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Sierra Leone

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I. Introduction

1. This report is a follow up from the period beginning after the first periodic report of the Universal Periodic Review to the Human Rights Council. Sierra Leone has had a defining four years, marked with steep human rights challenges that posed a threat to its very existence as a nation. The Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) came as a shock to us as a State and to the infrastructure resulting in shut down of the State; a death toll that left us baffled due to the alarming rate of increase and a period of stagnation. The only area of progress was the determination to fight the disease and the final victory. The casualty was high: both economic, social, infrastructural and the GDP took the hardest hit. This report covers the period of implementation and development; it will give the status of recommendations put forward by States and will further, give an overview of the current human rights landscape in the country.

II. Overview and methodology

2. This report was prepared by the Ministry of Justice with assistance from the Justice Sector Coordination Office (JSCO) and in collaboration with a Technical Working Group (TWG); consisting of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC), Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), Ministry of Defence (MoD), Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA), Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MOLSS), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Sierra Leone Police (SLP), the Sierra Leone Correctional Service (SLCS), Office of the Ombudsman and the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL).

3. A consultative approach was employed that included national and regional consultative workshops with members of the TWG, other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA) of the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), International Agencies, the media, Faith Based Organizations (FBO), Women and Youth groups, academic Associations and citizens.

4. The scope of this work covers the promotion and protection of human rights since the first cycle, and has been mapped into themes for proper implementation of recommendations and for ensuring that normative and institutional framework are prioritized for sustainability.

III. Developments in the promotion and protection of human rights in Sierra Leone

A. Constitutional review

5. The Sierra Leone Constitution Act No.6 of 1991 is in the process of being reviewed. A number of stakeholders have repeatedly called for the review of certain provisions that are either discriminatory or have been found to not conform to national policies and popular trends, especially those that relate to human rights. The Constitutional Review Committee was therefore set up to canvas methods and to translate these concerns into a document that will essentially form the basis for the eventual amendment of the Constitution. The review of the 1991 Constitution is on-going, with key issues such as the death penalty, independence of the judiciary, citizenship, libel, gender discrimination, taking the lead in the debate. The Committee is also looking into the provisions of Chapter 2 of the

Constitution, the letter denotes the provisions as policy guides; however, the general spirit is that they should be made justiciable.

6. Quite a good number of TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) recommendations have been implemented through reforms in the public sector, security sector and judicial sector. There has also been progress in promoting human rights, gender equality, youth development, addressing corruption, law reform, and the ratification of treaties, as well as in handing out a presidential apology to women for harms they suffered and reparations for victims, as recommended by the TRC.

7. However, the implementation of the TRC recommendations is still ongoing: the abolition of the death penalty, the repeal of sections (27(4)(d) and (e) of the Constitution which are discriminatory against women, the enactment of the 30% quota for women, the repeal of provisions that make race a prerequisite for citizenship, and the establishment of the TRC Follow-up Committee.

8. There are some recommendations that we have under consideration whist some have not been implemented, such as the separation of the offices of the Attorney General and the Minister of Justice and the request that the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) has yet to dismantle the Operational Support Division (OSD) paramilitary branch of the Sierra Leone Police and create a Gender Commission.

9. On 30th July 2013, the Constitutional Review process was formally launched by H.E. President Koroma. A Constitutional Review Committee was established and the Secretariat of this Committee was set up. The Committee is comprised of 80 members representing political parties, independent bodies, CSOs, the judiciary and the legislature. The overall project objective is to ensure that the constitution is reviewed in an inclusive participatory manner involving all sectors of the population and adopted by popular referendum. The review presents a historic opportunity for strengthening Sierra Leone's democratic institutions, anchoring the rule of law and human rights, leading to a modern and more inclusive system of governance, promoting equitable economic development and social justice for all; those will in turn foster greater cohesion and unity among Sierra Leoneans. It is tasked with ensuring that all discontent with the present Constitution is captured and steps are taken for the required amendments.

10. This Committee started its very intensive work in earnest, but most of its activities had to be suspended for the last eighteen months during the fight with the Ebola Virus Disease. It has however resumed its work and we hope to have a revised constitution by the next cycle of the UPR, which would address many of the outstanding UPR recommendation that have not yet been implemented.

B. Legislative safeguards

11. A lot of advancements were made in reforming laws and safeguarding the rights of the people. Several legislations were also promulgated during that period such as the Persons with Disability Act 2011, Right to Access to Information Act 2013 and the Sexual Offences Act 2012. The law Reform Commission is currently working on the Seditious Libel laws. The Devolution of Estate Act 2007 is under review as it does not fully conform in some areas, with provisions in the Constitution, so too does the Child Rights Act 2007 and the Customary Marriage Act 2007, which is in parts contradictory with regards to the age limit and the principle of consent.

12. Further legislative safeguard is provided by the implementation of the Legal Aid Board which looks to ensure fair trials and representation in criminal matters for those who cannot afford it. The amended Local Courts Act 2011 now has direct supervision from the Judiciary as opposed to the Ministry of Local Government as mandated by its predecessor.

13. The GOSL has completed the implementation of the first and second generation Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan (JSRSIP I & II) and a third generation has been developed for implementation from 2015-2018. Consequently, there is an increase in the number of formal justice structures (police stations, local courts, magistrate courts houses and other supporting institutions like the Local Police Partnership Boards) across the country. The GOSL continues to undertake measures to strengthen the criminal justice system to ensure accountability for future crimes. Recruitment is ongoing, strategic partnerships between the judiciary and traditional leaders are being formed and comprehensive cost considerations for the running of the Local Courts in the 2016 budget has been developed. Refurbishment of some of the dilapidated local courts buildings will soon commence, the GOSL has committed to addressing the perennial problem of poor conditions of services for judicial and law officers in the 2016 Budget.

14. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) / Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) Policy on recruitment has maintained that no individual below the age of 18 years should be recruited into the RSLAF. This is clearly spelt out in the advertisement for recruitment into the RSLAF. Birth certificates are also requested from potential recruits to authenticate the age claims made by them. Both sexes are given equal opportunity during the recruitment process.

15. While the Independent Police Complaint Board is being operationalized, the Complaints, Discipline and Internal Investigations Department (CDIID) monitors the excesses of police personnel in the execution of their duties, which also aims at building their image with the public. When the need arises, the CDIID also prosecutes personnel for misconduct based on the Discipline Regulations of 2001. Penalties for misconduct if proven on the balance of probabilities, includes dismissals, suspensions, reduction in rank, fines, evictions from the officer barracks, corrective training, reprimands and warning letters, etc. In 2011, a total of 1589 cases were brought before the CDIID, which resulted in, among others, 55 suspensions, 379 warning letters, 29 dismissals, 18 officers being struck off, 4 reduced in rank, and over 500 corrective training assignments.

C. Treaty obligations

16. Sierra Leone has signed all of the nine fundamental human rights treaties and has ratified seven of them. It has further reported on five of the seven ratified: CAT, CEDAW, CRC, CERD, and CCPR as recently as 2014, when Sierra Leone reported to three treaty bodies. Unfortunately, Sierra Leone has not been able to follow-up on the cycle of the CAT report given the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak. However, all obligations will be duly addressed once Sierra Leone has successfully defeated this scourge.

17. The GOSL has domesticated the International Humanitarian Law into Act No.14 of 2012, the Geneva Conventions Act.

D. Human rights institutions

18. The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) was accredited with an "A" status by the International Coordination Committee of National Human Rights Institutions in Geneva in 2011, acknowledging its full compliance with the Paris Principles. The enabling Act stipulates that the main objective for the establishment of the HRCSL is to promote and protect human rights in Sierra Leone whilst guaranteeing its independence. The GOSL met its obligation to the Commission by the payment of its operational costs, salaries and other emoluments. It also provided funds for monitoring of the 2012 elections. The GOSL intends to ensure that the subvention for the HRCSL will be disbursed in a

timely fashion in order to enable them to undertake further planned activities. The HRCSL received over three hundred complaints between January 2012 and January 2015. The HRCSL also conducted a public inquiry into alleged violations following the events which occurred in Bumbuna during 16th–18th April 2012 and followed up on the implementation of the HRCSL's recommendations on the public hearing on the matter involving 234 ex-soldiers of the RSLAF. HRCSL is also collaborating with the Western Area Human Rights committee and all districts human rights committees in the 12 district in the country.

19. The office of the Ombudsman is fully operational, with regional offices in the four districts.

E. Policy measures

20. Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government elections were held on 17th November 2012. Polling day was observed to be peaceful with a high voter turnout. Many activities were conducted ahead of the polls to ensure that election-related rights were respected and used responsibly by all citizens, including through the training and other engagements with election officers, political parties, civil society, general population and vulnerable groups. A National Consultative Conference on Human Rights and Elections was held in Freetown in May 2012, with the theme; "Making Rights real in the 2012 Elections".

21. Sierra Leone is a firm believer in advancing gender issues and is still working towards the promulgation of the 30% quota bill; the Agenda Prosperity has the empowerment of women as its 8th Pillar. The concerned Ministry namely, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs (MSWGCA) has since the last review, implemented a National Gender Strategic Plan. A National Steering Committee was set up for the implementation of the National Action Plan on Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820. In 2012 a National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence and the National Referral Protocol on Gender-Based Violence was developed and launched. The President went a step further on the 8th March 2013, by declaring "Violence against women is violence against the State".

22. The GOSL has taken further steps with regards to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and has signed an agreement with the traditional heads banning the initiation of girls below the age of 18. There has also been policy measures put forward by the GOSL concerning the rights of the child including: the National Child Welfare Policy and Alternative Care Policy, and a policy that allows for a Family Support Unit within the Sierra Leone Police.

23. The MOD/RSLAF has reintroduced the Court Martial System and a Legal Department to strengthen the armed forces' capacity to prosecute, defend and punish personnel found guilty. The RSLAF Sexual Harassment and Fraternalisation Policies have been endorsed by the Defence Policy Committee (DPC). These policies serve as guides to all on their behaviour and also prescribe punishment for those who infringe on these policies. The MOD/RSLAF has set up a Sexual Harassment Board with two Brigadiers as members. The board investigates sexual harassment incidents and offer recommendations. The MOD/RSLAF has also set up a gender-based violence (GBV) desk in the office of the directorate of Gender and Equal Opportunity and a welfare office at HQ Joint Force Command to address GBV related issues. Sierra Leone thanks its development partners, both international and national, for ensuring the best practices in the MOD/RSLAF.

