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**Statement by Edward Sam, Chairperson, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone at the 18th session of the Human Rights Council on the consideration of the UPR report on Sierra Leone.**

Madame President  
Members of the Human Rights Council

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone welcomes the UPR process and its outcome report and recommendations. We are delighted that Sierra Leone was able to participate in the entire process with a high powered delegation consisting of Government, Civil Society and the HRCSL. HRCSL holds the view that indeed positive steps will now be taken to use this process to begin to remedy our poor record of reporting on international human rights instruments. The review gives the country a unique opportunity to move forward its agenda in the promotion and protection of human rights. We welcome the recommendations proffered by member states, especially those accepted by the government and those that the government is already working on. HRCSL remains committed to providing the necessary technical support and monitor government's implementation of these recommendations. In particular, we welcome recommendations on 1) accession and ratification of international instruments which have not yet been ratified or acceded to and 2) sign and ratify the second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR which prohibits the death penalty. in addition to others such as Freedom of Information Bill which are critical for the promotion and protection of human rights particularly those for the advancement of women and children's rights.

Sierra Leone and HRCSL looks forward to supporting and establishing strategic partnerships with members of the working group and the international community during the course of implementation so that the progress made in the area of promoting and protecting human rights can be reported at the next review of Sierra Leone. We look forward to the follow up visits to Sierra Leone by the various Special Rapporteurs. We hope that the development of the national action plan on human rights and the rights of children which have been recommended by the Council will include measures to implement the new U.N.Human Rights Council Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights which we think is relevant in addressing some of the recommendations of the Council. As you know we will be having presidential and parliamentary elections next year. We call on government to prioritize the implementation of those recommendations that will facilitate the conduct of a peaceful free and fair elections. The Council's recommendations relating to HRCSL recognizes the role the Commission has played and can continue to play as a fully compliant Paris Principle NHRI. HRCSL hopes that this will be reflected not only in increased support by the government but also in government's response to HRCSL's recommendations and activities for the protection and promotion of human rights.

In conclusion we are honoured to be part of the UPR national and international process and we remain grateful to all those countries, agencies, and the working group who have made this process a rich and meaningful experience for Sierra Leone. We shall continue to support Government beyond the Conclusions and Recommendations to ensure that the promotion and protection of human rights continues to improve in our post conflict country

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