

Family farming in Sierra Leone

Family farms feed and employ two-thirds of the African population and work 62 percent of the land. Family farmers ensure the future of Africa and are at the heart of food security and sustainable food systems. The United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDF 2019-2028) aims at unleashing the potential of family farmers as key agents of change to transform food systems world-wide. Within this framework, the Yenkasa Africa communication initiative implements a regional campaign to raise awareness on the UNDF and promote improved communication capacities and services for family farming in Africa.

KEY FIGURES

In Sierra Leone, family or smallholder farmers by far dominate the country's agriculture sector. They represent 85.4 percent out of the national agricultural households of 57.9 percent. This category of farmers is engaged in food crop farming, mainly rice, cassava, sweet potatoes, groundnut and maize. Tree or export crop farmers involved in the production of cocoa, coffee, oil palm, citrus and cashew crops are the second largest group in the country's agriculture sector. 73.6 percent of agricultural households are involved in animal husbandry and 33.6 percent are engaged in fishing activities. Despite government and donor best efforts, nearly all agricultural activities at this level are subsistence driven, carried out in family settings.



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United Nations
Decade of
**FAMILY
FARMING**
2019-2028



UNDF in Action

On the 28 April 2021, after thorough examination, stakeholders unanimously adopted and validated the National Action Plan for the UNDF in Sierra Leone. The plan that is conceived for ten years, is the result of an extensive process of discussion among agricultural institutions, civil society and family farmers organizations, local government, academia and international cooperation agencies. Building on existing national strategies, activities and processes and exploring new instruments and mechanisms, the NAP promotes policy coherence, multi-actor and inter-institutional cooperation, by mainstreaming family farming issues into the wider agricultural policies

and strategies. The UNDF NAP in Sierra Leone is meant to provide an inclusive umbrella for relevant national stakeholders to consolidate, align and reinforce their actions and define interventions in support of family farming across different sectors at the national level. Actions should be build based on an agenda and a strategic vision that intertwines national priorities with the objectives of the UNDF. One of the recommendations suggests that 10 percent of the national budget should be allocated to agriculture by 2023 and that collaboration with donors and resource mobilization are key for sustainability, as well as communication.



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Contribution to sustainable food systems

Indigenous and traditional knowledge of agriculture and local food systems, which drives food production, preservation and consumption for more than 80 percent of citizens in Sierra Leone, is at risk due to urban migration, land grabbing, modern commercial farming, and the difficulty to document, share and put into practice this knowledge. In Sierra Leone, traditional knowledge of agriculture and food systems expressed by different languages, cultures and practices has been passed from generation to generation by word of mouth. However, managing local knowledge remains a big challenge. The lack of documentation, coupled the limited access to information on sustainable agricultural practices, greatly limits the potential of both social learning and local knowledge in achieving food security. A possible solution may be based on blending the local knowledge and learning with digital technologies and participatory communication to preserve and share the Sierra Leone indigenous and local agricultural knowledge. An interactive knowledge-sharing platform may provide a channel for amplifying smallholder farmers' voice and making available their knowledge to future generations.

Useful links

[FAO in Sierra Leone](http://www.fao.org/sierra-leone/fao-in-sierra-leone/fr/)

www.fao.org/sierra-leone/fao-in-sierra-leone/fr/

[UNDF](http://www.fao.org/family-farming-decade/home/en/)

www.fao.org/family-farming-decade/home/en/

[Family Farming Knowledge Platform](http://www.fao.org/family-farming-decade/home/en/)

www.fao.org/family-farming-decade/home/en/

[Family Farming Campaign](http://bit.ly/37C8dnu)

bit.ly/37C8dnu



Parliamentary Alliance on food security and nutrition in Sierra Leone

Parliamentarians in Sierra Leone, along with lawmakers from other west-African countries, benefit from an Online Course on Gender equality and investment in agriculture and food systems, accompanied by a series of information and training sessions, as well as individual coaching meetings with interested Parliamentarians. The course - which is being organized by FAO in collaboration with International Training centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC-ILO) – aims at exchanging relevant approaches, experiences and good practices while strengthening the knowledge and skills of participants on implementing policies and investments of agri-food systems. On the same topic, high-level events were held in Freetown within the framework of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In fact, parliamentarians can promote greater gender equality through gender-transformative legislation, policies and investments. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate economic and social effect on rural women. Therefore, investing in women's leadership and including them in the design of strategies in the COVID-19 response is critical. The purpose of these series of events is to enhance the capacities of parliamentarians and other relevant actors to develop integrated policy frameworks inspired by the UNDF and to operationalize National Action Plans for family farming in alignment with country priorities.



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