F. Health

24. Sierra Leone was rocked by the outbreak of the deadly Ebola Virus which threatened to lead to the annihilation of the nation. The disease has wiped out entire families (and in some cases whole villages) ravaged the country for over eighteen months during the reporting period. The very nature of the disease has challenged social activity and the proper implementation of policies and plans. The general infrastructure of the country was unprepared for a disease of this nature, especially the health sector. A significant number of medical personnel, both international and local perished as a result of the outbreak. The GOSL had to declare a State of Public Emergency - as guaranteed in section 29(2) of the Constitution to ensure the safety of the general public. This State of Emergency (SOE) prompted the attendant suspension of the enjoyment of some rights as guaranteed by the Constitution; *“During a period of public emergency, the President may make such regulations and take such measures as appear to him to be necessary or expedient for the purpose of maintaining and securing peace, order and good government in Sierra Leone or any part thereof.”* This has brought more focus to a sector that was already a priority.

25. The crisis has led to the GOSL to increase its budgetary allocation to this sector from Le47.6 billion in 2008, to Le199.9 billion in 2014.

26. Paramount in this drive is the improvement in women’s healthcare issues through the implementation of a major health care policy, the Free Health Care (FHC) initiative for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children of 5 years and under. The Ministry of Health supported the Free Malaria Treatment Program for all age groups, as well as the Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS programmes.

27. Sierra Leone has increased the number of testing sites for HIV/AIDS Anti-retroviral Therapy (ART) from 556 in 2011 to 689 in 2012, with the number of pregnant women tested for HIV/AIDS rising from 138,000 in 2011 to 224,000 in 2012. The coverage for prophylaxis is 74%. The 2011 HIV/AIDS Commission Act makes it an offence to deny a person access to employment or to an educational institution on the basis of their HIV status. Alongside this, HIV positive personnel are serving in the security sector and an anti-stigmatization law is also being enforced. Several workplaces have adopted and mainstreamed National HIV/AIDS policy. Orientations on the 2011 HIV/AIDS Commission Act have been held with provisions within the Act (part VIII sub-section) prohibiting prosecuting a woman on the basis of mother-to-child transmission of HIV before or during birth of the child or through breast-feeding. There has been an increase in sensitization on the radio and TV, as well as the integration of HIV/AIDS in other programs (e.g. Teenage Pregnancy and Family Planning), as well as in religious (Sierra Leone Inter Religious AIDS Network) and private sector initiatives (Business Coalition against AIDS in Sierra Leone) are yielding results. The awareness level in the country is over 90% (BSS 2011). In terms of investment in Anti-Retro Viral drugs (ARVs), 40% of the 20,000 people who are in need of ARVs are receiving treatment. Based on these projections, the Global Fund has approved \$6.5 Million over the next three years to procure ARVs. Another \$2 million has been approved for the procurement of HIV test kits. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) is now putting together a resource mobilization plan to raise funds for HIV/AIDS programs sustainability after 2015.

28. A Social Health Insurance Scheme has also been introduced to strengthen the FHC. Changes have been effected in the human resource capacity of the health sector through a Human Resource Policy launched in 2012. Also, savings from payroll clean-up and an increase in the budget of the sector enabled the recruitment of 2000 more workers and an increase in salaries of all health workers. Consequently, the proportion of health centres with more than one health worker has increased from 41% to 67%.

29. To address the causes of maternal mortality, the Campaign for the Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality (CARMMA) was launched in March 2010 with a threefold strategy; to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and to prevent and treat complications. Family planning was identified as a key strategy for reducing maternal mortality and was integrated into the FHC initiative and into district plans. It is provided free in all government health facilities. A substantial reduction in fatality rates has been recorded since the inception of the FHC. Also, a Teenage Pregnancy Secretariat has been established to mitigate teenage pregnancy and related complications.

IV. Identification of achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints in relation to the implementation of accepted recommendations and the development of human rights situation in the State

30. In the report of the Working Group, during the first cycle, there were 129 recommendations put to the State; 101 were accepted, of which 57 were already implemented or were being implemented. Subsequently, during the plenary, 28 more recommendations were noted. All motions of ratification put forward to Parliament at this time have been delayed; the EVD fight had Parliamentarians at the front line therefore the actual legislative work slowed down. The status of the recommendations put to the GOSL is explained in the following.

A. Treaties

31. Sierra Leone has signed and ratified the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), and has signed its Optional Protocol. The Ministry of Justice is currently working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation towards the ratification of the Optional Protocol. **(Recs: 80.1, 80.3, 80.4, 80.5, 82.1)**

32. Sierra Leone has gone a step further to report to Committee against Torture in May, 2014. Unfortunately, the GOSL was unable to meet the follow-up deadline given by the treaty body and is currently requesting the proposal of another date for the follow-up.

33. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (OP-CRPD) was signed on 30th March 2007, and is awaiting ratification. Meanwhile, the GOSL has taken further steps in this area by enacting and implementing the Persons with Disability Act in 2011 and by establishing the National Commission for Persons with Disability (NCPD) in 2012. **(Recs: 80.1, 80.15, 81.17)**

34. The Child Rights Act 2007 which is a domestication of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) ensures as priority, the survival and protection of children from any form of harm, as well as the right of children to development to their fullest potential and ensures their participation in decision-making especially on issues affecting them. Sensitization on the Child Rights Act was carried out by the Ministry and various partners. Child Protection Committees were set up at national, regional and district levels to coordinate and monitor child protection activities. **(Recs: 81.36)**

35. Sierra Leone has signed the Optional Protocol to CEDAW and is in the process of ratifying it; the MSWGCA had put the OP-CEDAW on its work plan to pursue its ratification by 2014. This deadline has been extended due to the EVD. However, the MSWGCA has set up local points for complaints regarding offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2012, which is in part a domestication of the CEDAW. The Family Support

