The weekly business newspaper

FINANCIAL STANDARD

MONDAY 25TH NOVEMBER - SUNDAY 1ST DECEMBER, 2024 | VOL1. NO 10 | www.financialstandadsl.com | The Smartest Way To Think | uk-2.90

US Development of Shale Has Turned Economically Beneficial

See Page 15

Sierra Leone's 2025 Fiscal Year Budget

See Page 12

Financing The Budget Deficit

See Page 3

Digital Currency Enters Next Phase

Many of the world's monetary authorities are seeking more guidance on how best to pursue digital forms of central bank money. Central bank digital currencies can improve payment systems as well as financial inclusion—if they are appropriately designed. If not, they could pose risks, an IMF study h revealed.

While not all countries may see an immediate case to deploy a CBDC, many countries are exploring CBDCs so they will have the option to introduce one in the future if it becomes pertinent for them. Benefits are more likely to come in time, following the policies pursued by countries and the private sector's response, as well as the evolution of technology. In most cases, it would be useful for countries to continue exploring CBDC, carefully and systematically, as IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva noted recently at the Singapore Fintech Festival.

The Bahamas, Jamaica, and Nigeria have already introduced CBDCs. And more than 100 countries are in the exploration stage. Central bankers in Brazil, China, the euro area, India, and the United Kingdom are at the forefront. "Looking ahead, our engagement with central banks will continue as they pursue new technologies. We will keep assessing the potential effects of CBDCs on areas from financial stability to cybersecurity and cross-border payments and build on these first five chapters with new publications planned for next year. And we'll continue our collaboration with other global bodies, including

Cont'd PAGE 11

$1.5m Stimulus Package For SME

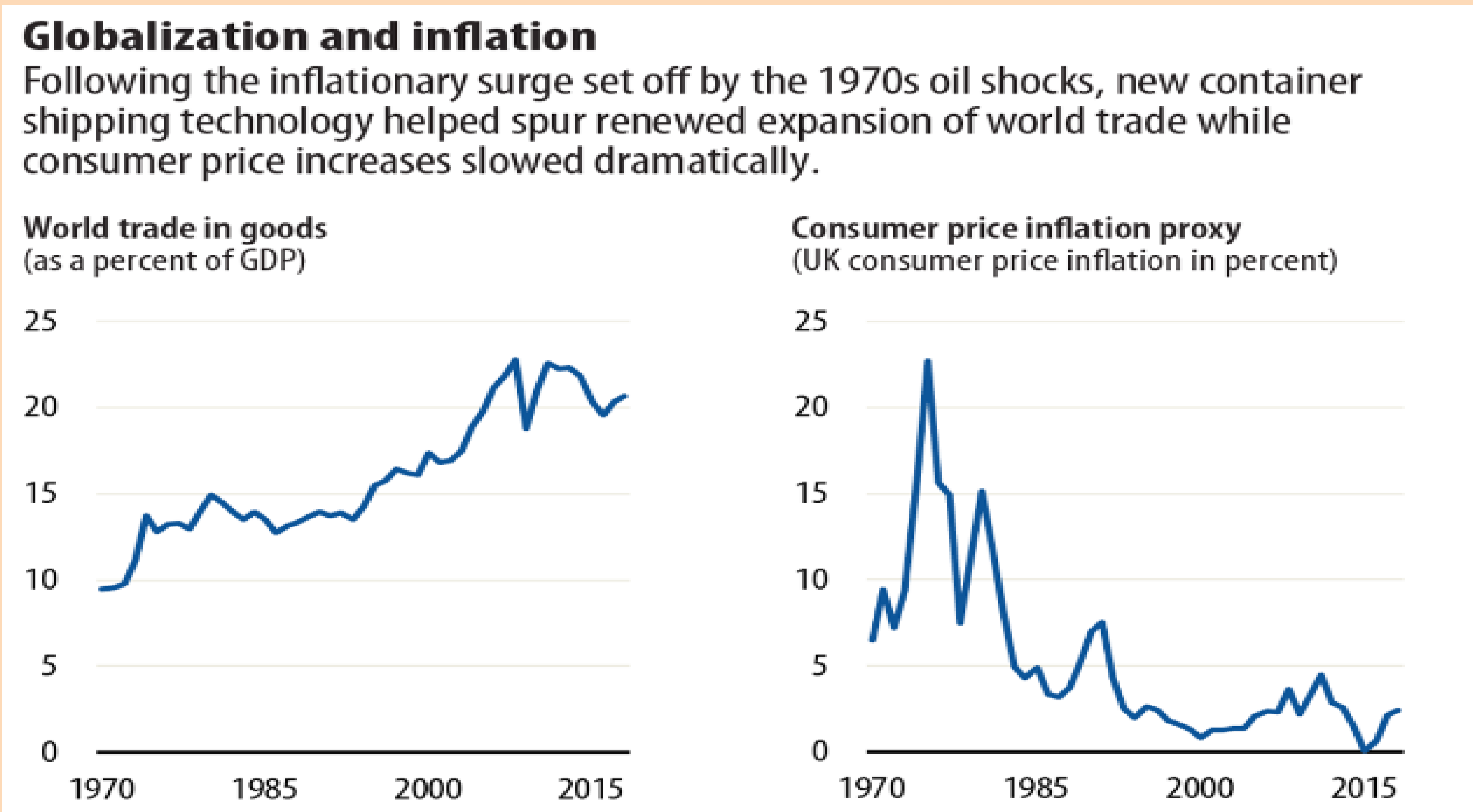
By John Marrah

The government is to rollout a core investment facility of US1.5 million dollars under the Sierra Leone Economic Diversification Project (SLEDP) to de-risking on-lending to small and medium scale Enterprises (SME) in the economy next year.

This move forms one of the government's strategies to buoy up activities in the SME sub sector would mitigate the risks associated with lending to small and medium scale enterprises in the country. In addition to this, the government is also in discussions with the World Bank for

Cont'd PAGE 2

Trade Deficit Excalates



Sierra Leone's deficit in trade with the United Kingdom has continued to worsen. The country's deficit jumped 6 million pounds in its trade relations with Great Britain in the one-year accounting period to June 2024. Whereas Britain total trade surplus in the one-year period to June this year improved from £35 million to a total of £41 million. It was £35 million in corresponding period of June 2023.

The figures represent total transactions in trade (in goods and services) between the two countries. The UK Trade Investment office's just released trading figures

Cont'd PAGE 2

INSIGHT

World Business Briefs

Green House Project Planned For Mexico

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, has announced an MXN 6,011 million (US$301 million) financing package for Vinte Viviendas Integrales, S.A.B. de C.V. (Vinte) to support the Vinte Green PCG Project. This initiative aims to expand access to affordable, energy-efficient housing in Mexico, addressing the country's housing deficit and contributing to its climate goals.

IFC's investment includes an "A" loan totalling MXN 1,150 million (US$58 million).

Promoting Women In Business Award.

In its sixth edition, awards that recognize and champion Maldivian women who have excelled in their careers, businesses and everyday life is to be held. With over 170 past award winners from Maldives, representing a wide array of professions such as banking and finance, hospitality, media, legal, logistics and supply chains, the 'Professional and Career Women Awards' demonstrate the significant role women play in bringing about transformational change as employees, entrepreneurs, and business leaders.

IFC Loan For Sanitation Project In Brazil

A new investment by IFC aims to improve water quality and expand access to services in low-income communities, while also addressing biodiversity loss and promoting climate mitigation in the State of São Paulo, Brazil. IFC is providing a sustainability-linked loan (SLL) of up to BRL 1,060 billion to Sabesp to support the implementation of the company's Integra Tietê initiative. This initiative focuses on enhancing water and sanitation infrastructure along the Tietê River. The SLL includes price incentives tied to increasing the percentage of households connected to sewage connection and treatment.

... And $20m facility for SME In Chile

The IFC has announced an equity investment of US$20 million (in Chilean pesos equivalent) in Tanner Servicios Financieros S.A. to strengthen its capital base and support growth, including the creation of a fully licensed and regulated commercial bank subsidiary. Additionally, IFC has provided a long-term senior unsecured convertible loan of up to US$20 million to finance Tanner's electromobility and MSME portfolios, with a focus on women-owned SMEs (WSMEs).

Fresh Guidelines on Digital Finance

A coalition of international organizations, including the IMF, has launched high-level guidelines for public authorities seeking to harness 'open finance' to accelerate digital financial services and innovation and increase usage of a broader range of financial products.

Alongside investment in digital public infrastructure, and ongoing efforts to reach the 1.4 billion people globally who still do not have access to a basic transaction account, open finance can be the next frontier for the growth of the financial services industry.

Trade Deficit.....

Cont'd from PAGE 1

revealed that in the four quarters to the end of Q2 2024, the UK had a trade in goods surplus of £28 million with Sierra Leone, compared to a trade in goods surplus of £32 million in the four quarters to the end of Q2 2023. "Meanwhile, in the four quarters to the end of Q2 2024 the UK reported a trade in services surplus of £13 million with Sierra Leone.

Total trade in goods and services (exports plus imports) between the UK and Sierra Leone was £77 million during the review period. A decrease of 2.5 percent; about £2 million in current prices from the four quarters to the end of Quarter 2 of 2023. Of this £77 million total imports from the United Kingdom into Sierra Leone amounted to £59 million - an increase of 3.5 percent (about £2 million in current prices), when compared to compared to what was imported into the country in the four quarters to the end of Quarter 2 in 2023).

Conversely, export goods going to the United Kingdom from Sierra Leone during same period – four quarters to the end of quarter 2 of 2024 - amounted to £18 million; a decrease of 18.2 percent (about £4 million in current prices), compared to the four quarters to the end of Quarter 2 of 2023).

Sierra Leone retained its position as UK's joint 156th largest trading partner during the review period accounting for less than 0.1% of total UK trade.

Data made available to FS at the UK Trade and Investment Department

Photo taken at COP 29 shows from left Lovetta Juonah, Gabriel Kpaka, Edward Bendu, Tamba Nyaka and Abubakar Massaquoi. The offficials presented scorecards on NDC 2.0 and the roadmap to NDC 3.0.

$1.5m Stimulus Package...

Cont'd from PAGE 1

additional funding to further support SMEs.

In the current year, the Sierra Leone Economic Diversification Project (SLEDP), in collaboration with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDA), is said to have disbursed a total of US$3.0 million in 2024 to support the growth of about 102 SMEs, over 50 percent of which are women-owned enterprises.

2To improve access to finance for businesses, the Bank of Sierra Leone, with support from SLEDP, continues to implement the upgraded collateral registry. This initiative has successfully unlocked US$39.3 million in loans by using immovable and movable assets as collateral. These efforts have resulted in the creation of more than 2,000 jobs in sectors such as light manufacturing, innovation, tourism, agribusiness, and the creative and circular economy." Finance Minister Mr Ahmed Bangura recently stated this as he addressed the parliament on the economy.

"You may recall that the government established the MUNAFA Fund in 2021, initially capitalized with NLe30.0 million to improve capital access for SMEs".

