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Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Sierra Leone

Addendum

Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Introduction

1. On 12 May 2021, the human rights record of Sierra Leone was reviewed for the third time by the Human Rights Council under its Universal Periodic Review mechanism. Sierra Leone received 274 recommendations from UN Member States during this 3rd UPR cycle.
2. Sierra Leone has carefully considered the 274 recommendations. This consideration involved consultation among members of Sierra Leone's Inter-Ministerial Committee for human rights, which includes all ministries, departments and agencies with a human rights mandate. Due to the increase number of COVID-19 cases, otherwise known as the third wave, a full national consultation involving civil society organisations, universities, women and youth groups, inter-religious bodies, diplomatic missions, international organisations, and other stakeholder groups (who had contributed to the 3rd UPR report) could not be undertaken for a national review and consideration of the 274 recommendations in time for the submission of this addendum. However, key Ministries, Departments and Agencies including the Attorney-General and Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Political and Public Affairs, National Commission for Democracy, Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Civil Society Organisation UPR Monitoring Group participated fully. Sierra Leone is, however, committed to undertaking a full national consultation on the 274 UPR recommendations in preparation to participate at the adoption of the 3rd cycle UPR recommendations at the 48th regular session of the Human Rights Council in September 2021.
3. Sierra Leone recognises some recommendations, like those on consensual or same-sex relationships and the criminalisation of female genital mutilation, are highly aspirational or ask to achieve ideals or outcomes that conflict with our national laws and cultural values. Sierra Leone subscribes to the principle that all human rights are indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated. Accordingly, this principle must be understood within the context of national laws and cultural values that are quintessential to the identity of any society.
4. Therefore, Sierra Leone's response to the 274 recommendations is consistent and reflective of the positions taken in the 1st and 2nd cycles. In this 3rd cycle, we have taken further steps to accept hitherto noted recommendations, especially those on the ban against pregnant girls, sexual and gender-based violence, women empowerment, criminal libel and the death penalty, etc., because of a genuine desire and strong commitment to protect, promote, respect the human rights of those groups of persons most impacted by our decision to note those recommendations following previous universal periodic reviews.
5. In accordance with paragraph 143 of A/HRC/48/17, Sierra Leone hereby presents in good faith its formal response to the 274 received recommendations for which a position was pending following the UPR Working Group Session on 12 May 2021.

I. Scope of international obligations

6. **Recommendations 143.1–143.10, 143.14, 143.15, 143.17–143.26** enjoy the **support** of the Government of Sierra Leone.
7. **Recommendations 143.11–143.13, 143.16** are **noted**.

II. National human rights framework

8. **Recommendations 143.27–143.45** continue to enjoy the **support** of the Government of Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone reiterates its commitment to upholding the Paris Principles and guaranteeing support for the effective, efficient and independent functioning of its national human rights institution.

III. Equality and non-discrimination

9. The Government **notes recommendations 143.46–143.53.**

IV. Development, the environment, and business and human rights

10. **Recommendations 143.54–143.60** enjoy the **support** of the Government of Sierra Leone.

V. Right to life, liberty and security of persons

11. **Recommendations 143.61–143.79** enjoy the **support** of the Government of Sierra Leone.

VI. Administration of justice

12. These **recommendations 143.80–143.105**, continue to enjoy the **support** of the Government of Sierra Leone.

VII. Fundamental freedoms and right to participate

13. The Government of Sierra Leone **notes recommendations 143.106 and 143.111.**

14. **Recommendations 143.107–143.110 and 143.112–143.115** enjoy the **support** of the Government of Sierra Leone.

VIII. Prohibition of all forms of slavery

15. **Recommendations 143.116–143.126** enjoy the **support** of the Government of Sierra Leone and will be further strengthened by the seven ILO conventions recently ratified.

IX. Right to an adequate standard of living

16. **Recommendations 143.127–143.140** enjoy the **support** of the Government of Sierra Leone.

X. Right to health

17. **Recommendations 143.141–143.155** enjoy the **support** of the Government of Sierra Leone.

XI. Right to education

18. **Recommendations 143.156–143.171** enjoy the **support** of the Government of Sierra Leone. These recommendations focus on education, which forms part of the Government's flagship programme for human capital development. Government has substantially increased budgetary allocation to all sectors of education. The ban on pregnant girls has been lifted.

XII. Specific persons or groups: Women

19. Sierra Leone has in place several measures to address the human rights concerns of female genital mutilation (FGM). Despite those measures, the right to associate and freedom of assembly conflict with some of the recommendations that call for a complete ban on FGM. To balance these competing rights over FGM, the Government of Sierra Leone **notes** the following **recommendations 143.174–143.179, 143.181–143.185, 143.188, 143.190, 143.192–143.200, 143.203–143.207, 143.209–143.212, 143.215, 143.217–143.221, 143.223–143.224, 143.226, 143.228–143.229 and 143.231.**

20. **Recommendations 143.172–143.173, 143.180, 143.186–143.187, 143.189, 143.191, 143.201–143.202, 143.208, 143.213–143.214, 143.216, 143.222, 143.225, 143.227, 143.230 and 143.232–143.246** enjoy the **support** of the Government of Sierra Leone.

XIII. Specific persons or groups: Children, minorities, persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs

21. **Recommendations 143.247–143.256 and 143.258–143.274** enjoy the **support** of the Government of Sierra Leone.

22. **Recommendation 143.257** on FGM is **noted**.