Unit (FSU) deals with sexual and gender-based violence committed against women and children. The Moyamba Division has been the pilot division for the FSU, sponsored by the former Justice Sector Development Project (JSDP). All divisions now have a FSU. An MOU was signed with chiefs and the Family Support Unit (FSU) to report and assist carers of child abuse victims. **(Recs: 80.1, 80.2, 80.6, 80.7, 81.36, 82.1)**

36. The Rome Statute was signed and has been domesticated in Sierra Leone. The Law Reform Commission has been tasked with reviewing existing domestic legislation and proposing necessary reform to ensure the full domestication of the Rome Statute which should become a statute by 2015. **(Recs: 81.43, 82.1)**

37. The ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (OP-CESCR) and International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ICRMW) will be completed before the next cycle of the UPR. **(Recs: 80.1, 82.1, 80.2, 80.7)**

38. Sierra Leone has ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on Civil and Political Rights (OP-CCPR); a moratorium continues and has lasted for over 14 years with an endorsement of the UNGA Resolution on the abolition of the death penalty in 2012 and following the Constitutional Review, the GOSL envisages that by the third cycle of the UPR, it would have completed the procedure for the abolition of the death penalty. **(Recs 82.1, 82.2, 82.3, 82.4, 82.22)**

39. Sierra Leone has still not ratified the Convention on the Protection of Persons from Enforced Disappearances (ICPPED); however, the Ministry of Justice has been mandated to prepare a draft legislation which domesticates the provisions of the Convention. **(Recs: 80.1, 80.2)**

40. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has reported on four conventions (including the African Charter on Human and People's Rights: ACHPR) since the first cycle and has been reviewed by all the bodies concerned with the treaties: CCPR, CAT, CRC and ACHPR (November 2015). **(Recs: 80.3, 80.11, 80.12, 80.13, 80.43)**

41. The GOSL has extended a standing open invitation to United Nations Special Procedures; the Special Rapporteur on Religion carried out a visit in 2013 and the preliminary report has since been published with positive feedback. Furthermore, invitations were being prepared but had to be put on hold as the EVD made effective country visits impossible. However, plans for these invitations will resume following the conclusion of the fight against the EVD. **(Recs: 80.14)**

B. Constitutional and legal reform: incorporating human rights standards into domestic law

42. The GOSL has continued to discharge its obligations with regards to CEDAW by fulfilling its reporting obligations and facilitated the partial domestication of CEDAW through statutory instruments such as the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act 2009, the Domestic Violence Act 2007, the Devolution of Estates Act 2007, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act of 2005 and the Sexual Offences Act 2012.

43. On the issue of FGM, it is culturally entrenched in the Sierra Leone but efforts are being made to address the prevalence of this practice. One of the flagship projects in the Agenda for Prosperity, especially Pillar 8 on: 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment', is the *enactment of law against underage initiation rites of passage for girls*. It is hoped that this can be an entry point for the elimination of the practice in the long run. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed at the local level with the *Soweis* to eliminate under-18 initiations. Massive sensitization campaigns continue with

constructive advocacy and engagement with the *Council of Soweis* and other FGM stakeholders. The expected outcome aims to create an alternative means of livelihood for *Soweis* especially through access to micro-credit and business skills. (Recs: 81.24, 81.28, 81.29, 81.30, 82.5, 82.6, 82.12)

44. The GOSL maintains that the Constitution affords fundamental guarantees for all whilst acknowledging that there are certain groups that are vulnerable. Sierra Leone has carefully prioritized the groups, especially those within the treaties it has already signed or ratified. Sierra Leone therefore continues to note recommendations 82.7, 82.8, 82.9.

45. The GOSL promulgated Act No. 2 of 2013, which is the Right to Access Information Act which provides for the disclosure of information held by public authorities or by persons providing services for them and to provide for other related matter. Freedom of expression is guaranteed by Section 25 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. The GOSL is however in consultations for the possible amendment of the Seditious Libel provisions of the Public Order Act 1965. Incidents in Bumbuna in April 2012 were considered to have posed both a threat to the right to freedom of expression and to the freedom of assembly. The HRCSL conducted a public inquiry into the incident. (Recs: 81.45, 80.29, 82, 10)

46. In 2012, Sierra Leone for the first time voted in favour of the General Assembly Resolution on the moratorium/abolition of the death penalty. The abolition of the death penalty requires a review of the Constitution. In this regard, the Constitutional Review process was formally launched on 30th July 2013 and the GOSL committed to addressing this issue as part of the review process. (Recs: 82.14, 82.15, 82.16, 82.17, 82.18, 82.19, 82.20, 82.21, 82.22, 82.23, 82.24, 82.25)

C. Strategies to address women's, children's and other rights including policy development

47. The MSWGCA provided leadership and coordination in the development and implementation of the National Gender Plan and the National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). Most of the activities in both documents have been implemented by the MSWGCA and its partners. With regards to the National Gender Strategic Plan, the Ministry undertook a mid-term review to assess the progress made in terms of implementation and those that were not implemented will be rolled over as part of the implementation processes into the Agenda for Prosperity.