The fund, he said, has recorded a recovery rate of 63 percent so far. "Consequently, the government is urging Financial Services Providers (FSPs) to

NEWS ANALYSIS

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.

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

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

Financing The Budget Deficit

By Joshua Mans

The government recently announced that the budget deficit, excluding grants for the 2025 year is projected at NLe16.4 billion; about 8.5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

A deficit of this magnitude is significant and indicates ongoing struggle to balance revenue generation against expenditure needs. It is reflective of the country's increasing need for financing, which is crucial for public sector operations, infrastructure projects, and essential services. There's a projected shortfall of NLe7.5 billion with grants which represents a notable gap that must be addressed strategically.

Government has equally announced its intention to finance the gap primarily through domestic borrowing. "The deficit, including grants, will be financed mainly by borrowing from the domestic banking system projected at NLe6.1 billion (3.1 percent of GDP)." This signifies the state's intention to rely on local financial institutions for liquidity. This undoubtedly would bolster the banking sector. However, it raises concerns on the possibility of that move crowding out private investment. In addition to domestic borrowing, the government anticipates the mobilization of NLe640.3 million (0.3 percent of GDP) from the non-bank sector. This strategic move underscores a multi-faceted approach to financing the deficit, illustrating the government's intent to diversify its sources of funds to mitigate risks associated with heavy reliance on a single sector.

The decision to pursue such financing have varying implications for the economy. Securing funds through local banks can stimulate the economy, enabling public investment in infrastructure and services that drive growth. On the other hand, significant borrowing may lead to higher interest rates and exert pressure on government revenue in the future thereby creating a cyclical problem of increased debt servicing costs. The need for comprehensive budget deficit financing cannot be overstated. In this direction, the government should consider the following:

Revenue Enhancement: To ensure sustainability, there is need for exploration of avenues for improving tax collection and enhancing non-tax revenue streams. Efficient revenue mobilization systems can help reduce dependency on borrowing.

Investment in Growth Sectors: Focus also can be placed on sectors that promise substantial returns, such as agriculture, mining, and tourism, ensuring that borrowed funds are utilized effectively to stimulate economic growth.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Establishing robust monitoring mechanisms for budget execution can assist in assessing the impact of borrowing on economic performance, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Public Debt Management Strategy: Developing a long-term debt management strategy will be essential to avoid excessive borrowing that might jeopardize fiscal stability.

> **"Monitoring and Evaluation: Establishing robust monitoring mechanisms for budget execution can assist in assessing the impact of borrowing on economic performance, ensuring transparency and accountability."**

Fiscal policies are the top priority for reform, though needs vary across countries

Percent of countries indicating a high priority

Fiscal policies	56	48	100	91
Education and skills	44	30	67	56
Green reforms	33	30	67	42
Governance	0	19	56	78
Labor market institutions	33	26	56	35
Business regulation	22	11	44	40
Innovation and digitalization	33	22	22	24
External sector	11	4	33	31
Monetary and financial sectors	0	11	11	43

Health Sector Scoops Lion Share At NLe1.5bn

A total of NLe1.5 billion has been allocated for the health sector in fiscal 2025. This lion share accounts for about 9 percent of total primary expenditures.

This substantial allocation highlights the government's intent to prioritize health in areas where access to quality healthcare services is crucial for sustainable development. Among the key highlights of the recurrent expenditure for the health sector, the Minister detailed an allocation of 'NLe131.7 million' from the recurrent budget to the Ministry of Health. Significant portions of healthcare is strategically distributed to cover essential services and operational expenses, which include:

Tertiary Hospitals and Ambulance Services: NLe41.2 million.

Primary Health Services: NLe16.1 million.

Reproductive and Child Health Services: NLe10.9 million.

National Medical Supplies Agency: NLe64.4 million (of which NLe42.2 million is earmarked for the procurement of free healthcare drugs).

National Public Health Agency: NLe9.0 million.

Health Service Commission: NLe6.5 million.

Transfers to Local Councils for Devolved Health Functions: NLe61.8 million

Furthermore, a significant segment of the budget goes toward the remuneration of health workers, with an apportionment of 'NLe1.0 billion' designated for wages and salaries for health personnel, in addition to 'NLe56.2 million' for the salaries of staff at allied health agencies. This underscores the government's recognition of the importance of human capital in the health sector, particularly in enhancing service delivery and maintaining healthcare quality.

The government is also making notable capital investments to address the infrastructure challenges plaguing the health sector. From the domestic capital budget, a total of 'NLe30 million' has been allocated to the Ministry of Health, which will fund crucial projects aimed at enhancing healthcare facilities:

Construction of a Cancer and Diagnostic Medical Centre: NLe20 million

Rehabilitation and Expansion of District Hospitals: NLe10 million

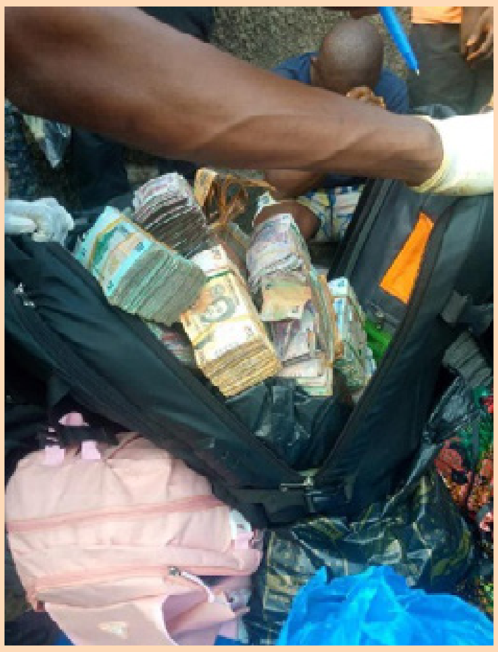
These capital expenditures signify a proactive approach to strengthening the healthcare infrastructure, addressing disparity in service delivery, and enhancing access to specialized medical services. To augment domestic financing efforts, development partners are stepping in with significant contributions. The Minister elaborated that 'NLe388.5 million' will be disbursed by various partners, including the World Bank, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), BADEA, Kuwaiti Fund, and Global Fund. These funds will support diverse projects in the health sector, including the construction of a Pharma Grade Warehouse—another critical need in bolstering pharmaceutical management and supply chains within Sierra Leone.

Additionally, the government is backing these initiatives with 'NLe72 million' as a counterpart contribution for donor-funded projects in the health sector, further solidifying collaborative efforts to enhance health outcomes.

The government's strategy encompasses both recurrent and capital expenditures, reinforcing its commitment to improve healthcare services through increased funding for essential services and infrastructure development. With ongoing support from international partners alongside domestic investments, MTNDP 2024-2030 objectives outlined will yield the desired impact on public health.

Illicit Drug Lab Uncovered In Freetown

By Joan Banniser

The drug Lab and Monies recovered by Police

A laboratory set up for the manufacture of illegal substances among which is the notorious 'Kush' has been uncovered in Freetown.

Located in Allentown – a suburb of Freetown, the facility found with improvised local equipment for producing 'kush' is said to belong to on Jah who was among four suspects picked up by police during the raid on the laboratory. Informed sources also told FS that some amounts of money in both foreign and local currencies had also been seized by the police.

The raid followed a tip off by the head teacher of a neighbouring school in the area as fumes from the laboratory filtered into the school compound and polluted the atmosphere. This development heightened fears on the safety of the students some of which reports say had already fainted because of the noxious fume.

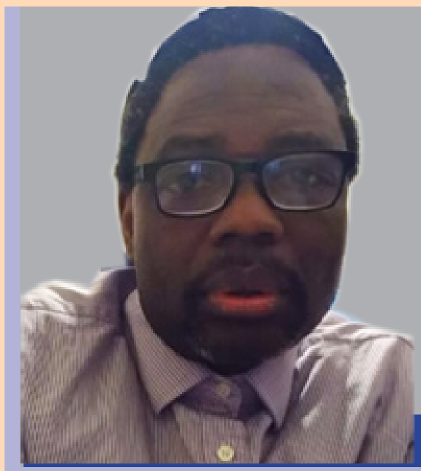
The fumes, according to sources, caused several students to lose consciousness, consequent upon which affected students were evacuated for medical attention.

This has raised fresh concern on the rising threat of drugs, especially the growing problem of 'kush', in Sierra Leone.

This incident has reignited fears on the widespread effects of 'kush' in Sierra Leone, a drug found to be responsible for various fatalities in the country. Law enforcement agencies have indicated efforts to dismantle drug production and its distribution networks in the country. Government has equally stressed the importance of community awareness and the need to report suspicious activities promptly.

As the students affected by the toxic exposure receive medical treatment, this situation underscores the urgent need for more stringent regulations and enforcement to combat the rise of illegal drugs in residential neighbourhoods.

STATISTICS SIERRA LEONE



ISSUES & POLICY

TERRY FADE ADEWALE

Achieving Sustainable African Economies

By Ibrahim Mansaray

There has never been any doubt that countries of rich raw materials, many of which are in Africa, want to develop and move from net receivers of so-called aid to self-reliant net providers of innovations and solutions to the challenges and problems confronting them and the world.

Colonialism, underdevelopment, inequalities, poverty have been and would continue to be major global crises that have dragged on for ages. This is compounded in Africa by limited global value chains, financial outflows, with worsening threats from pandemics and climate change, among other challenges. The continent has a significant infrastructure gap that must be closed. Foreign Direct Investment in Africa is key to sustainable recovery and growth. Fresh funds imply the erection of factories, stimulation of sustainable industrial development, research and development, employment creation and sustainable livelihoods and value addition to commodities in the case of African minerals and divestment from fossil fuels and investment in renewable energy.

German investment in Africa stood at 1% of its total external investment in 2018; this means that Sierra Leone and other African Nation's has an opportunity to tap into the German business investments. Last year 2021, the G7, hosted by the UK, pledged to invest $80 billion in Africa.

The G7 has a present and historical duty to assist by drawing on their financing commitments for Africa. There are potentials for mutual benefit for Germany and Africa in German foreign direct investment, as with G7 FDIs in Africa.

The G7 and the G20 have committed to re-allocating $100bn of Special Drawing Rights out of $650bn to help International Monetary Fund (IMF) member countries facing economic crises. The G7 has promised much to Africa through endless so-called aid offerings. For decades, G7 leaders have pledged to allocate 0.7% of their respective countries (GNI) to international aid to support Africa and other continents in need.

Yes, Africa needs development partners who care about its citizens' environment, climate, and economic and social wellbeing. However, any development support that ignores Africa's post-colonial challenges relating to trade, food sovereignty and energy sovereignty will merely deepen Africa's economic challenges.

> **there is the need for the G7 to invest in a global financial and trade architecture that would enable African countries produce their own food, provide energy to meet their domestic needs**

To do this, there is the need for the G7 to invest in a global financial and trade architecture that would enable African countries produce their own food, provide energy to meet their domestic needs, facilitate technological transfer (to enable sustainable essential manufacturing and industrial activity) and invest in public education, research, and development. This is the only way to achieve sustainable economies that would produce jobs and provide livelihoods on the continent.

