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NEWSLETTER

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SPECIAL EDITION: WORLD GOVERNMENTS SUMMIT

**PRESIDENT BIO MEETS
UAE PRESIDENT**

**SEVERAL MOUS AND
AGREEMENT SIGNED...**

- Economy
- Energy
- Mining
- Defence and security



**UAE AND SIERRA LEONE:
A FRIENDSHIP HITTING
GREAT HEIGHTS**



EDITORIAL

A whole lot is currently happening in the relations between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Sierra Leone covering various fields - be it in trade and the economy, healthcare, security and defence, labour migration, humanitarian assistance, etc. – so much so that it is practically impossible to cover the breadth of relations in a single edition. Thus, this Special Edition has been dedicated exclusively to cover His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio’s recent visit to the UAE in February 2026.

This edition discussed President Bio’s participation at the World Governments Summit and his bilateral engagements while in the oil-rich Arab state. We also talked through the signing of various Memoranda of Understanding and agreement in various sectors, including the economy, energy, defence and security and mining between the UAE and Sierra Leone.

We again provided insights into the series of bilateral engagements carried out by other senior government officials from Sierra Leone, including the Chief Minister, Ministers of Public Administration, Employment and Labour, Mining, Energy and Transport and Aviation.

The President had declared 2026 as a ‘Year of Action’ and to get the year started on such a high note, as manifested in the very important outcomes (discussed herein) from his UAE visit, signifies leadership driven by bold vision backed by tangible deliverables.

We wish you a great read!

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PRESIDENT BIO'S HIGH SCORING VISIT TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

On the invitation of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio attended this year's World Governments Summit (WGS) in Dubai, UAE.

The WGS, which brought together Heads of State and Government and business executives among other participants to discuss important global issues, was held under the theme: 'Shaping Future Governments'. This year's summit, held from the 3rd – 5th February, highlighted five key themes, including: global governance and effective leadership, societal wellbeing and

building capacities, economic prosperity and strategic investments, urban future and evolving demographics, future realities and emerging frontiers.

President Bio's participation at the global event underscored his commitment to position Sierra Leone as an important member in the international community and his desire, as chief marketer, to share Sierra Leone's success stories to the world, learn from other global best practices and present compelling case why his small mineral-rich nation is now an attractive destination for investment.

MEETING WITH THE UAE PRESIDENT

During his visit, the President held high-level engagements with political and business leaders which would undoubtedly culminate in tangible development outcomes that would better the lives of Sierra Leoneans through job creation, improve social services, skills training and investment inflows. The height of the President's visit was meeting with his UAE counterpart, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, during which they both discussed existing ties between the two countries and



further ways of strengthening it. The President also laid out his government's vision as espoused in his 'Big Five Agenda' while inviting UAE

private sector to take advantage of the enormous investment opportunities in his country.



SIGNING OF CEPA

The two leaders also witnessed the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Signed by the Minister of Foreign Trade, His Excellency Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, on behalf of the Government of the UAE and Chief Minister, Hon. Dr. David Moinina Sengeh, on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone, the CEPA provides a broad framework through which the two countries would pursue trade and economic activities.

In 2025, the UAE's non-oil trade with Sierra Leone reached \$153 million. The signing of the economic pact represents not only a symbolic ceremony, but offers the prospects of rejuvenating existing projects as well as unlocking new windows of opportunities on a mutu-

ally beneficial basis. As a direct impact of the CEPA, economic activities between the two countries are projected to increase to over \$213 billion by 2033. This means more than mere statistics. It signifies more income in the national treasury thereby allowing government to undertake social services like construction of schools, roads and hospitals and offers job creation, skills training and livelihood opportunities for young people.

After the signing of the CEPA and the meeting between the two leaders, the two governments released a joint statement.

JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

On Monday 2nd February 2026, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, met His Excellency Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, in Abu Dhabi to advance the strong bilateral relations between their two countries. On the margins of the World Governments Summit 2026, the two leaders witnessed the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), marking a pivotal step toward unlocking new opportunities for trade, investment, and private sector collaboration, and further enhancing economic cooperation. The two leaders welcomed the constructive high-level engagement between the UAE and Sierra Leone and underscored the Summit's role as a global platform for advancing dialogue on governance, development, and international cooperation. They emphasized the importance of expanding economic cooperation across priority sectors, including artificial intelligence, energy, agriculture, infrastructure, logistics, and healthcare. Discussions also covered prospects for enhanced defense and military cooperation. The President of Sierra Leone welcomed the UAE's launch of the USD 1 billion "AI for Development" initiative, announced at the G20 Leaders' Summit in Johannesburg in November 2025, and both leaders affirmed its potential to support Africa's development priorities through innovation and digital transformation.

