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## **Construction of UN-supported hydro power plant begins in Sierra Leone**



The Bankasoka river in Sierra Leone. Photo: UNIDO/Mikhail Evstafyev

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The construction of a United Nations-supported hydro power plant has commenced in north-western Sierra Leone, in an effort to bring electricity to the local community, which is expected to benefit from improved irrigation, water and sanitation services and increased businesses opportunities.

The three megawatt capacity plant on the Bankasoka river, near the town of Port Loko, is funded by the Government of China and the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO),

according to a [press release](#) issued by the UN agency, which promotes industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization and environmental sustainability.

“Small and micro hydro plant in rural areas of Sierra Leone will help improve access to modern energy services, boost market activities and irrigation,” said UNIDO’s Director-General, Kandeh K. Yumkella, who accompanied Sierra Leone’s President, Ernest Bai Koroma, during the laying of the plant’s foundation stone.

Mr. Yumkella said UNIDO is working on a feasibility study for a 10 megawatt hydro power project in Sierra Leone to be funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) at a cost of \$32 million. The GEF is an independent financial organization which provides grants to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for projects related to issues such as biodiversity, climate change and land degradation.

The head of UNIDO noted that increasing access to modern energy services was a prerequisite for creating social and economic opportunities that should improve the lives of the world's poorest.

Progress is desperately needed, he said, as one person in five worldwide still lacks access to electricity. Nearly three billion people – more than 40 per cent of the world – rely on wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste for cooking and heating.

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