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	5.8	*15.1*	*3.8*	*7.0*	*3.9*	*2.2*	*3.7*
Change in imports (%)	20.0	-6.4	4.4	*7.1*	*3.4*	*1.1*	*1.3*	*4.5*	*1.5*
CURRENT ACCOUNT									
Current account balance (% of GDP)	-5.7	-2.2	-6.0	*-5.5*	*-5.7*	*-4.7*	*-4.2*	*-4.5*	*-4.5*
GDP									
Change in real GDP (%)	5.9	5.3	5.7	*4.0*	*4.5*	*4.7*	*4.7*	*4.7*	*4.6*
GDP per capita (1,000 $USD)	0.9	0.9	0.8	*0.9*	*0.9*	*0.9*	*0.9*	*0.9*	*1.0*
GDP PPP (Int'l $billion)	23.1	26.0	28.5	*30.3*	*32.3*	*34.4*	*36.7*	*39.1*	*41.7*
INFLATION									
Inflation, year average (CPI %)	11.9	27.2	47.7	*36.6*	*18.0*	*13.2*	*10.2*	*8.5*	*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)	14.1	14.9	19.7	*18.3*	*19.5*	*19.6*	*19.9*	*20.3*	*19.8*
Gross national savings (% of GDP)	8.4	12.7	13.8	*12.8*	*13.8*	*14.8*	*15.8*	*15.8*	*15.4*
BUDGET DEFICIT-DEBT									
General government net lending/borrowing (% of GDP)	-4.3	-5.9	-5.0	*-2.9*	*-3.6*	*-1.7*	*-0.9*	*-0.5*	*-1.5*
General government gross debt (% of GDP)	47.1	54.0	49.2	*42.8*	*42.9*	*42.7*	*40.1*	*37.1*	*35.9*

Sierra Leone was the 157th largest economy in 2023, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). The UK was the 6th largest economy in 2023.[36]

Top goods traded with the world by Sierra Leone, in current prices (UN Comtrade)[37, 38]

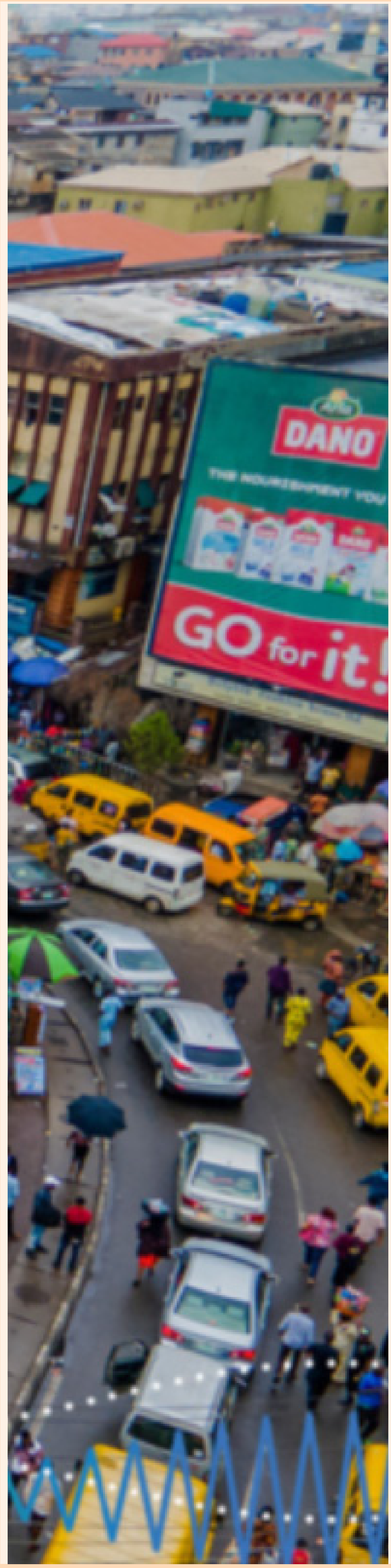
Data presented here show the top commodities traded with the world, not solely the UK, by Sierra Leone. These data are based on a different commodity classification system to the ONS commodity data used earlier in this factsheet, and the two sections should therefore not be directly compared.

Top goods exported to the world by Sierra Leone in 2018:

Rank	HS Commodity	$USD million	% of total goods exported
1	03 - Fish and crustaceans	42	20.5%
2	26 - Ores, slag and ash	32	15.7%
3	18 - Cocoa and cocoa preparations	22	10.9%
4	44 - Wood and articles of wood; wood charcoal	20	9.9%
5	87 - Vehicles other than railway or tramway stock	20	9.8%
6	84 - Machinery and mechanical appliances	13	6.1%
7	15 - Animal or vegetable fats and oils	12	5.6%
8	36 - Explosives; pyrotechnic products; matches	6	2.7%
9	20 - Preparations of veg, fruit or nuts	5	2.5%
10	25 - Salt; sulfur; earths and stone	5	2.4%
	All goods exported	**205**	**100.0%**

Top goods imported from the world by Sierra Leone in 2018:

Rank	HS Commodity	$USD million	% of total goods imported
1	10 - Cereals	153	15.5%
2	84 - Machinery and mechanical appliances	112	11.3%
3	87 - Vehicles other than railway or tramway stock	93	9.4%
4	85 - Electrical machinery and equipment	63	6.4%
5	39 - Plastics and articles thereof	56	5.7%
6	73 - Articles of iron or steel	48	4.9%
7	25 - Salt; sulfur; earths and stone	46	4.6%
8	72 - Iron and steel	35	3.5%
9	30 - Pharmaceutical products	24	2.4%
10	11 - Products of the milling industry	24	2.4%
	All goods imported	**987**	**100.0%**



Budget 2025: A Bold Move Towards Improved Well-Being

By Joan Bannister
John Marrah

The 2025 budget aims at reducing inflation, improve social security, and develop infrastructure even as government acknowledged various challenges to sustainable growth in the economy. Among others the government has identified volatile international markets, investor uncertainty and political unrest as great challenges to its reforms.

"With the economy expected to grow by 4.5% in 2025 and inflation continuing into 2027, the government will focus on promoting change and protecting the lives of Sierra Leoneans. The government is committed to achieving 4.5% growth in 2025, reducing inflation to 14.9%, and promoting socioeconomic integration". Consequently, in fiscal 2025, the Sierra Leone state is investing in capital projects and socio-economic projects that would have serious positive impact on the people. The Feed Salone initiative a school feeding program for over 500,000 children is continuing while construction of hospitals and strengthening of energy projects with emphasis on rural electrification are taking pride of place. Presenting the 2025 budget, the Minister of Finance Mr Ahmed Bangura disclosed that fiscal discipline, economic resilience and human development programs would drive citizens' well-being in the coming year.

> **This is vital, as enhanced revenue collection could reduce the country's reliance on external financing and help decrease fiscal deficits.**

Titled "Enhancing the Welfare and Living Condition of Sierra Leoneans," the budget statement captures the bold aspirations of government to improve food security, human capital development, to promote agricultural self-sufficiency "whilst carving out grounds for lasting fiscal reforms, growth through infrastructure development, social protection and climate change adaptation". The government has significantly increased the national budget in the past 3 years, reflecting its commitment to economic recovery, resource mobilization, and strengthening tax administration. Approved budget for 2023 was at NLe 13.74 billion. This figure surged to NLe 21.46 billion in 2024, representing a 56% increase in just one year. For the 2025 fiscal year, the government has unveiled an ambitious budget of NLe 35.3 billion, marking a staggering 64.5% rise from 2024 and a cumulative growth of 157% over the three-year period.

This' a demonstration of the administration's focus on stabilizing the economy and in addressing resource mobilization challenges. The 2025 budget, which represents approximately 18.3% of Sierra Leone's GDP, underscores the government's strategy to prioritize fiscal consolidation while making critical investments in key sectors.

A key focus for the year 2025 is the emphasis on tax compliance and administration. This is vital, as enhanced revenue collection could reduce the country's reliance on external financing and help decrease fiscal deficits. Strengthening the tax system is expected to increase domestic revenue mobilization, enabling the government to fund essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

The dramatic rise in budget allocation signals a deliberate effort to stabilize the economy following years of external shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the global ripple effects of the Ukraine war. Investments under the 2025 budget are poised to stimulate economic activity, particularly in agriculture and mining, which are key growth sectors.

Energy Sector To Gulp NLe1.4bn

A consortium of World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Indian Export -Import (EXIM) Bank is disbursing a total of NLe1.4 billion for the implementation of several projects in the energy sector in the next fiscal year.

Already earmarked projects include the Regional Emergency Solar Power Intervention Project (RESPITE). The EU is supporting improvement in energy access under the Transformational Energy Access for Sierra Leone Project. The Sierra Leone government is providing NLe4.2 million as counterpart contribution towards the implementation of these projects. In addition, Government is also providing NLe5.9 million for administrative expenses and NLe9.8 million for wages and salaries to the Ministry of Energy. The government is allocating a total of NLe127.3 million to the energy sector in fiscal 2025. This is being provided from the 2025 domestic capital budget Of this, NLe50 million is to be expended on the completion of the 7 districts electricity projects in the country.

A total of NLe26 million is earmarked for the rehabilitation of the Goma-Dodo Hydro Dam and NLe 26 million for the extension of transmission and distribution lines to mining companies. A total of NLe25.5 million is for enhancing energy generation and transmission.

Furthermore, Government is providing NLe875.0 million as subsidies to EDSA for the payment of outstanding invoices to the Independent Power Producers (IPPs), including Karpower, CI-Energy, and TRANSCO-CLSG.

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

By Tobias Adrian, Christopher Erceg & Fabio Latalucci

Soaring Inflation Puts Central Banks on a Difficult Journey

Upside risks to the inflation outlook remain large, and more aggressive tightening may be needed if these risks materialize.

Tobias Adrian

Christopher Ecerg

Fabio Latalucci

Central banks in major economies expected as recently as a few months ago that they could tighten on monetary policy very gradually. Inflation seemed to be driven by an unusual mix of supply shocks associated with the pandemic and later Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and it was expected to decline rapidly once these pressures eased.

Now, with inflation climbing to multi-decade highs and price pressures broadening to housing and other services, central banks recognize the need to move more urgently to avoid an unmooring of inflation expectations and damaging their credibility. Policymakers should heed the lessons of the past and be resolute to avoid potentially more painful and disruptive adjustments later.

The Federal Reserve, Bank of Canada, and Bank of England have already raised interest rates markedly and have signaled they expect to continue with more sizable hikes this year. The European Central Bank recently lifted rates for the first time in more than a decade.

Higher real rates to help push down inflation

Central bank actions and communications about the likely path of policy have led to a significant rise in real (that is, inflation-adjusted) interest rates on government debt since the start of the year.