48. In the case of the sister resolutions on 1325 and 1820, the Ministry has transformed the National Taskforce for the development of the SILNAP on 1325 and 1820 into a National Steering Committee for full implementation. The Ministry has concluded a second phase of the Gender and Security Sector Reform Project aimed at building the capacity of stakeholders and rural women for their engagement in security sector apparatus at the local level. Additionally, the MSWGCA developed and launched the National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and the National Referral Protocol on Gender-Based Violence in 2012. The implementation of the National Referral Protocol on GBV continues all across the country. (Recs: 82.13)

49. The GOSL has made several efforts through the MSWGCA in raising awareness on gender equality issues across the country. As set out in the Agenda for Prosperity, particularly *Pillar 8*, the GOSL has identified flagship projects to undertake. These include the development and passage of a minimum 30% quota for women in governance at all levels; the establishment of the Women's Commission and the development of a comprehensive policy on gender equality and women's empowerment. The Ministry has begun initiating actions on these flagship projects and intends to accomplish them before

the end of 2014. It has also appointed a gender focal point in each ministry and governmental agency, ensuring that the appointee is a permanent member of staff at a senior level. Gender mainstreaming is a new plan of action and is also a criterion for any evaluation by the Minister of MSWGCA. **(Recs: 80.19, 81.18, 82.28)**

50. The GOSL recognizes that some traditional practices have proven harmful and violates the basic rights of individuals. It is therefore advocating, also as a nation, on the importance of the age limit set in the Child Right's Act (18). This enactment was promulgated as a deterrent to FGM and Child Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM). However, the Law Reform Commission is still working on the amendment of the Customary Marriage Act which currently allows marriage below 18, but with the consent of the parent/guardian. It is hoped that by the third cycle, this law will be in conformity with the age of maturity or consent, that is: 18years. **(Recs: 80.18, 80.20, 82.12)**

51. The six-year Reparation Program is due to expire in 2014. The GOSL, which has the primary responsibility to fund the program, provided Le 300,000,000 (Three Hundred Million Leones) as operational and administrative support for the program. Unfortunately, the expected contribution to the Victim's Trust Fund has not been met due to budget cuts. The UN Peace Building Fund provided Le 3,719,400,000 (Three Billion Seven Hundred and Nineteen Million Four Hundred Thousand Leones) for the program. This money was used to provide micro-grants of approximately 75USD each to 12,398 beneficiaries. The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women provided nearly 700 Hundred Million Leones for screening of 354 beneficiaries who had been victims of sexual violence and for providing training of various life skills and thematic subjects. Sierra Leone is therefore on the road to implementing the TRC recommendations in this regard. **(Recs: 81.41)**

52. The GOSL has taken affirmative action for the improvement of women's participation in public life through the appointment of several women in key leadership positions in the country. Positions taken by women include; (the immediate past) Chief Justice, Solicitor General, Administrator-Registrar General, Commissioner General of National Revenue Authority, Commissioner of Law Reform Commission, Auditor General, Commissioners of National Elections Commission including the former Chief Electoral Commissioner, Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Government, Honourable Members of Parliament, Ambassadors, Heads of Chanceries, Executive Secretaries, Commissioners of Human Rights Commission, Heads of Agencies and Parastatals, among others. The Government has enshrined in the Agenda for Prosperity the enactment of the legislation on a minimum 30% quota for women at all levels of governance positions. **(Recs: 80.18, 81.17)**

53. The MSWGCA has during the period under review, collaborated with the International Rescue Committee, UNDP, and AMNET-SL in providing trainings and awareness-raising drives on sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) for the law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders including the Local Councils and other service providers for SGBV cases. The Directorate of Gender and Equal Opportunity of RSLAF has conducted a series of sexual harassment sensitisation tours for brigades and battalions across the various forces in order to discuss the RSLAF Sexual Harassment Policy. Gender Durbars have also been conducted with brigades, battalions, units and other departments across the RSLAF to discuss gender issues, including women's empowerment, and to build their capacity to address GBV issues. GBV and Teenage Pregnancy Workshops have been conducted in military barracks and communities. The Directorate of Gender and Equal Opportunity is also networking with gender stakeholders, institutions and civil society groups to share experience, best practices and lessons learnt, in order to build capacity to deal with GBV issues within the Force.

54. The RSLAF continues to benefit from US Government-sponsored courses for top and middle-level ranking military officers on the Law of Armed Conflict and Human

Rights. The US Government has also offered training courses to the RSLAF in the areas of HIV/AIDS Planning and Policy Development, GBV and Women's Health. Participants for such courses included both male and female military officers. The RSLAF Peace Support Operation Policy has a provision relating to the training of personnel on the Law of Armed Conflict and Human Rights issues as a condition for pre-deployment. **(Recs: 80.10, 80.22, 81.23)**

55. Part 8, Articles 125 to 136 of the Child Rights Act 2007, addresses the employment of children and it sets the age for full time employment and apprenticeship as 15 years. It prohibits child labour at night, and sets the minimum age for light work at 13 years and the minimum age for hazardous work at 18 years. The ILO Child Labour Conventions 138 (Minimum Age Convention) and 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention) were ratified in June 2011, through the support provided by TACKLE Project in Sierra Leone. Following the ratification of Convention 138, the Minimum Age for Work Declaration was made: 15 years for non-hazardous work, and 18 years for hazardous work.