The two leaders exchanged views on significant regional and global issues, reaffirming their shared commitment to the principles of international law and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The UAE praised Sierra Leone's constructive role within regional and international forums, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and underscored their shared commitment to multilateral cooperation in addressing common challenges.

On Sudan, both condemned the atrocities against civilians by the warring parties, underlined that the primary responsibility for ending the civil war lies with both warring parties, and called for accountability for violations of international humanitarian law. The two leaders stressed the urgent need for an immediate, unconditional humanitarian truce, a permanent ceasefire, unhindered humanitarian access throughout Sudan, and the formation of a civilian-led government independent of the warring parties that reflects the aspirations of the Sudanese people. Both sides stressed the importance of upholding international law, including the UN Charter, emphasizing respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference, and the prohibition of the threat or use of force. They called for ending the occupation of the three UAE islands—Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa. They reiterated support for a peaceful settlement of the dispute over the three UAE islands through bilateral negotiations or referral to the International Court of Justice in accordance with international law and the principles of the UN Charter.

Aligned with the 2026 African Union theme, Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063, Sierra Leone expressed its appreciation for the UAE's continued engagement with Africa and its support for sustainable development initiatives across the continent. Both sides welcomed the 2026 United Nations Water Conference, co-hosted by the UAE and the Republic of Senegal, and held in the UAE at the end of 2026, as a key opportunity to accelerate the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6. Sierra Leone commended the UAE's efforts to elevate the global water agenda through initiatives like the Mohamed bin Zayed Water Initiative and the Abu Dhabi Global Water Platform, agreeing to cooperate closely, toward tangible, action-oriented deliverables.



Both sides acknowledged the urgency of accelerating climate action and the energy transition. The UAE praised Sierra Leone for boosting resilience and expanding clean energy access, while Sierra Leone recognised the UAE’s support for renewable energy, including its global leadership through initiatives like the Global Energy Efficiency Alliance. This leadership has been instrumental in advancing the UAE Consensus and supporting the implementation of the Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge adopted at COP28. Both sides reiterated

the importance of enhancing cooperation in the renewable energy sector, highlighting ongoing engagement between Global South Utilities and Sierra Leone’s authorities to improve grid reliability and foster the development of sustainable energy solutions.

The two sides pledged to maintain close coordination and expressed confidence that this engagement will further elevate UAE–Sierra Leone relations to new levels of cooperation.

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SIGNING OF MOU ON ENERGY COOPERATION

On the margins of the Summit, President Bio also witnessed the signing of MoU between Sierra Leone and Global South Utilities (GSU), an energy provider in the UAE that delivers sustainable and resilient utility infrastructure

providing essential services that have a transformative impact on local communities. As a start, GSU is expected to add an estimated 50 – 150 MW into the country's power grid, thereby supporting the growth of small and large-scale businesses.

During the meeting, President Bio reaffirmed his government's commitment to support efforts toward addressing his country's energy challenges. The signing was done by Ali AliShimmari, Chief Executive Officer of GSU and Hon. Cyril Grant, Sierra Leone's Minister of Energy.



Minister Mattai alongside IRH's Chief Operating Officer after the signing ceremony in Abu Dhabi

SIGNING OF MOU ON MINING

Also on the margins of the World Governments Summit, Hon. Julius Daniel Mattai, Sierra Leone's Minister of Mines and Mineral Resources on Wednesday, 4th February signed MoU with the International Resources Holding (IRH), based in the UAE capital, Abu Dhabi, to enable partnership and deeper cooperation on mining opportunities in Sierra Leone. The IRH was represented by Mr. Ravi Shar-

man, Group Chief Operating Officer. At the signing ceremony, Minister Mattai stressed Sierra Leone's commitment to transparent licensing, robust environmental and social safeguards and local content. He also welcomed the partnership to translate geology into sustainable, bankable projects and shared national value. The phases of implementation of the MoU are expected within the next six months.

PRESIDENT BIO MEETS YANGO GROUP

The President again met with the CEO of Yango Group, Daniil Shuleyko, where they discussed investment opportunities in Sierra Leone's public transport sector. Also at the meeting, was the Minister of Transport and Aviation, Hon. Alhaji Fanday Turay.

Yango Group is a private tech ecosystem, headquartered in Dubai, that offers public transport services, among others. The Group operates in more than 30 countries across Europe, Africa, Middle East, South Asia and South America.

As a direct outcome of the



President Bio meets YANGO Group

meeting, Yango Group has already sent a team of experts to Sierra Leone to undertake a study tour of the country's transport system.

SIGNING OF MOU ON DEFENCE COOPERATION



Staff Ibrahim Nasser Al-Alawi, Undersecretary of the UAE Ministry of Defence, and His Excellency Mr. Gilbert Cooper, Director General of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Among other things, the Memorandum of Understanding aims to enhance aspects of cooperation and joint coordination in military fields of common interest.