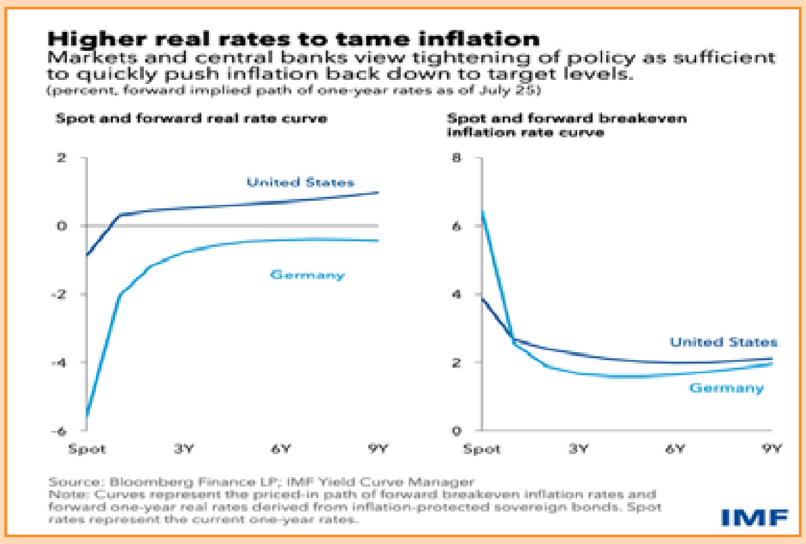
While short-term real rates are still negative, the real rate forward curve in the United States—that is, the path of one-year-ahead real interest rates one to 10 years out implied by market prices—has risen across the curve to a range between 0.5 and 1 percent.

This path is roughly consistent with a "neutral" real policy stance that allows output to expand around its potential rate. The Fed's Summary of Economic Projections in mid-June suggested a real neutral rate of around 0.5 percent, and policymakers saw a 1.7 percent output expansion both this year and next, which is very close to estimates of potential.

The real rate forward curve in the euro area, proxied by German bunds, has also shifted up, though remains deeply negative. That's consistent with real rates converging only gradually to neutral

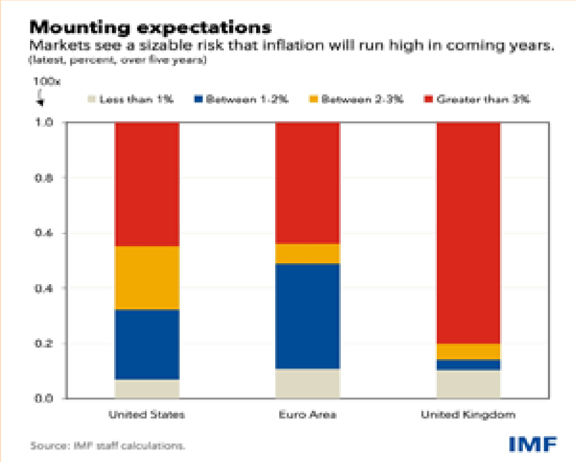
The higher real interest rates on government bonds have spurred an even larger rise in borrowing costs for consumers and businesses, and contributed to sharp declines in equity prices globally. The modal view of both central banks and markets seems to be that this tightening of financial conditions will be enough to push inflation down to target levels relatively quickly.

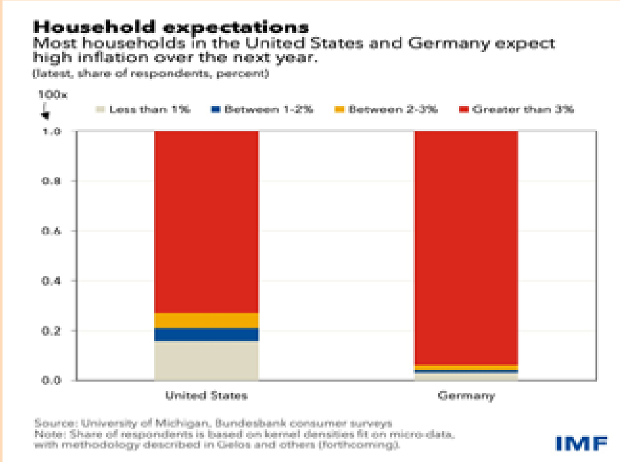
To illustrate, market-based measures of inflation expectations point to a return of inflation to around 2 percent within the next two or three years for both the United States and Germany. Central bank forecasts, such as the Fed's latest quarterly projections, point to a similar moderation in the rate of price increases, as do surveys of economists and investors.



This seems to be a reasonable baseline for several reasons:

- The monetary and fiscal tightening in train should cool demand both for energy and non-energy goods, especially in interest-sensitive categories like consumer durables. This should cause goods prices to rise at a slower pace or even fall, and may also push energy prices lower in the absence of additional disruptions in commodity markets.
- Supply-side pressures should ease as the pandemic relaxes its grip and lockdowns and production disruptions become less frequent.
- Slower economic growth should eventually push down service-sector inflation and restrain wage growth.





Substantial risk inflation runs high

However, the magnitude of the inflation surge has been a surprise to central banks and markets, and there remains substantial uncertainty about the outlook for inflation.

It is possible that inflation comes down more quickly than central banks envision, especially if supply chain disruptions ease and global policy tightening results in fast declines in energy and goods prices.

Even so, inflation risks appear strongly tilted to the upside. There is a substantial risk that high inflation becomes entrenched, and inflation expectations de-anchor.

Inflation rates in services—for everything from housing rents to personal services—appear to be picking up from already elevated levels, and they are unlikely to come down quickly. These pressures may be reinforced by rapid nominal wage growth. In countries with strong labor markets, nominal wages could start rising rapidly, faster than what firms reasonably could absorb, with the associated increase in unit labor costs passed into prices. Such "second round effects" would translate into more persistent inflation and rising inflation expectations. Finally, a further intensification of geopolitical tensions that ignites a renewed surge in energy prices or compounds existing disruptions could also generate a longer period of high inflation.

While the market-based evidence on "average" inflation expectations discussed above may seem reassuring, markets appear to put significant odds on the possibility that inflation may run well above central bank targets over the next few years. Specifically, markets signal a high probability of inflation rates of over 3 percent persisting in coming years in the United States, euro area and the United Kingdom.

Consumers and businesses have also become increasingly concerned about upside inflation risks in recent months. For the United States and Germany, household surveys show that people expect high inflation over the next year, and put considerable odds on the possibility that it runs well above target over the next five years.

More forceful tightening may be needed

The costs of bringing down inflation may prove to be markedly higher if upside risks materialize and high inflation becomes entrenched. In that event, central banks will have to be more resolute and tighten more aggressively to cool the economy, and unemployment will likely have to rise significantly.

Amid signs of already poor liquidity, faster policy rate tightening may result in a further sharp decline in risk asset prices—affecting equities, credit, and emerging market assets. The tightening in financial conditions may well be disorderly, testing the resilience of the financial system and putting especially large strains on emerging markets. Public support for tight monetary policy, now strong with inflation running at multi-decade highs, may be undermined by mounting economic and employment costs.

Even so, restoring price stability is of paramount importance, and is a necessary condition for sustained economic growth. A key lesson of the high inflation in the 1960s and 1970s was that moving too slowly to restrain it entails a much more costly subsequent tightening to re-anchor inflation expectations and restore policy credibility. It will be important for central banks to keep this experience firmly in their sights as they navigate the difficult road ahead.

Implications of Central Bank Digital Currencies for Monetary Policy Transmission

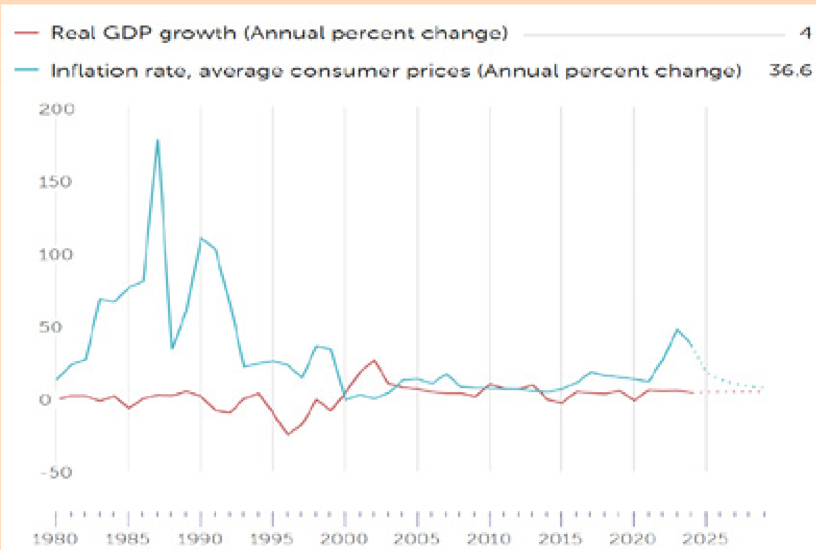
The level of global interest in central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) is unprecedented. According to a 2022 survey from the Bank of International Settlements (BIS), 93 percent of central banks are exploring CBDCs, and 58 percent report that they are likely to or might possibly issue a retail CBDC in the short or medium term (Kosse and Mattei 2023).

Indeed, more than 100 countries are exploring retail CBDC issuance. Several central banks have already launched pilots or even issued a CBDC. The implications of CBDCs for monetary policy transmission is a topic of significant interest for IMF member countries. Monetary policy transmission plays a critical role in the overall functioning of an economy because it determines how changes in policy measures and interest rates implemented by central banks affect key economic variables such as investment, consumption, inflation, and employment.

The proposed foundational principles for CBDCs stipulate that CBDC designs should align with central bank mandates to achieve price stability (low and stable inflation) and to help manage economic fluctuations (BIS, 2020). CBDCs could bring both opportunities and challenges to monetary policy transmission. For some countries, enhancing monetary policy effectiveness is an important motivation for CBDC exploration; for others, motivations include modernizing the financial system, reducing future risks associated with rapid digitalization, and lowering the costs of person-to-person monetary transfers.

At the same time, some countries view the potential for CBDCs to weaken monetary policy transmission as a risk. This note provides a conceptual analysis of the implications of CBDCs for monetary policy. In particular, it focuses on the implications of a retail CBDC, which would be available to the general public and is the scale of access that most central banks are considering.

The baseline design considered in this paper is a non-remunerated CBDC with possible caps on individual holdings and accessible only in the issuing jurisdiction (the most common design among central banks adopting or piloting CBDCs thus far). The issuance of retail CBDCs can impact key parts of countries' macroeconomic environment. In turn, these changes in the macroeconomic environment may affect both the tightness of financial conditions (upon issuance) and the transmission of monetary policy through the main channels: the interest rate channel, bank lending channel, asset price channel, and exchange rate channel. CBDCs may have an impact on countries' macroeconomic environment in several ways. CBDCs offer a safe store of value and efficient means of payment, which can increase competition for deposit funding, increase banks' share of wholesale funding, and lower bank profits.



