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**UN Human Rights Council  
Eighteenth session, 12-30 September 2011**

**Item 6:  
Consideration of UPR reports**

**SIERRA LEONE**

Madame President,

Thirteen states raised the issue of the death penalty during the review of Sierra Leone, calling for a moratorium on executions, abolition of the death penalty, and ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.<sup>1</sup> We congratulate Sierra Leone on accepting these recommendations in principle and urge it to immediately take all necessary steps to abolish the death penalty in national legislation and to commute existing death sentences to terms of imprisonment.

Madame President,

We welcome Sierra Leone's commitment to improve healthcare in connection with birth delivery and to address other causes of maternal mortality.<sup>2</sup> We are pleased to note that Sierra Leone is reviewing maternity healthcare policies and improving access to confidential family planning and sexual health and reproductive services.<sup>3</sup> While we note important reforms in this area, including a free healthcare policy covering pregnancy and childbirth, we urge Sierra Leone to ensure that gaps in monitoring and accountability do not undermine the success of these reforms. Amnesty International recently published a report highlighting continuing challenges faced by pregnant women and girls in Sierra Leone.<sup>4</sup> Women and girls report that drugs and other

<sup>1</sup>A/HRC/18/10, recommendations 82.1 (Ecuador), 82.2 (Portugal), 82.3 (France), 82.4 (Belgium), 82.14 (France), 82.15 (Ireland), 82.16 (Spain), 82.17 (Austria), 82.18 (Germany), 82.19 (Argentina), 82.20 (Brazil), 82.21 (Chile), 82.22 (Switzerland), 82.23 (Portugal), 82.24 (United Kingdom), 82.25 (Ecuador).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., recommendation 80.21 (Sweden).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., recommendations 81.34 (Norway), 81.35 (Norway).

<sup>4</sup>At a crossroads: Sierra Leone's free health care policy (Index: AFR 51/001/2011).

essential medical supplies are often not available at health facilities, or they are charged for medicines and care that are supposed to be free. Our research also reveals serious deficiencies in accountability across critical areas of the health system.

We call on Sierra Leone to reinforce transparency and accountability by monitoring and investigating shortcomings in the national health systems, and to respond robustly to allegations of corruption and systematic malpractice. We urge Sierra Leone to make grievance redress mechanisms available within the health systems and inform patients about their right to redress. Sierra Leone must also commit to conducting a periodic assessment of progress using "UN process indicators" to monitor the availability, utilization and quality of emergency obstetric care.

Finally, Madame President,

We urge Sierra Leone's prompt implementation of the many recommendations on the elimination, prohibition and criminalization of female genital mutilation.<sup>5</sup>

Thank you, Madame President.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., recommendations 80.19 (Argentina), 80.20 (Slovenia), 81.24 (Austria), 81.25 (Japan), 81.26 (Canada), 81.27 (Germany), 81.28 (Switzerland), 81.29 (Portugal), 81.30 (United Kingdom), 81.31 (Italy), 82.12 (Costa Rica).