On Wednesday 4th February, the Ministry of Defence of the UAE and the Ministry of Defence of Sierra Leone signed in Abu Dhabi, the UAE capital, a Memorandum of Un-

derstanding to strengthen and develop the relations and cooperation between the two parties in the field of military cooperation and counter intelligence. The MoU was signed by His Excellency Lieutenant General

MAIN PLENARY AT THE WORLD GOVERNMENTS SUMMIT



“In the 21st century without education, definitely you can’t make it and we do not just want to make it at a personal and family level; we want to grow as a nation. We want to be useful citizens of West Africa and also global useful citizens that can contribute to the world. So, we are taking stock of that and we are educating them, equipping them in a world that is becoming very complicated and complex,” the President told the Summit.

President Bio, who also doubles as Chairman of the Authority of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), spoke on series of issues, including the state of democracy and security in the region and also the current changing and emerging global trends.

At the World Governments Summit, the President also addressed the main plenary together with President of The Republic of Botswana, Hon. Duma Gideon Boko and President of The Republic of Zimbabwe, Hon. Emmerson Dambudzo. This session was Moderated by Tucker Carlson,

Founder, The Tucker Carlson Network, focusing on the topic: “Is the Next Decade African?”

On this panel, the President discussed his government’s human capital agenda, especially investment in education providing an opportunity for every Sierra Leonean child to fulfil their potentials.

CHIEF MINISTER ADDRESSES ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FORUM IN DUBAI



Sierra Leone's Chief Minister and Chief Innovation Officer, Dr. David Moinina Sengeh

Sierra Leone's Chief Minister, Dr. David Moinina Sengeh on Tuesday 3rd February delivered the opening address at the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Forum at the World Governments Summit in Dubai, highlighting Sierra Leone's digital transformation drive to improve the lives of citizens.

He said that Sierra Leone understood that AI and digitization must not only be a pillar of national development, but that governments must ensure equity, and build a more just society, noting that His Excellency President Dr Julius Maada Bio had shaped that vision within the 'Big Priorities' in the National Development Plan. He highlighted trans-

formative technology and infrastructure as a critical pillar in Sierra Leone's 'Big 5' agenda, with the direct impacts leading to nearly 100% 3G, and nearly 90% 4G coverage with 100% fiber networks in major cities, like Freetown.

The Chief Minister stated that beyond the numbers and the expansion of mobile coverage and fiber lines, Sierra Leoneans now have more access to banking and financing, adding that within the past five years alone, the country had doubled all indicators linked to financial inclusion with more women having access to financing and AI algorithms helping banks offer better financial solutions for citizens.

“Human capital development - quality education for us, healthcare and food security, we know are core to human security. And in Sierra Leone, we have deployed digital solutions, that help teachers reach most students, and technologies that help support parents to be part of the learning of their children. We have deployed solutions that support our pregnant mothers and over the last decade alone, we have been able to reduce maternal mortality by 80%,” he said, while also discussing Sierra Leone’s reliance on technology during the COVID-19 when all schools were shut down.

He furthered that as part of the government’s food security drive, it had deployed drones to apply fertilizers in farms, even if yet, at a small scale, while also using satellite imagery to study and inform policies to protect the environment. He said with these efforts, his country was showing that impact, and return on investment could be near immediate, and thus the government was

looking for partners to work with both internally and externally.

“Those partners are not just being sought out outside of Sierra Leone and we are also looking internally, between the Ministry of Innovation, the Ministry of Education, the Directorate of Science, Technology, and Innovation, and private citizens. Young people, young women in their 20s, like Mama Yokie, of the Kamara Yokie Innovation Center, are shaping what AI should be, not just for government officials, but for students, in faraway remote schools”.

Dr Sengeh, who doubles as Sierra Leone’s Chief Innovation Officer, again spoke about radical inclusion to support everyone reach their fullest potentials. He said technology must be used to breach the gap between the haves and the have-not, while adding that AI medication should help teachers help students who need it the most, not those who have the most.





MINISTER KALLON MEETS ORACLE ON REVAMPING SIERRA LEONE'S PUBLIC SERVICE

Sierra Leone's Minister of Public Administration and Political Affairs, Hon. Amara Kallon on the margins of the World Governments Summit in Dubai met with Simon de Montfort Walker, Executive Vice President of Oracle Industry Applications to discuss ways of revamping his country's public service in order to improve on service delivery. The meeting took place on Wednesday 4th February.

Minister Kallon said that Sierra Leone's current development agenda was based on the 'Big 5' priorities, with the public service being a critical pillar. He recalled the Truth and Reconciliation Commission finding that failure of service delivery was one of the causes of the civil war, hence His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio had made revamping the public sector architec-

ture to enable efficiency and professionalism a key priority for his administration.