CBDCs also have the potential to bolster financial inclusion to the extent that they can address the barriers to inclusion for the unbanked. In dollarized or euroized economies, or in economies where the adoption of crypto assets is widespread, the introduction of CBDCs could also encourage a greater use of the local currency, 1BIS survey data show that central banks are particularly interested in retail CBDCs: all central banks conducting work on CBDCs either look at both wholesale and retail CBDCs or focus solely on a retail CBDC.

Implications of CBDCs for Monetary Policy Transmission particularly in lieu of other forms of digital money denominated in foreign currency or crypto assets (that is, "de-dollarization/de-cryptoization"). Changes in the macroeconomic environment could lead to either a tightening or a loosening of financial conditions. Increased competition for bank deposit funding, increased wholesale funding, and lower bank profits would tighten financial conditions.

> ...principles for CBDCs stipulate that CBDC designs should align with central bank mandates to achieve price stability (low and stable inflation) and to help manage economic fluctuations (BIS, 2020).

On the other hand, increased financial inclusion could loosen financial conditions. Decreasing dollarization/ cryptoization has an ambiguous impact on financial conditions. The central bank should closely monitor the effects of CBDC issuance on the macroeconomic environment so that it can react to maintain a given level of financial conditions, if needed. As it can with any other economic shock, the central bank can choose to adjust its policy instruments to achieve its objectives as the macroeconomic environment evolves.

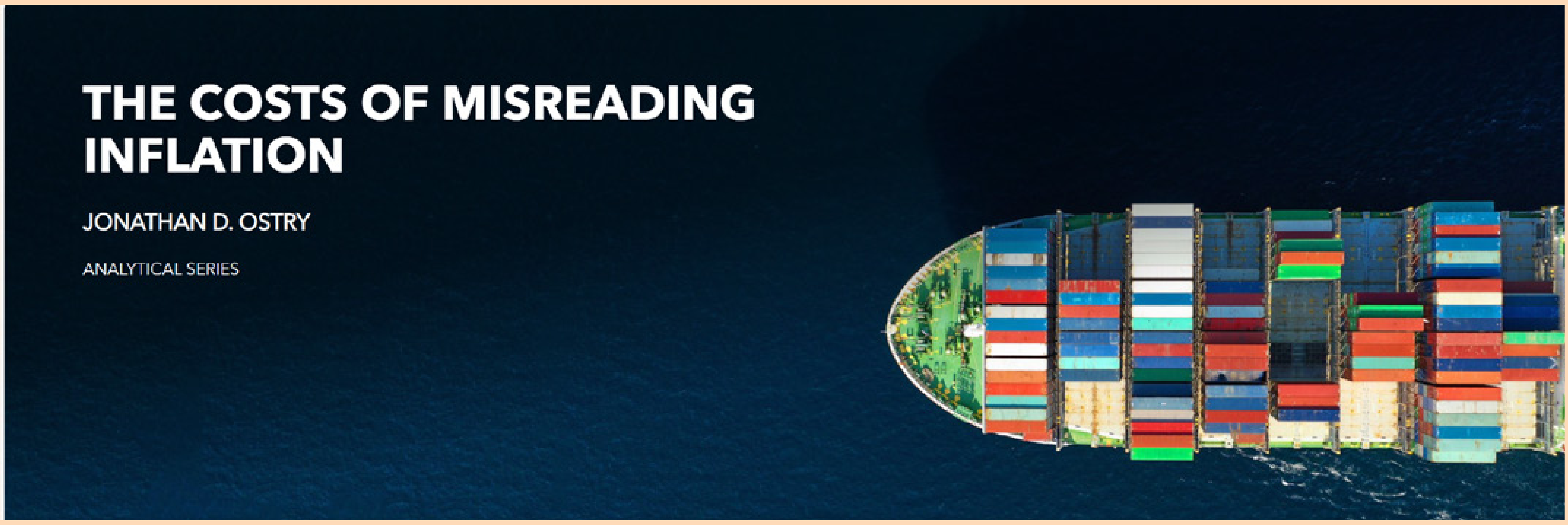
Given that the introduction of CBDCs could either tighten or loosen financial conditions, keeping a close watch over the macroeconomic environment related to monetary policy would be warranted. The central bank can offset the impact if necessary. CBDCs have the potential to strengthen the channels of monetary policy transmission. De dollarization/ de-cryptoization is likely to amplify all transmission channels.

Increased competition for bank deposit funding could strengthen the interest rate and bank lending channels. Increased wholesale funding would strengthen the bank lending channel. Higher levels of financial inclusion can strengthen the interest rate and asset price channels. There are unlikely to be additional effects on the exchange rate channel. In general, the effects of CBDCs on monetary policy transmission are expected to be relatively small in normal times; however, these effects can be more significant in an environment with low interest rates or financial market stress.

The strengthening of

Cont'd NEXT EDITION

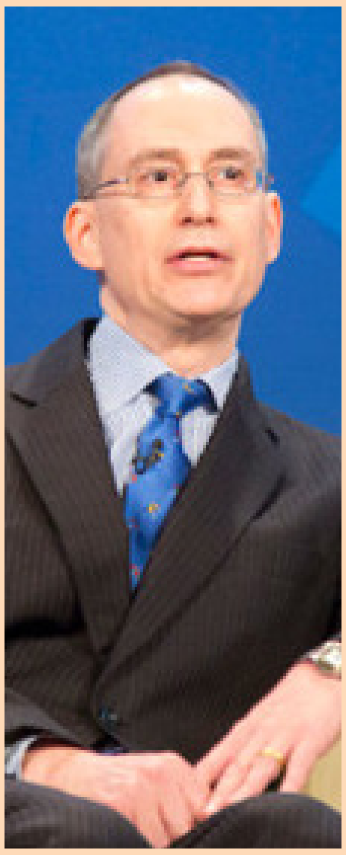
MARITIME & PORTS



The 2021 surge in global shipping costs was a canary in the coal mine for the persistent rise in inflation

It bears remembering that, as recently as the second half of 2021, the Federal Reserve considered that the surge in consumer price inflation would dissipate, with price increases returning to the Fed's 2 percent target in 2022. In testimony before Congress, Fed Chair Jerome Powell affixed the now infamous "transitory" moniker to the ongoing price increases, which he ascribed to temporary supply bottlenecks and price declines in the early stages of the pandemic.

The Fed rejected the notion that price increases reflected an overheated economy—a view that was nevertheless already making the rounds in certain segments of Congress—and did not foresee any tightening before 2023 or 2024. New York Federal Reserve Bank President John Williams, who also serves as vice chair of the Fed's policymaking committee, expected inflation to run at about 2 percent in both 2022 and 2023.

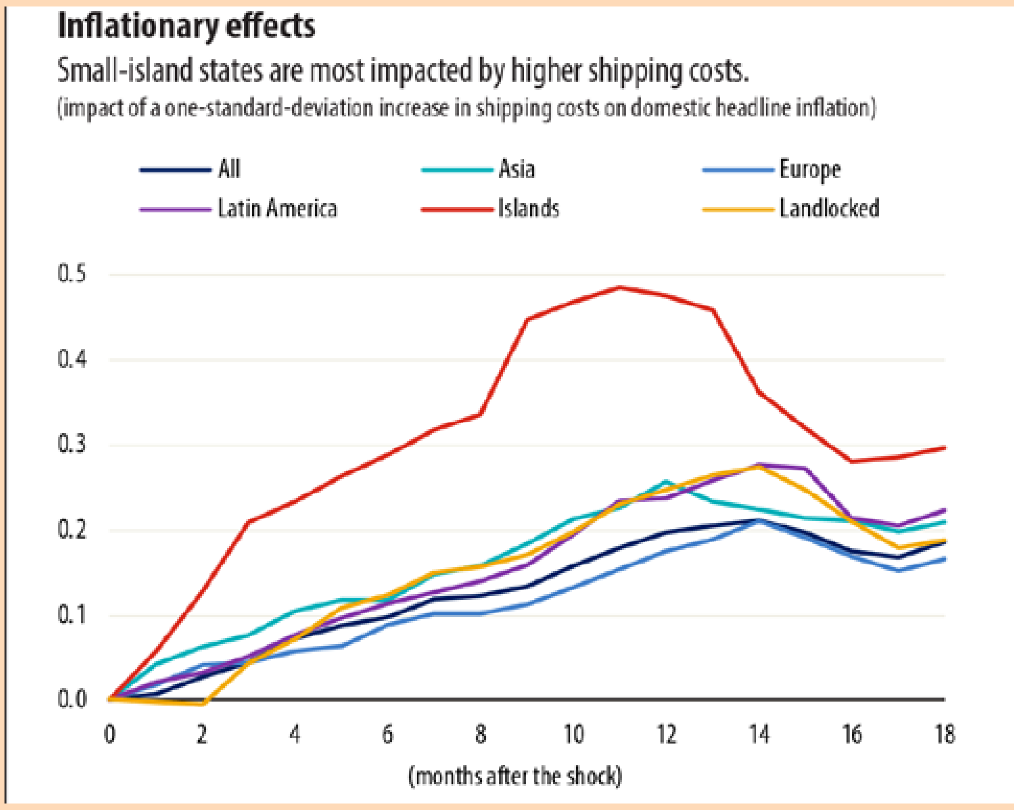

Jonathan Ostry

The Fed was not alone in misreading the implications of the data already available in 2021. The IMF, whose mandate is to take an independent view of developments and policies in member countries, described the inflationary surge in a blog by its (then) chief economist, Gita Gopinath, in the same terms as the Fed, pointing to transitory causes and taking comfort in the anchoring of inflation expectations. Like the Fed, the IMF did not mention in its updates the possibility of economic overheating and inflation persistence.

Fast-forward to spring 2022: the IMF's World Economic Outlook revealed that the institution's inflation projections were off by a factor of more than 3 for advanced economies and 2 for all other countries. These facts show that the inflation surprise was global.

To be fair, there were factors that were not foreseeable in 2021, such as supply chain disruptions related to China's zero-COVID policy and commodity price increases owing to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. There were also factors whose impact was difficult to predict with precision—for example, the unwinding of pandemic-era savings, which boosted demand. Economic forecasters, whether at the Fed or at the IMF, are not geopolitical or public health experts, and often the best they can do is to make an educated guess.

But while policymakers may get a pass for not factoring into their decisions what was unknowable a year ago, they should be held accountable for missing known drivers of inflation, especially those that pointed to enduring price pressures. It's likely that the Fed has had to hike interest rates further to make up for its delayed start. Recession risks are very plausibly larger as a result, as are the adverse global spillovers from Fed policy.



So was there a smoking gun? In a recent study, my coauthors and I focus on a key driver of global inflation that was very evident already in 2021: the rapid increase in global shipping costs. By October 2021, indicators of the cost of shipping containers by maritime freight had increased by over 600 percent from their pre-pandemic levels, while the cost of shipping bulk commodities by sea had more than tripled.

What caused this remarkable increase? As manufacturing activity picked up following extended COVID-19 lockdowns, demand for shipping intermediate inputs (such as energy and raw materials) by sea increased significantly. At the same time, shipping capacity was severely constrained by logistical hurdles and bottlenecks related to pandemic disruptions and shortages of container equipment. Ports around the world lacked workers, who had to self-isolate after testing positive for COVID-19, and public health restrictions prevented truck drivers and ship crews from crossing borders.