56. A list of hazardous employment/work for children under 18 years in Sierra Leone is also being developed, championed by the Child Labour Unit of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS). Consultations were held at the regional level, and a validation document completed and is awaiting Cabinet's approval. A workshop on the formulation of a National Action Plan against the Worst Forms of Child Labour (as an obligation under ILO Convention 182) was organized in August 2012 and a draft National Action Plan (NAP) has already been developed. A Child Labour National Technical Steering Committee was formed in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS). The committee comprises of tripartite partners (Employers and Workers Organisations), with key Ministries such as Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Education, Science & Technology, Ministry of Youths and Sports, Ministry of Social Welfare etc. A Child Labour Unit was created at the MLSS to ensure that actions following the ratification of Conventions 138 and 182 were met. Its mandate includes taking the lead in the national efforts to enhance the local capacity to address child labour, to ensure the integration of child labour into national policies and programmes, to formulate action plans on the development and wellbeing of children and for the monitoring of workplaces.

57. Two main Action Programs (APs) which were implemented through TACKLE support have been completed in Sierra Leone. The first, entitled; "Community Responses to Child Labour" was implemented by the International Rescue Committee (IRC). The project recovered those already being used and prevented 1,500 children from child labour through educational support. The second AP was implemented by a local NGO called Community Action for Rural Empowerment (CAREM). It targeted 200 direct child beneficiaries, who were withdrawn or prevented from child labour through educational support in 10 primary schools.

58. A National Child Labour Survey, which is the first in Sierra Leone, is being conducted in order to get a clearer picture of the child labour situation in the country. Data has already been collected and is being analysed. The draft report was expected for end of September 2013 but had to be postponed due to the EVD. Awareness-raising activities on child labour have also been supported through mini-programmes implemented by various partners. Child labour concerns have been mainstreamed into national development policies, child protection strategies and education. The GOSL intends, through its national partners, to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by the next cycle of the UPR, and to conduct a legal review of child labour legislations so that all the current laws against child labour could be harmonized. Strengthening the Labour Inspectorate Unit of Ministry of Labour for child labour Monitoring and Capacity building of Labour Inspectors, the role of social workers and other key enforcement partners on child labour monitoring is also envisaged. The finalization and implementation of the National Action Plan against the

Worst forms of Child Labour and the further strengthening of national structures for sustainability of interventions is also planned. The MLSS intends to reach out to more children and families, with possibility of assisting with income generation activity support in order to effectively transform the socio-economic lives of the most vulnerable families. **(Recs: 80.24, 80.25, 80.26, 80.27, 81.37, 81.47, 81.54)**

59. The Sierra Leone Correctional Services Department replaced the former Sierra Leone Prisons Department following an Act of Parliament. This has resulted in the transformation of a system once focused on punishment to one that deals with the rehabilitation of inmates. The Prison Strategic Plan for 2012–2014 focuses on four core outcomes: to enhance inmate's welfare, to improve systems and procedures, to improve public perception, to improve the terms and conditions of service of officers. Achievements in 2012-2013 include: the induction training for 300 new recruits, an updated Prison Officers Training School curriculum, the training of trainers on gender and equal opportunities, the popularization of Robben Island Guidelines on Torture, Prevention and Needs of Inmates; the Prison library opened in Freetown Central Prison with the support of AdvocAid and UNIPSIL, as well as an upgrade in the conditions of services which has served to motivate the staff.

60. Plans are underway for the reconstruction and extension of the fencing of Kabala Prison, the barricading of Port Loko and Kono prison to separate the male from the female wing. The relocation of the Freetown Central Prison to Masanki and the construction of another prison at the Special Court Detention Centre for pre-trial are underway.

61. Plans are also underway to construct a saloon at the Freetown Female Prison for inmates to acquire skills in hair dressing and all workshops in the Freetown Central Prison were refurbished by a development partner, Don Bosco. A prison showroom in the Prison Lower Barracks will display finished products from the prison workshops.

62. With regards to juvenile offenders, the National Child Justice Strategy (developed in 2006) was revised and updated into the National Child Justice Strategy (2013–2017) with a five-year plan to coordinate the implementation of child justice reforms as achieved over the years. The strategy identifies key strategic outcomes and set out a concrete set of activities needed for the incremental reform of the child justice system which is in line with the broader justice sector reform plans. The outcomes include measures to prevent juvenile delinquency and violence, as well as measures aimed at their rehabilitation and reintegration.

63. Other measures include the monitoring of Juvenile Courts and other Courts to ensure that the rights of children are guaranteed and protected. Offenders and victims and the role of advocacy are also considered at this level. The monitoring of police stations or holding cells and of the two Remand Homes and one approved school for the care and protection of children that are in custody would also be intensified. The revised Criminal Procedure Act, which is completed and awaiting approval, will also introduce alternative sentencing and reduce backlog and overcrowding in prisons.

64. The GOSL intends to recruit 458 more officers to make proportional the rate of officers to inmates - as requested by the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules (1 officer to 2 inmates). This wave of recruitment will create new positions such as Prison Legal Adviser, Medical Doctor, Estate Officer and Mechanical Engineers. The Legal Adviser would address challenges faced in court hearings, the lack of indictments and disparities in judgment passed.

65. The Sierra Leone Correctional Service plans to engage the Judiciary on the jurisprudence on guaranteeing the rights of mother and-child in that category and look for modalities to ensure that suckling mothers are placed on a special diet knowing that there is a particular need for this at this time.

66. The GOSL plans to address the reintegration of ex-convicts into society and build a half-way house where convicts who are about to complete their sentences are sent and prepared for their return into society.