He said that, in order to actualize President Bio's vision to modernize and professionalize the public service to become accountable, his ministry had developed a Public Service Transformative Roadmap Strategy focusing on strategic and structural alignment of MDAs; human resource management/manpower planning; public service coordination and management; monitoring, evaluation and performance management for effective public service delivery; pay and incentives; e-governance; gender and social inclusion; and communications and citizens engagements.

"There is a very strong political will in Sierra Leone to strengthen our public sector architecture. We want to use digital systems to develop our

public service and also to improve attendance as a basis for appraisal. Government is working to transform the universities to go digital to allow enrollment of more students and provide access to universities within their safe spaces. There is a lot of opportunities for investment and we are willing to work with partners," he said.

Oracle Industry Applications works with visionary governments globally, delivering secure, AI-powered, sovereign digital services that safeguard national control over data and platforms while accelerating innovation across the public sector. During the meeting, its Executive Vice President, thanked Minister Kallon for his presentation and expressed his group's desire to support the government to provide services for its citizens.



MINISTER OF LABOUR MEETS UAE COUNTERPART TO DISCUSS SKILLS TRAINING AND JOB CREATION

Sierra Leone's Minister of Employment, Labour and Social Security, Hon. Mohamed Rahman Swaray on Thursday, 5th February met with his counterpart, His Excellency Dr. Abdulrahman Abdulmannan Al Awar, Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation UAE. The meeting took place on the margins of the World Governments Summit in Dubai.

Minister Swaray thanked the UAE for its support to Sierra Leone over the years in various fields and also discussed the strength of bilateral relations between the two countries, including the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two countries in 2021 providing a framework for cooperation in the field of labour migration. He commended the UAE for its labour reforms, noting that his country was desirous to learn from the UAE's experience.

"His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio has a very ambitious plan to provide jobs for our people who are young and ready to work. We want to address the issue of joblessness. We recognize the missing middle level manpower as a major issue. When we have a population ready to work, they are also ready to learn. We

would appreciate cooperation in technical and vocational training and other areas so we can further equip our people with the requisite knowledge to compete in this ever-changing world of work" he said.

On his part, the UAE Minister commended Sierra Leone for its efforts in creating job opportunities and investing in the wellbeing of her people. He spoke on the UAE's thriving private sector and the reforms undertaken to protect and upskill employees. He also discussed several ways through which both countries could partner in areas of growth and demand.

As a direct outcome of the meeting, the ministers agreed to form a joint technical working group that would work on skills development training programme, an initiative that would benefit Sierra Leonean workforce across the labour markets.

Also at the World Governments Summit, Minister Swaray participated in the 'Future of Work Forum', a gathering of global labour leaders to discuss the future of the labour workforce in a vast changing global system.

MESSAGE FROM AMBASSADOR RASHID SESAY ON THE OUTCOME OF THE VISIT

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My colleagues and I at the Embassy are extremely proud of the privilege to host His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio and his delegation in the UAE. The visit was extremely successful during which we witnessed bilateral meetings between the leadership of our two countries, a huge number of other productive engagements and the signing of various MoUs and agreement to boost the enduring cooperation with the UAE. Over the next few months, we remain committed to supporting the implementation of these agreements in line with His Excellency's vision to build a country where potentials are fully harnessed and dreams are actualized.

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Ambassador Rashid Sesay

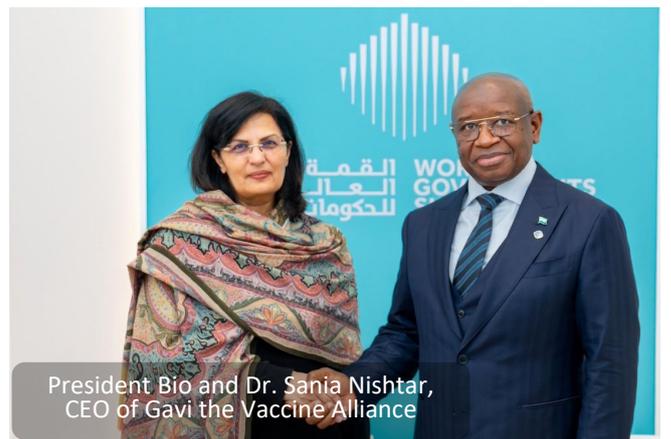
PICTORIALS



President Bio & CEO of GSU



President Bio meets President of Kosovo, Dr. Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu on the margins of the WGS in Dubai



President Bio and Dr. Sania Nishtar, CEO of Gavi the Vaccine Alliance



President Bio meeting with representatives from Al Dalil Technology



President Bio and Shaikha Alnuwais, Secretary General of the UN Tourism on the