While skyrocketing food and energy prices were making headlines, the surge in shipping costs seemed to pass largely under the radar, despite its potential inflationary impact. Our analysis suggests that a doubling of shipping costs causes inflation to increase by roughly 0.7 percentage point. Given the actual increase in global shipping costs during 2021, we estimate that the impact on inflation in 2022 was more than 2 percentage points—a huge effect that few central banks would dismiss.

Our study also shows that the effect of the shipping cost shock on inflation is longer-lasting than the effects of commodity price shocks, peaking after about a year and lasting up to 18 months. By contrast, the impact of global oil prices on consumer price inflation peaks after only two months.

Of course, this average result varies across economies and regions, and it depends on monetary policy frameworks, particularly central banks' track record of stabilizing prices and anchoring expectations, as well as on more structural features such as geography (which affects an economy's remoteness and dependence on goods shipped by sea).

Our evidence suggests that the impacts of surging shipping costs are likely to be larger and more persistent in countries

NEWS

Freetown-Monrovia Sign New Pact

By Joan Bannister

Sierra Leone is forging ahead with significant initiatives across diplomacy, civic engagement, and economic development. Minister of Information and Civic Orientation, Mr Chernor Bah who disclosed this in Freetown also spoke on bilateral relations with Liberia and plans for the upcoming first Civic Festival.

Sierra Leone, he said has entered into an agreement with Liberia on collaborative efforts in combating fake news, bolstering media engagement, and advancing cooperation in agriculture, trade, diplomacy, and security, marking a new era of partnership between the two nations.

Presidents Boakai & Bio (left -right respectively)

The first-ever Civic Festival, scheduled for December 11-12, 2024, at the Miatta Conference Center, was also unveiled. The event will provide a platform for citizens to engage in discussions on national priorities, centred on President Dr. Julius Maada Bio's "Big Five" agenda, while celebrating Sierra Leone's cultural heritage through music, art, and dialogue with government officials.

In a focus on youth empowerment, Hon. Sia Mahawa Tommy highlighted the 2025 budget's initiatives to create thousands of jobs across key sectors, including health, security, and the prison service, with no new taxes imposed on essential goods like rice. She emphasised the increased budget allocation for the Ministry of Youth Affairs, underscoring the administration's commitment to fostering youth development.

Andrew Lavali, Executive Director of the Institute of Governance Reform, praised the economic advancements reflected in the 2025 budget, which sees Sierra Leone's GDP rise from $4 billion to $8 billion and per capita income increase to $857. However, Lavali urged Parliament to address critical challenges, including debt sustainability, electricity supply through EDSA, and the national wage bill.

$26.9 Million UNIDO Grant For SME, Climate Adaptation

By John Marah

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDA) has secured a $26.9 million grant from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF),.

With this, the agency is set to implement the Promotion of Climate Adaptation Technology and Business Model Innovations and Entrepreneurship in Sierra Leone (CATBIE) project. This transformative initiative will target key sectors such as water, energy, and food, aiming to foster sustainability, resilience, and economic growth. The CATBIE project will focus on providing capacity building, technology transfer, business coaching, and enhanced access to finance for SMEs. It is expected to create 200 new jobs and support 250,000 vulnerable individuals, including 40 percent women and 20 percent youth.

The project's emphasis on climate adaptation technology and innovative business models will not only empower SMEs but also address pressing environmental challenges. A National Adaptation Innovation Platform will be established under the project to promote collaboration among stakeholders, drive research, and facilitate the adoption of climate-smart solutions across the country.

In alignment with SMEDA's broader mandate, this initiative complements ongoing efforts to expand opportunities for SMEs. Over the years, SMEDA has championed programs that enhance access to capital, build entrepreneurial capacity, and encourage innovation within the SME sector.

The CATBIE project underscores SMEDA's commitment to driving economic diversification, creating employment, and fostering inclusivity in Sierra Leone's economic landscape.

Additionally, SMEDA is working closely with other national and international partners to ensure that the grant is efficiently utilized to achieve its intended outcomes. By empowering SMEs to adopt sustainable practices and innovative technologies, SMEDA continues to position itself as a key driver of Sierra Leone's socio-economic transformation.

Digital Currency...

the Group of Twenty".

"The IMF will continue assisting countries exploring CBDCs, along with efforts by other global bodies like the Bank for International Settlements." A virtual CBDC Virtual Handbook has been launched by the Fund to collect and share knowledge with policymakers around the world, and also to serve as a basis for the IMF's engagement with country authorities. "We intend this to be a living document that will be updated and expanded as our body of knowledge and analysis grows, and as new lessons and insights emerge from countries".

Sierra Leone's 2025 Fiscal Year Budget

Mr Ahmed Bangura, Minister of Finance delivering the Budget Speech at the Parliament.

Domestic Revenues and Grants

The effective implementation of the National Development Plan largely depends on a robust revenue mobilisation drive. The Medium-Term Revenue Strategy (MTRS) 2023 – 2027, is our blueprint for domestic revenue mobilisation. Most of the revenue measures contained in the MTRS are being implemented through the Finance Acts 2023 and 2024. Government's focus for 2025 is to strengthen tax compliance and administration. On the basis of the tax policy and administrative measures to be implemented and the expected recovery in economic activities, domestic revenue for FY2025 is projected at NLe18.9 billion (9.8 percent of GDP).

- Income taxes will contribute NLe6.7 billion.
- Goods and services tax (GST), NLe4.3 billion.
- Customs and excise duties, NLe4.1 billion.
- Mining royalties and licences, NLe1.1 billion.
- Fisheries royalties and licences, NLe171.7 million.
- Parastatal dividends, NLe396.0 million.

Revenues from other Government departments, including Treasury Single Account (TSA) Agencies and royalty on timber exports will amount to NLe1.8 billion.

Road user charges and vehicle licences will contribute NLe249.1 million to domestic revenue in 2025.

Total grants to be disbursed by development partners are projected at NLe9.0 billion (4.6 percent of GDP), of which, budget support from the World Bank and the European Union will amount to NLe2.1 billion. Other grants from several development partners will amount to NLe6.9 billion; of which, project grants will amount to NLe2.7 billion and off-budget grants, NLe4.2 billion. Total revenue and grants will, therefore, amount to NLe27.9 billion (14.4 percent of GDP).

Expenditure Priorities and Budget Allocations

The priorities of Government as articulated in the National Development Plan are:

- Feed Salone.
- Human Capital Development.
- Youth Employment Scheme.
- Infrastructure, Technology and Innovation; and
- Transforming the Public Service Architecture.

Also referred to as the BIG FIVE GAME CHANGERS given their potential to transform our economy. Consequently, the composition and allocation of Government expenditures, both recurrent and capital, for the 2025 fiscal year are geared towards ensuring the implementation of the National Development Plan in order to improve the wellbeing of Sierra Leoneans.

Total expenditure and net lending for the 2025 fiscal year is projected at NLe35.3 billion (18.3 percent of GDP). Of the total expenditure, recurrent expenditures

"Foreign-financed capital expenditure is projected at NLe9.5 billion (4.9 percent of GDP) and domestic-funded capital expenditures at NLe2.2 billion ..."

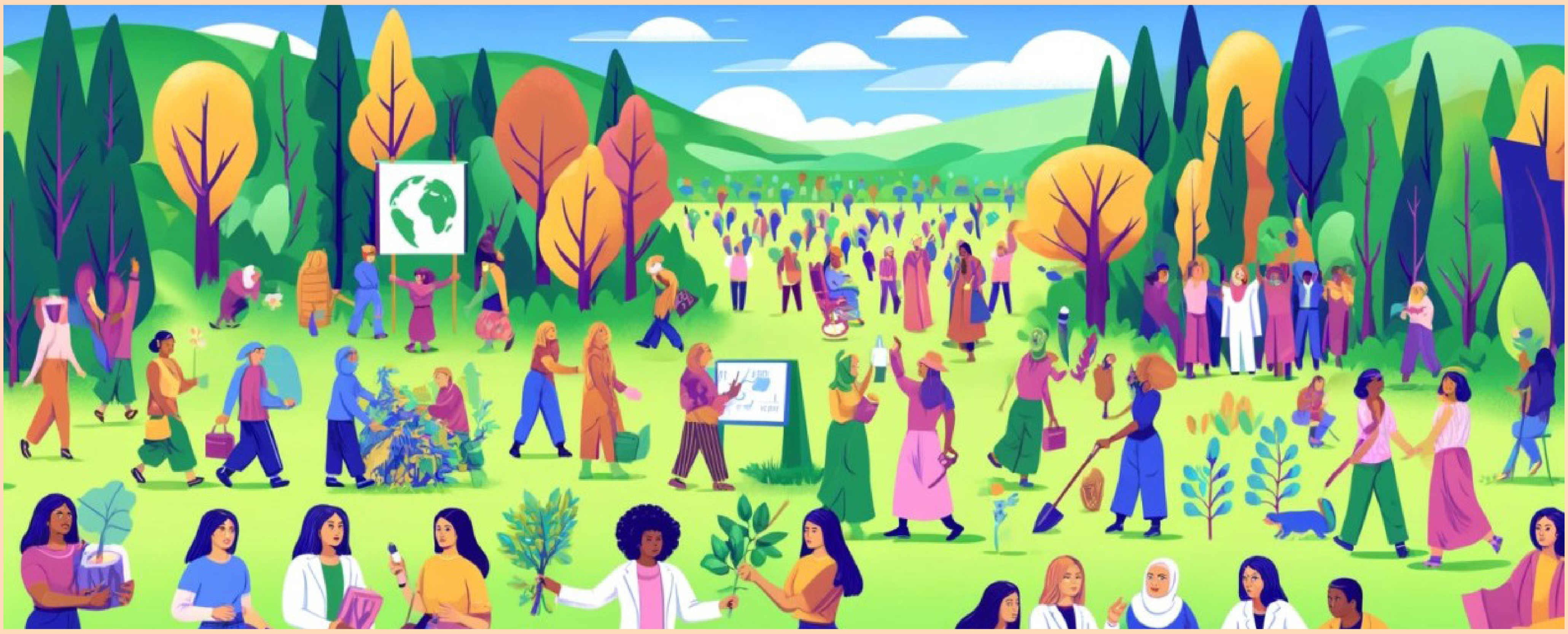
are projected at NLe22.1 billion (11.4 percent of GDP) and capital e expenditures and net lending are projected at NLe13.0 billion (6.7 percent of GDP), of which, capital expenditure is NLe11.7 billion and capital transfers for the recapitalisation of the Bank of Sierra Leone is NLe1.3 billion.