67. The GOSL intends to fully implement the recommendations contained in the report; “Behind Bars: the situation of detention in Sierra Leone” which was jointly released by the OHCHR and UNIPSIL in 2012. **(Recs: 80.30, 80.31, 80.32)**

68. The GOSL has instituted the Independent Police Complaints Board by an Act of Parliament. The Board will be dealing with serious complaints from members of the public against police officers and shall be independent of police interference. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (Ministry of Internal Affairs) has undertaken a nationwide information campaign covering all 12 districts of the country and the Western Area. The Board became operational in 2015 and will be evaluated in a year. **(Recs: 82.26)**

69. The National Child Welfare Policy has been developed to provide the vision to guide the strengthening of child protection system. The Alternative Care Policy has been developed to further enhance the care and protection of children separated from their families and caregivers. Child Welfare Departments have been established within the local councils and child welfare committees have been established nationwide with the responsibility of promoting child rights awareness. The MSWGCA and Child Protection Partners have carried out family training and reunification for all groups of vulnerable persons separated from their families at the district and national levels. *Pillar 6* of the Agenda for Prosperity makes provision for the support of children from poor households. Members of the National Commission for Children have been appointed by Parliament from nominations put forward by the President.

70. Furthermore, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Chiefs and Family Support Unit (FSU) of the Sierra Leone police, to report cases of child abuse. The Child Protection Committees were set up at the national, regional and district levels to coordinate and monitor child protection activities. **(Recs: 80.16, 80.23)**

D. Measures and institutional mechanisms on economic, social and cultural rights, poverty reduction

71. The period between 2004 and 2012 saw an increase in the budget for education from Le 247 billion to Le 407 billion. In the period of 2010 to 2012, the budget was further increased from Le 337 billion to Le 407 billion - corresponding to an increase from 26% of domestically generated resources to 28%. A new Education Sector Plan (ESP) has just been prepared and endorsed by development partners in education. One of the three main areas covered by the ESP is ‘system strengthening’. Strategies and activities to improve education management in the period 2014 to 2018 are detailed under ‘system strengthening’. The implementation plan derived from the ESP spells out how education management is to be improved. Issues relating to teaching are covered under ‘quality and relevance’ in the ESP. On the issue of improving teaching methods, the ESP highlights the need to improve the teaching of reading at the early grade levels and includes the training of teachers to teach reading as part of a project to be funded by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). In-service programs for teachers which would also help teachers with the needed pedagogy are also detailed in the ESP and IP. **(Recs: 81.51, 81.53, 82.27)**

72. In 2012, the GOSL adopted the third Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) called “Agenda for Prosperity” (AFP). The long term vision of Sierra Leone as reflected in the Agenda for Prosperity is a Sierra Leone that by 2035 becomes an inclusive, green, middle-income country. Education (free and compulsory education), Health (health care

and delivery system within 10km of every village) and good governance features prominently in the AFP.

73. The AFP was prepared through broad consultations with all stakeholders and is summarized under 8 strategic pillars namely: economic diversification, managing natural resources, accelerating human development, international competitiveness, labour and employment, strengthening of social protection systems, and gender equality and women's empowerment. A Secretariat for the Agenda for Prosperity has been established at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED) with a mandate to participate regularly in the National UPR Coordination Working Group (WG) and to share information with the WG on the progress in the implementation of the AFP in areas relevant to the UPR recommendations. **(Recs: 80.34, 80.35, 80.42, 80.44, 81.48)**

74. The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in June 2010 approved a new program, the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) for Sierra Leone, with the objective of improving economic growth by accelerating investments in infrastructure and developing an accessible financial sector. The economic recovery programme was also supported by other multilateral and bilateral development partners including the ADB, DFID, EU and World Bank.

75. To mobilize adequate resources for the implementation of projects and programmes as highlighted in the Agenda for Prosperity, the GOSL will explore traditional and non-traditional sources of funding including:

- Intensifying domestic revenue mobilisation
- Broadening and deepening development partner support
- Accessing funding through the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)
- Prioritising Public-Private partnership (PPP)
- Exploring carbon trading
- Exploring issuance of Diaspora bonds
- Intensifying and broadening corporate social responsibility
- Promoting access to internal capital markets

(Rec: 81.49)

76. The GOSL aims to strengthen the decentralization of the education process, ensure its affordability and accessibility whilst maintaining fully-functional and equipped classrooms to accommodate current and projected demand; including the construction of additional classrooms for inclusiveness; reducing the cost of schooling for parents and households; providing accelerated primary education for older children and youth between the ages of 10 to 15 years-old; etc.

77. The Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST) estimates that the equivalent of Le 250,000 (approx. 77USD) is spent per girl child, per annum for their secondary education. This includes school fees and in-kind assistance such as uniforms and school materials for girls. This program has now led to a significant number of girls attending Junior Secondary School 1 (JSS1).

78. Furthermore, the MEST continues to work on decentralizing education by ensuring approximately 160 primary and 30 junior secondary schools were constructed during the period 2008 to 2012. As reported by the School Census Report and the 2013 Country Status Report on Education, gender parity has been achieved at the pre-primary level and is almost achieved at the primary school level. Gender parity is increasing rapidly at the junior and

senior secondary school levels and enrolment is increasing at a remarkable rate. The ratio of girls to boys at the different levels are as follows:

- Pre-primary GPI: 1.04 (2010); 1.08 (2011)
- Primary GPI: 0.94 (2010); 0.98 (2011)
- Junior Sec. GPI: 0.80 (2010); 0.89 (2011)
- Senior Sec. GPI: 0.59 (2010); 0.73 (2011)

79. Those who are not enjoying the right to education come in for much attention in the ESP in the section on 'access, equity and completion'. The ESP and IP spell out strategies and activities to provide schooling / learning opportunities for out-of-school children, the disabled and children of the very poor, as well as those living in remote rural areas and the 'under-served' in general. Planned interventions include: constructing additional facilities.

