

## **Pre-recorded video statement by OneFamilyPeople delivered at the Pre-session of the 38<sup>th</sup> UPR Session**

OneFamilyPeople's mission is to build resilience and break barriers for persons with disabilities. My statement provides updates and recommendations on Discrimination as a crosscutting issue, with Education and Health as priority areas for persons with disabilities.

### **Discrimination**

We commend the Government of Sierra Leone for including the needs of persons with disabilities in its *Medium-Term National Development Plan* and for expanding its *Social Safety Net* programme to soften the adverse impacts of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities. We also welcome the Government's initiative to review the Persons with Disability Act 2011.

In the spirit of constructive engagement, we urge and recommend to the Government to:

1. Amend the Persons with Disability Act and develop guidelines for its effective implementation
2. Ratify the Optional Protocol to the UNCRPD
3. Review the Social Protection Policy to capture all forms of disabilities

### **Education**

OneFamilyPeople commends the Government for its new Free Quality School Education programme introduced in 2018. We are however concerned that children with disabilities do not fully enjoy the right to education due to lack of qualified special needs teachers in mainstream schools and lack of special needs teaching and learning materials and equipment. These constraints contribute to high rates of school dropout by children with disabilities, thereby undermining the Government's pledge to leave no one behind.

We recommend to the Government to:

4. Adopt and fully implement the Inclusive Education Policy and adequately fund the special needs learning institutions and train more special needs teachers including the use of sign language
5. Review the Education Act and mainstream the provision of disability services
6. Include special needs education modules as part of the curricula at university and the teacher training colleges

### **Health**

OneFamilyPeople welcomes government and non-state actors' initiatives to promote sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) in Sierra Leone. However, women and girls with disabilities face cultural and social stigmatization when accessing SRHR services. To address this and other concerns, we recommend to the Government:

7. Train health workers on disability-friendly SRHR service delivery and provide information in a user-friendly format for PwDs
8. Provide adequately resourced and fully decentralized rehabilitation services across the country, including the provision of assistive devices, fully functional gynecological chairs, ramps and elevators
9. Implement free healthcare policy for PwDs as enshrined in the Act of 2011

Thank you.