

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

European Union, Ireland and UNDP sign Agreements to support Peaceful Conduct of the 2023 Elections in Sierra Leone

9 November 2022-Freetown: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Sierra Leone, the Embassy of Ireland in Sierra Leone, and the European Union Delegation to Sierra Leone (EU) have signed the financial and contribution agreements to support the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) of Sierra Leone and other stakeholders in the preparation and conduct of peaceful and inclusive elections.

In accordance with these agreements, Ireland and the EU will contribute €1.5 million and €1 million, respectively, to the electoral basket fund managed under UNDP's election project ***"Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023."*** UNDP's own contribution to the project will total US\$4.5 million.

During the signing event, the Resident Representative of UNDP Sierra Leone, Pa Lamin Beyai, stated, *"Credible and inclusive Elections are the cornerstone of democratic governance and contribute to consolidating development efforts. The UNDP Election Basket fund will support strengthening the capacities of Electoral Management Bodies and enhance inclusive political participation and representation, mostly for women, youth, and people living with disabilities."*

Within two years, the Project will provide technical assistance to the EMBs to conduct credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone in line with national legislation, international electoral standards, and good practice.

Speaking at today's event Ireland's Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Claire Buckley, stated, *"Ireland is a committed partner to Sierra Leone. We are glad to support credible and inclusive elections through the UNDP Election Basket Fund. The project puts a focus on transparency and ensuring that all eligible citizens are informed and engaged in the electoral processes. Voter education, information sharing and monitoring of misinformation will be critical to ensuring that peaceful, credible and inclusive elections take place. We look forward to further stakeholder engagement on these principles."*

The project will focus its support on programmes aimed at raising public awareness about elections and strengthening the capacity of national institutions responsible for adjudicating electoral complaints, providing electoral security and respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The project will also support the organization of training and mentoring programmes that will enhance aspiring women candidates' capacity for their successful engagement in the electoral process.

The Ambassador of the European Union to Sierra Leone, Manuel Müller, reaffirmed that *"Today's event marks yet another contribution of the European Union to support the electoral cycle in Sierra Leone. Trustful, peaceful and inclusive elections are the utmost expression of the will of the people and the most important event in a democracy. The contribution of the*

European Union to the UNDP basket fund project also testifies our genuine commitment towards UN-led multilateral activities.”

Over the years, UNDP, Ireland, and the EU have contributed significantly to strengthening conditions for peaceful and transparent elections in Sierra Leone. Collaboration with the election management bodies, state institutions, and non-governmental organizations will continue to assist in creating a peaceful environment for all-inclusive and well-informed participation of voters and candidates in a democratic electoral process.

For media inquiries, please contact:

Mohamed A. Kanu | *Communications Associate, UNDP* | Mobile: +23277245031 | Email:
Mohamed.kanu@undp.org