80. The GOSL is cognizant of the fact that education is the key to development and has reflected this view in some key pillars of the Agenda for Prosperity (Accelerating Human Development; Labour and Employment strategy; Social Protection and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment). In the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment pillar of the AFP, measures are being put in place to ensure that women's access to education is enhanced, especially the retention of girls in schools and adult literacy. Special programs such as scholarship schemes are available for girls taking up science and technology courses and free tuition is provided for girls up to junior secondary school level and this is intended to contribute to gender parity. **(Recs: 80.36, 80.37, 81.33, 81.37, 81.52, 80.16)**

81. The lack of proper infrastructure has resulted in a devastating death toll in the country during the EVD outbreak. At a time when Sierra Leone was poised for growth and had an increased total health expenditure which had increased from Le 47,6 billion in 2008 to Le 174,2 billion in 2012, Sierra Leone was slow to react to this red flag in a sector that needed an urgent turn around. The first National Health Sector Strategic Plan (NHSSP) 2010-2015 was adopted to develop the country's health sector. The strategies contained in the plan especially focus on the Free Health Care (FHC) initiative for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children below five years of age. A Country Compact was adopted as a voluntary agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and its health development partners. These partners agreed to implement the NHSSP 2010-2015 through joint working arrangements and to align it with the government's health priorities. There have been substantial reductions in the hospital case fatality rates (CFR) for the commonest childhood diseases following the introduction of the FHC: malaria CFR has decreased from 6.7% in 2009 to 1.7% in 2010, diarrhoea CFR from 10.2% in 2009 to 1.3% in 2010 and pneumonia CFR from 6.6% in 2009 to 1.3% in 2010 (Health Sector Performance Review 2010). In addition to FHC, free malaria treatment for all age groups is provided in all government healthcare facilities, including the treatment for tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). Efforts are underway to expand the healthcare service beyond the Free Health Care bracket through the social Health Insurance Scheme.

82. In terms of human resources, a Human Resource policy was launched in 2012 whereby all health workers salaries were increased. The entire payroll was cleaned up and savings were used to recruit 2000 health workers. The proportion of health centres with more than one health worker has increased from 41% to 67%.

83. A Performance Based Financing (PBF) Scheme was introduced at the PHU level in April 2011 and at the hospital level in April 2012. All public PHUs and some private clinics are currently eligible to receive PBFs. PBF for primary healthcare focuses on six key areas of reproductive and child health interventions which are assessed for performance adjustment, namely; family planning, antenatal consultations, safe deliveries, postnatal consultations, full vaccination of children under the age of one, and outpatient consultations

for children under the age of five. PBF for hospitals focuses on quality based on a mixed scoring system involving clinical and crosscutting criteria in eight areas, namely; general organization, human resource management, financial management, pharmacy management, hygiene and sanitation, patients' care, health care services, laboratory. A PBF is one of several policies designed to accelerate the reduction of maternal and child mortality rates – which is in line with the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 4 and 5.

84. The GOSL notes that policies which were designed to improve the health sector existed but these plans were mostly theoretical as the first wave of the EVD epidemic saw an accelerated death toll of medical personnel, both at the local and international levels. It is from this backdrop that the GOSL has been working assiduously with international and national partners in the health sector to improve the infrastructure in every way necessary. **(Recs: 80.21, 80.36)**

85. Aggressive campaigns on HIV prevention have been conducted. Testing sites have increased from 556 in 2011 to 689 in 2012, and the number of pregnant women tested has increased from 138,000 in 2011 to 224,000 in 2012. There has been an improvement in male condom branding by facilitating an MOU between the UNFPA and Aids Healthcare Foundation. The MOHS is now putting together a resource mobilization plan to raise funds for HIV and AIDS programs sustainability after 2015. **(Recs: 80.38, 80.39, 80.40, 80.41)**

86. With a view to promoting awareness of the UPR process and for strategizing the implementation of the recommendations, a National Conference on the UPR was held in Freetown on 14th and 15th November 2011 with the theme: *“Developing a Roadmap and Strategies for the Implementation of UPR Recommendations”*. The Conference was organized by the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL), the Office of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice (AG&MJ), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC), with technical support provided by the United Nations Integrated Peace Building Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). During that process, 200 participants representing government, civil society, local community stakeholders and international partners examined the outcome of Sierra Leone's UPR and discussed recommendations, agreed on strategies, priorities and lead actors for the implementation of UPR recommendations.

87. In 2013, a Mid-Term Review Conference was held to review progress in the implementation of the UPR recommendations. Civil society was involved in the organization of the Review Conference and actively participated in its deliberations. **(Recs: 81.55, 81.56)**

V. Conclusion and emerging priorities

88. The GOSL remains committed to promoting and protecting human rights and to improving socio-economic conditions in order to enable all its citizens to live decent and dignified lives. We are pleased to announce the end of a successful battle with the EVD. This victory signals the resumption of all those activities that had been put on hold temporarily. The GOSL continues to dedicate its resources to the improvement of the human rights landscape in the Sierra Leone.