Foreign-financed capital expenditure is projected at NLe9.5 billion (4.9 percent of GDP) and domestic-funded capital expenditures at NLe2.2 billion (1.1 percent of GDP). Wages and Salaries 109. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Government Wage Bill is projected to increase to NLe7.6 billion (3.9 percent of GDP) in 2025 from NLe6.5 billion (3.9 percent of GDP) in 2024. The increase in the nominal wage bill covers the following: i. ii. iii. iv. Government's commitment to a 45 percent increase in salaries for teachers which started in 2023 remains intact. Teachers will, therefore, receive the third and final tranche of 15 percent increase in January 2025.

- Government will also recruit 2,000 additional teachers and reassess and promote 3,043 teachers, effective September 2025.
- Recruitment of 3,000 health workers effective July 2025 and a 15 percent salary increase for health workers effective April 2025.
- Recruitment of additional 1,000 civil servants; Award a 30 percent salary increase effective April 2025 for civil servants in Grades 8 to 14 who had not received any pay raise since 2018.
- Recruitment of 500 staff by tertiary educational institutions effective September 2025 as follows: Universities - 300, Colleges-100 and Technical and Vocational Institutions -100 staff.
- A 15 percent salary increase is awarded to staff of tertiary education

Cont'd to NEXT PUBLICATION

Cont'd PAGE 15



Framework On Climate Change for Overhaul

By Alusine Kargbo

The government is planning a total overhaul of the legal and regulatory framework for the environment

Among others, it plans to develop legislation that would regulate all climate actions, reduce emissions and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change in the country. Also in the plans is the establishment of a National Plastics and Plastic Waste Management Bill which will seek to limit plastic usage, encourage proper disposal of plastic waste and phase out single use plastics. Speaking to parliamentarians on government's plan for fiscal year 2025, Minister of Finance, Ahmed Bangura disclosed that the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change will develop the environmental legal and regulatory framework 'to ensure that Sierra Leone's environmental laws are robust and aligned with international standards'.

He hinted that he government equally plans to undertake the following:

Develop legislation to regulate all climate actions to reduce emissions and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, develop a National Plastics and Plastic Waste Management Bill, which will seek to limit plastic usage, encourage proper disposal of plastic waste and phase out single-use plastics; and undertake a review of the Forestry Act, 1988, as amended in 2022 and the Wildlife Conservation Management Act, 1972, as amended in 2022.

These revised Acts, he said will be submitted to the House for ratification after they are reviwed.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, Sierra Leone updated its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 2.0) in 2021.

" In 2025, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will update the NDC 2.0 to NDC 3.0 that aims to respond to the threat of global warming and climate change in line with the Paris Agreement. The NDC 3.0 will be aligned with national policies and backed by concrete programmes that can be implemented by both the public and private sector as well as CSOs".

Mr Bangura disclosed that the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan would be updated while the government would also develop a Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy and the first-ever National Programme for Pollution Prevention with accompanying investment plans to ensure full execution.

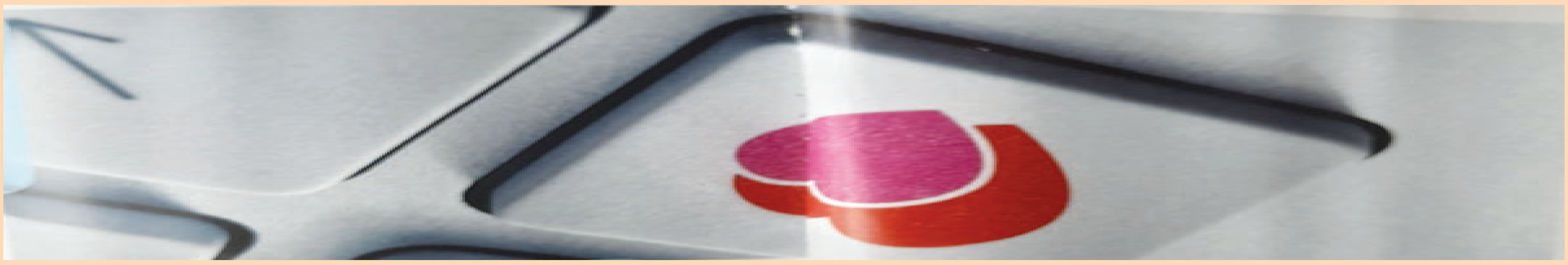
"To achieve our targets in the NDC 3.0, Sierra Leone will require significant amount of resources to implement both the conditional and unconditional programmes. In this regard, the Ministry of Finance, with support from the World Bank, commenced the development of a National Climate Finance Strategy for Sierra Leone". The Strategy, he announced will outline various instruments to be used in the medium-term to mobilise climate finances from both domestic and international sources.

...Action Plan would be updated while the government would also develop a Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy and the first-ever National Programme for Pollution Prevention with accompanying investment plans to ensure full execution.

"Given the importance of international climate finance in our transition process, the Presidential Initiative on Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Food Security, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and the EPA will, in 2025, work together to finalise the 29 work programmes for both the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF)".

This will unlock further international funding to support our climate resilience and environmental projects.

He announced government's readiness to put in place the necessary regulatory arrangements to participate in the international carbon market; adding that, the UNDP is providing both technical and financial support to Government in its bid to develop a carbon policy framework.



The art of writing speculative letters

If you write an on spec letter that starts with 'Dear Sir/Madam' then you might as well start it with the words 'put this through the shredder'.

Draw up a shortlist of employers

If you want to work at a specific industry, look up employers in the career sectors that interest you, such as publishing houses and law firms. For more general roles, you might choose to focus on employers within a particular region.

When it comes to finding out more information about potential employers, good sources include:

•local and national newspapers
•specialist business and trade publications
•magazines and websites by professional associations
•online business directories such as Kompass UK and Kellysearch.

If you still have access to your university's careers service, it's worth looking through the information they have on local employers, including reports from alumni.

You could also try your local council or library.

Remember, personal networks can be useful too.

Friends, family members and friends of family members can all be good contacts to help you get that first foot in the door.

2. Prepare to apply on spec

Once you have your employer shortlist, you need to do your research. Find out details about the company and get a feel for the kind of work they do. This will help you to show a genuine interest in the employer and make a convincing speculative application.

3. Make a personal contact

Finding a named contact is the golden rule of making a speculative application. 'Dear Sir/Madam' letters have a high probability of being ignored. It's easy to make a quick phone call to the company to ask for the name of the person who's responsible for recruiting - then you'll be able to personalise your letter.

4. Stay focused, but also open-minded Be clear about what you are looking for when contacting potential employers. Making a speculative approach can be a great way to:

•find permanent, temporary or part-time vacancies, work experience or work shadowing opportunities.
•arrange a time for a chat on the phone, a brief visit or the opportunity to meet a recent graduate or employee of the organisation.

5. Follow up: it's good to talk To improve your chances of success, follow up your speculative application with a phone call a few days after you have sent it; personal contact can create a good impression and make you more memorable.

Even if the employer can't help with your main request, talking to them will be your chance to ask if there are any opportunities coming up, find out how the organisation typically recruits and where you should look out for their job ads.

1. Remember the subject line Don't leave the subject line blank. Application for graduate surveyor position,' for example, is informative and looks professional.

2. Your email address

Use an email address with your initials and surname or your full name. Kooky names - even witty ones-won't cut it with graduate recruiters.

3. Check your attachments

Hello Emma

I've heard that you're in I've seen your ad and send me information

Thanks James Pennings

4. Hi, Hello or Dear?

'Hi' is too casual for your first contact with an employer.

'Dear Emma Jones' is probably your safest bet - if they reply with a 'Hi' and your first name then take their lead, but still retain a professional tone. that you're looking for graduate surveyors. Is that right? your ad and am keen to know more. Could you please nformation so I can know what you really want? ennings

5. Does your email have a respectful, considered tone?

It's all to easy for the tone of an email to slacken off and become casual and thoughtless. How might the following come across to an employer?

I've heard that you're looking for graduate surveyors.

Is that right?'

The employers thinks: this candidate sounds as if they apply on hearsay. Is that really the standard of accuracy we want in our company? It's also a bit muddled as they go on to say they've seen an ad. Which ad and where? 'Is that right' sounds a bit confrontational. Of course it's right, I booked the ad!

I've seen your ad and am keen to know more. Could you please send me information so I can know what you really want?' The employer thinks: this candidate might think they're creating the right impression, but everything points to someone who's dashed off this email in a hurry. I know what I 'really want, and that's for someone to have read my ad and to give me an idea of why they might be suitable.

6. Signing off

Close your email as you would a 'proper' letter. You should make the effort to get a contact name for your application and address that person directly-so sign off with "Yours sincerely' and use your full name.

Even if the employer can't help with your main request, talking to them will be your chance to ask if there are any opportunities coming up, find out how the organisation typically recruits and where you should look out for their job ads

Think big

Make sure you look at an employer's current vacancies, even if they are bigger roles above your level of experience. You can get an idea of the types of coles, areas of work and skills required for the job. You may also pick up on keywords that are used in the organisation's recruitment advertising

US Development of Shale Has Turned Economically Beneficial (1)

AUTHOR OF PULITZER AWARD WINNING BOOK: THE PRIZE, THE EPIC QUEST FOR OIL, MONEY, and Power , Yergin here discusses with Bruce Edward of the IMF on the present global energy crisis.

Bruce Edwards: What do you think international institutions should be looking at in terms of helping countries respond to this, I don't know if you might call it an energy crisis, but it's certainly

Daniel Yergin: Oh, I think we're in a global energy crisis. I just met with people from a series of emerging market countries in Southeast Asia deeply concerned about what high prices are doing. And my concern is that looking at the elements, it looks to me like it's going to get worse over the next few months. And an organization like the IMF and others, World Bank, have to look pretty carefully at what's going to happen over the next 3, 4, 5 months. What it will do to countries balance the payments, economic and even political stability, because really, things are not going to stand still.

Bruce Edwards: Disruption in the energy markets is not new. The energy crises in the early '70s, the '80s and the early 2000s were all challenging in their own ways, but none were so intertwined with other emergencies like climate change and a global pandemic. Today's guest has won the Pulitzer prize and many other accolades for his writings about the global energy markets. His latest book is The New Map.

Daniel Yergin: I'm Daniel Yergin and I'm Vice Chairman of S&P Global. But I also write books and I've done books on political economy, and economic history, and geopolitics. Maybe the best known one is called The Prize: The Epic Quest For Oil, Money, and Power. That was a book that I was fortunate enough to receive the Pulitzer prize for. But my new book is called The New Map Energy, Climate and the Clash of Nations. And if you think about it, that's what we're all living through right now. Bruce Edwards: Great. Thank you so much for that, and welcome to the podcast.

Daniel Yergin: Thank you.

Bruce Edwards: So with all the advancements in renewable energy, we've been hearing about in the past decade and more recently, one would assume, or at least hope that our dependence on oil and gas would be waning. Is it?

Daniel Yergin: No. It's not. Renewables are growing, but oil and gas consumption are growing as well. And the world still uses about 80% hydrocarbons. Wind and solar costs have come down a lot. Both of those are 50 year old technologies, but it's only in the last 10 years that they've become competitive and they've become very competitive... Costs came way down. And they're growing and there's a lot of government support for them, there's a lot of investor support for them... their costs are going up somewhat right now. But the world is still primarily runs on hydrocarbons.

