment to a reform agenda and unlock financing from other countries. The Executive Board undertook reforms to strengthen the global financial safety net.

The PCI is available to all member countries. Against the backdrop of a challenging and shock prone global environment, the Executive Board approved two key refinements to the PCI to make it more fit for purpose while maintaining its strong signaling function. The first was to enhance the flexibility of the review schedule while ensuring regular and uninterrupted signals to markets. The second was to require articulation of the rationale for concurrent use of a Standby Arrangement or a Stand-by Credit Facility arrangement by members with an ongoing PCI, which allows members to continue to demonstrate their commitment to a reform agenda while benefiting from access to IMF resources when needed.

The Board also

approved the elimination of the PSI given a demonstrated preference for the PCI as evidenced by the absence² See 2023 contribution agreements with Italy, Luxembourg, Oman, and the United Kingdom.³ See 2023 contribution agreements with Belgium, Malta, Qatar, and Switzerland. of requests for the PSI since 2015 and a universal switch by PSI users to the PCI.

Regarding RST fundraising, the Board was informed in November

“
As of April 30, 2024, there has been good fundraising progress with about SDR 34.3 billion in pledges received.
”

2023 of four new contribution agreements that were finalized between May and September 2023 and in April 2024 of four more contribution agreements that were finalized between October 2023 and March 15, 2024.^{2,3} As of April 30, 2024, there has been good fundraising progress with about SDR

34.3 billion in pledges received. Effective contribution agreements include SDR 25.4 billion in contribution packages from 16 countries and SDR 5.6 billion in stand-alone contributions from 3 countries. Given strong and front-loaded demand for RST resources, fundraising efforts should be reinvigorated to secure additional resources. The 2023 Review of RST Resource Adequacy indicated that reserves are adequate in the baseline and under several risk

scenarios.

Following the achievement of the SDR 2.3 billion first-stage target under the July 2021 fundraising round for PRGT subsidy resources during the Annual Meetings in Marrakech, in December 2023 the IMF Executive Board approved a temporary increase in the annual

access limit under the PRGT from 145 percent of quota to 200 percent of quota and a temporary increase in the cumulative access limit from 435 percent of quota to 600 percent of quota until the end of 2024.

The PRGT access norms, which provide general guidance on access to PRGT facilities, and the per arrangement cap on PRGT resources under the blending policy were both also raised from 145 percent of quota to 200 percent of quota until the end of 2024. In January 2024, the IMF Executive Board approved an increase in the PRGT cumulative borrowing by SDR 3 billion from SDR 68 billion to SDR 71 billion to accommodate the better-than-expected loan mobilization outcome for additional loan pledges under the 2021 PRGT fundraising round. In FY 2024, seven PRGT lenders provided SDR 5.9 billion in new loan resources under the new PRGT borrowing agreements or by amending those that already exist. In January 2024, the IMF staff completed an operational guidance note that aims to explain the key principles and considerations underlying the design and conditionality of IMF-supported

programs.

The note expanded on the previous operational guidance notes on conditionality published during 2003—14, incorporating lessons from the 2018—19 review of conditionality and other recent key policy developments, including the recommendation of the Management Implementation Plan in response to the Independent Evaluation Office's report on growth and adjustment in IMF-supported programs. The note highlighted in particular operational advice to (1) improve real-world applications of macroeconomic forecasts in programs and foster more systematic analysis of contingency plans and risks; (2) improve the focus, depth, implementation, and tailoring of structural conditions with due consideration of growth effects; and (3) help strengthen the ownership by country authorities.

Designed as a comprehensive reference and primer on program design and conditionality in an accessible and transparent manner, the note referred in summary to a broad range of economic and policy considerations over the life cycle of IMF supported programs.