Bruce Edwards: And so in your latest book, The New Map, you lay out essentially the supply lines for energy, past and future, and how the power of nations is founded on their ability to either extract fossil fuels or secure what they need in some way. Where do the major powers stand today in terms of energy security as you describe it?

Daniel Yergin: That's a very interesting question because energy security actually over the last 10 years has more or less fallen off the table as a consideration for many parts of the world. And I think part of it was because of the growth of the shale in the United States, which took the US from importing 60% of its oil to being self-sufficient and being the world's largest producer of oil and gas. And the consequence of that is that there was a kind of sense of everything's fine, and didn't have to really worry about it. That of course has changed in the last year because really, this energy crisis, this global energy crisis that we're on now did not start on February 24th when Russia invaded Ukraine. It started in the second half of last year when the global economy came so strongly out of COVID

Daniel Yergin, Vice Chairman of S&P Global

and suddenly energy markets that had been very slack became very tight. And prices were already going up before those Russian troops crossed the border into Ukraine.

Bruce Edwards: And so you mentioned how shale gave a boost to the US in terms of their energy supply. What about other powers in the world like Russia and like China perhaps?

Daniel Yergin: Well, let's focus on Russia. Russia has been for a number of years now in energy superpower. I quote Putin in The New Map where he was asked was Russia an energy superpower? He said, "I don't like that term. It sounds too Cold Warish." Well, this kind of Cold Warish right now, but he sure liked the money. And he sure liked the political clout that came with it. But I think because of the decisions he's made and Europe's response to them, which is to say, we really don't want to depend on Russian energy anymore. I think right now Putin has some real high cards and is very intent on disrupting the European economy. But I think a couple years from now Russia will continue to be a major producer,

> ...but it's only in the last 10 years that they've become competitive and they've become very competitive... Costs came way down. And they're growing and there's a lot of government support for them, there's a lot of investor support for them...

but it's not going to be, I think, anymore a energy superpower. It's going to be much more tied into China, and in a sense dependent on China as it's growing market. China's position is they're well endowed with coal and they're one of the world's major oil producers, but not enough. They import 75% of their oil. They've been building up their natural gas consumption, which means imports. And they're going, gung-ho, all out, for renewables for wind and solar. So they're moving on all those fronts, but I think they have, China has a sense of vulnerability and insecurity because it's so dependent on global markets for its oil, and it regards that as a security problem.

Bruce Edwards: Okay. So the war in Ukraine is obviously very much about Russia wanting to firm up its own energy security. And in your book, you place the war at the very center of this geopolitical shift as you describe it in energy trade, that's essentially dividing east and west. But if Ukraine is so important to Russia's energy security in terms of Ukraine's resources, how did Ukraine's independence come about in 1991? I mean, how did that happen?

Daniel Yergin: Well, there are two parts to that, which is actually Ukraine from an energy point of view was important to Russia mainly as a transit. Most of Russian gas to Europe has to go through Ukraine, and they've been working assiduously to build these other pipelines like Nord Stream to get around Ukraine. I think that Russia's, this was, I think Putin's obsession. As you said, 1991, Ukraine became an independent country. It had only fleetingly been an independent country at the end of the first world war. And particularly since the last 10 or 12 years, it's developed a real sense of national identity. Putin refused to recognize that.

Daniel Yergin: He repeatedly said Ukraine is not a country. That two thirds of it used to be Russian, and one third was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. And I think he saw Ukraine first, an independent Ukraine that was integrated into the global economy would be a threat to Russia because of the message it would send, and because of the kind of close affinity. And then I think it's become clear in recent years and maybe it was his two years of isolation during COVID, his extraordinary isolation during COVID, he started to dream of recreating not the Soviet Union, but the Russian empire.

Daniel Yergin: So I think this became very much tied into energy because the big fights between Ukraine, independent Ukraine and Russia were over natural gas and the price of gas and Russia cutting off gas to Ukraine, but cutting off gas to Europe. But I think now as Putin expresses himself, we see more and more that he had this messianic dream about a Russian empire that he wanted to recreate, and he never accepted the outcome of the Cold War, the way the Cold War ended, and the way the Soviet Union ended. And so great deep sense of grievance that he's been expressing for decades. And I think he had a series of calculations about how this would all go and all of them turned out to be wrong so far.

Bruce Edwards: So far. And so he did manage to build Russia as a great supplier of energy, especially to Europe

Daniel Yergin: Absolutely.

Bruce Edwards: **Yeah. And you speak in your book of Europe's Dependence on Russian oil and how Vladimir Putin thought he could survive the sanctions because of it. But you also point out that public opinion is now putting pressure on companies to step back from Russian oil because of the war. How much influence does public opinion have in energy trade generally, and how might it play into geopolitics of energy in the coming years, do you think?**

Daniel Yergin: That's a very good point because, I remember before the war, just when it started, talking to people, the US government here, and they saw the build up and they had this very large panoply of sanctions. The one thing they weren't going to sanction was Russian energy because of Europe's dependence. And they thought that you couldn't do that, that it would fracture the coalition. But I think you point to something that was really new, which was public opinion, saying we don't want Russian energy. We don't want to send money to Russia that they're going to use to further their war in Ukraine. And you had dockworkers who wouldn't handle Russian energy products, you had investors putting pressure on companies about importing. And so you had even before the sanctions were there, you had the major Western companies, which had been very important in the development of Russian energy since the end of the Soviet Union...

Daniel Yergin: And by the way, with the strong encouragement of Western governments, including the United States, because it was seen, it's Russia, post-communist, has to be integrated into the world economy. So the governments, I remember going to several conferences sponsored by the US government about US-Russian energy dialogue. But these companies now were getting this pressure. And before sanctions were there, you just saw them saying, "We're leaving, we're getting out of here now." It's not easy to get out of there because you may have several thousand employees, and you don't just pick up everything and leave in the middle of the night, it's complicated. But Western companies are leaving and Russia is going to not have the access to Western technology. And that's one of the things that's going to cause its former position as energy superpower to deteriorate, because it just won't have the capabilities that it's had up till now- because it's been integrated into a global economy.

Continues from next edition

Health And Medical Scam

Health and medical scams are commonplace. The scammers promise youmiracle tablets and other medical cures that offer unbelievable results

What you should know

Scammer may lead you to believe you will receive a product or service from them of a comparative or better quality for a lower price. This is a sales ploy to get you to buy their product. If it seems too good to be true it probably is.

•Another type of scam involves fake online pharmacies offering drugs and medicines very cheaply or without prescription. Even if you do receive the product you order, there's no guarantee that they are the real thing.

•These products are usually promoted by people who have no medical qualifications and exploit hopes for improved health.

• 'Miracle' cure scams promise quick and easy remedies for serious conditions.

At the very least you will be left out of pocket, but in some cases they may actually damage your health.

•Be wary of newspaper adverts for rapid weight loss or teeth whitening treatments. Often you will be required to pay up front and in full for a series of treatments. However, the offices used may be hired by the scammer for a few days only. Don't be surprised if you do not receive the service you pay for.

Scammers can and do disappear overnight with your money.

•To help you identify a legitimate pharmacy, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (www.rpharms.com) has produced an internet pharmacy logo.

REMEMBER	So called 'Cure' products may not be the real thing and in some cases can demage your health.
CAUTION	NEVER buy medicines or any treatments without seeking advice from a health care professional
THINK	Ask yourself: is the promise or offer too good to be true?
INVESTIGATE	If you are being sold a product, check the company is reputable prior to purchase

Internet Scams

Many internet scams take place without the victim even noticing.

Ensure that you have anti-virus software and a firewall installed on you computer and keep it up to date. If you are aware of the following precautions and apply common sense then you should be able to prevent yourself from becoming a victim.

What you should know

A Scammers can use the internet to promote fraud through unsolicited or junk emails known as spam. Delete the email otherwise the scammer will continue to send you more and more emails from lots of different addresses.

•Any email you receive that comes from an unknown sender is likely to be spam if it is not actually addressed to you and promises you some gain.

•If you receive an email from someone you know but it is not the usual sort of message you get from them and it has an attachment DO NOT open the attachment. Speak to the person who is supposed to have sent it first before you reply. (The real sender may have infected it with a virus and forwarded it through their address book).

•Online market places can be a lot of fun and can save you money but they are also used by scammers.

Scammers will try to steer you away from online sites and request that you use unusual payment methods e.g. money transfer agents or Emoney (digital equivalent of cash, stored on an electronic device). This can also be stored on, and used via, mobile phones or in a payment account on the internet.

•Scammers may claim that the buyer has pulled out of the auction you were bidding on and then offer the item to you. Once your money has gone to them you are unlikely to hear from them again and the auction site will not be able to help you.

•The most common scams at the moment are for concert and event tickets, apartments, residential and holiday lettings, dating and romance scams and vehicles for sale or hire (especially if hire vehicles are to be delivered to you). Adverts and website can be very sophisticated so do some research to ensure everything makes sense. Always consider your personal safety when meeting anyone over the internet.

•There are lots of ways scammers gain personal and/or financial information from victims - eg. Phishing (unsolicited email purporting to be from a legitimate company requiring personal details) Vishing (voice over cold calling purporting to be from a legitimate company requiring personal details) and Spear Phishing (type of phishing scam that focuses on an individual or department within an organisation, addressed from someone within the company in a position of trust. They request information such as login IDs and passwords. This scam will often appear to be from a company's own internal unit and may ask employees to update their username and passwords.

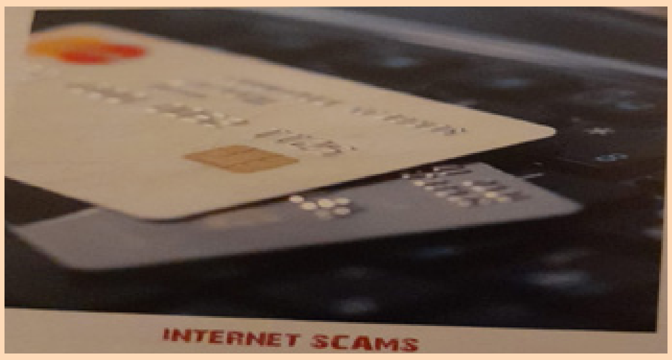
Once scammers get this data they can gain entry into secured networks.

Another way is to ask users to click on a link, which deploys spyware that can take personal data from you). Never give your personal and/or financial details unless you know who you are giving them to.

REMEMBER	Delete all messages without reading them if they are from somebody you do not know. If you open it by mistake ad it has an attachment, do not open that attachment. It may be a virus
CAUTION	Don't reply to spam emails even to unsubscribe, and do not click on any links or call any telephone number listed in a spam email. Ensure you have antivirus software or see a computer specialist.
THINK	Never buy any item from a bidder with a poor rating. Be wary of any request to use an unusual payment method.
INVESTIGATE	Make sure the sites are genuine as some business websites can be copied, cloned or redirected

INTERNET SCAMS

HEALTH AND MEDICAL SCAMS


INTERNET SCAMS