

## Outcome Report

### CSO strategy workshop on implementation of UPR recommendations

Bo City, Sierra Leone, 7 – 9 April 2016



## Executive summary

On 7-9 April 2016, *UPR Info*, the Human Rights Defenders Network Sierra Leone (HRDNSL) and the Core UPR Working Group in Sierra Leone<sup>1</sup> organised the “CSO strategy workshop on implementation of UPR recommendations”. The workshop has a two-folded purpose. First, to better equip civil society in Sierra Leone to utilise the opportunities offered by the UPR framework to advance their human rights priorities, and second, to improve coordination among national human rights defenders. The specific objectives of the workshop were to:

- Increase CSOs’ theoretical and practical knowledge of the UPR process;
- Raise awareness of the UPR recommendations that Sierra Leone received during its second UPR on 27 January 2016;
- Define CSOs activities for the next 4,5 years.

The core documents drafted during the workshop were:

- 4 implementation plans;
- 4 action strategies;
- 1 Outcome Charter.

The implementation plans and action strategies were drafted and discussed during the workshop and the thematic groups will deliver finalised versions to *UPR Info* after the workshop. Combined these documents comprise the ‘CSO implementation matrix’ which, when finalised, will be shared with all participants.

The CSO workshop (Step 1) is the first part of a holistic project geared towards employing the plethora of UPR entry points for collaboration between governments, civil society, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), UN agencies. Building on this first step, a CSO-government dialogue (Step 2) is planned for summer 2016 (August, TBC), following the adoption Sierra Leones UPR report at the 32<sup>nd</sup> session

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<sup>1</sup> The Core UPR Working Group in Sierra Leone is comprised of the Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone, Western Area District Human Rights Committee, CSO UPR Monitoring Group, Prison Watch Sierra Leone and Human Rights Defenders Network Sierra Leone.

of the Human Rights Council in June 2016. The objective of this second step is for CSOs to introduce their implementation plan and action strategy to government representatives responsible for implementation of UPR recommendations and for the latter to offer feedback. This way a platform is created for CSO-government deliberations on a joint roadmap towards implementation. The second step also includes the participation of other UPR stakeholders including the United Nations Country Team. A third step, in 2018, will focus on taking stock of the implementation rate through the process of drafting a joint civil society mid-term report.

The CSO workshop is structured so that each day is linked to specific objectives. The first day aimed at debriefing participants on the January 2016 UPR of Sierra Leone and to **commence the drafting of the implementation plan**. At the debriefing session *UPR Info* showcased some of the recommendations Sierra Leone received, stressed the complementary nature of the mechanism and discussed how to link it to other national, regional and international human rights bodies. The afternoon of the first day was dedicated to the implementation plan. After a brief introduction by *UPR Info* participants divided themselves into thematic groups and began to discuss and draft the implementation plan. The purpose of this exercise was to collect input from civil society on how to follow up on the implementation process of UPR recommendations. During the first half of the second day CSOs continued working on their implementation plans. After the morning tea break, Rapporteurs from each group presented in plenary their draft implementation plans and received feedback from other participants as well as from *UPR Info* facilitators. Following lunch the thematic groups **began to discuss and draft their action strategies**. This document compiles activities that need to be undertaken by CSOs in order to ensure that the goals set in the implementation plan are met. It furthermore maps how CSOs can support the government in the implementation of recommendations. On the third day, CSOs continued working on their action strategies before presenting them to the plenary. After each presentation the group received feedback on how to strengthen their action strategies. Both the implementation plan and action strategy is aligned with the 4,5 year time span of the UPR. This contributes to long term CSO engagement and, thus, mitigates the risk of CSOs discontinuing their UPR related activities. At the end of the workshop, an official **Outcome charter was adopted** by all the participating CSOs.

Overall, 40 CSOs working on diverse issues such as rights of prisoners; women's rights; freedom of expression; rights of the child; LGBTI human rights; safety of journalists and human rights defenders were represented by 45 participants. The three-day workshop was facilitated by two *UPR Info* representatives, one from the

headquarters in Geneva and one from the *UPR Info Africa Regional Office*.

During the three-day workshop, the participants analysed all of the 208 UPR recommendations that Sierra Leone left pending during its review on January 27 2016. A core added value of the workshop was that participants established new partnership with CSO colleagues as well as identified ways in which they can communicate and collaborate with the government and other stakeholders in the implementation phase. The unanimously adopted Outcome Charter is further evidence of the usefulness of the workshop. This document is vital when CSOs meet the government and other actors to display that CSOs speak with one voice on a specified set of priority issues that guide their UPR activities.

*UPR Info* was able to meet with a substantive number of UPR stakeholders prior to the workshop. During two days prior to the workshop, *UPR Info* met with UNDP, the British High Commissioner, the Irish Embassy, the EU Delegation in Sierra Leone, Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and national CSOs. In addition, *UPR Info* enjoyed very productive meetings with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and H.E. Excellency Mr. Kamara, Attorney General and Minister of Justice, all of whom pledged their support to both the CSO workshop and the CSO-government dialogue. As a sign of this genuine commitment, Deputy Minister of Justice, Mr. John Arrow Bockarie, delivered the key note speech during the Opening Ceremony of the CSO workshop. As is to be expected, the level of engagement with UPR differs between stakeholders but all expressed a sincere willingness to contribute to a successful follow-up phase of the implementation of UPR recommendations in Sierra Leone. UNDP specifically expressed their interest in *UPR Info* training the UN Country Team on the UPR modalities and representatives from the British High Commissioner and the Irish Embassy informed about the recommendations that their respective governments as Recommending States had extended to Sierra Leone. They also elaborated on how they follow up on their recommendations and related support to national CSOs. OSIWA and the EU Delegation also shared their respective views on the UPR. It should be noted that the Deputy Head of Mission of the Irish Embassy gave an appreciated welcome speech during the Opening Ceremony and representative from UNDP participated actively in the training and shared many valuable insights from the UN level. In addition, representatives of the Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone (HRCSL) participated actively throughout the workshop and Commissioner Brima Abdulai Sheriff contributed with opening remarks during the Opening Ceremony as well as chairing the ceremony itself. While the strengthening of HRCSL financial resources and independence was touched upon during the UPR in Geneva, its cooperation with



Promoting and strengthening  
the Universal Periodic Review  
<http://www.upr-info.org>

CSOs will be paramount for the continuation of the project.

To facilitate the participation of human rights defenders from districts outside of the capital and ensure all participants would be better focused on the workshop, the event took place in the second largest city of Sierra Leone, Bo City, centrally located in the country, instead of Freetown. Drawing on the feedback from participating actors the workshop was a timely exercise and successful in meeting its objectives. The ownership now lies with the CSOs to transform lessons learnt during the workshop into activities geared to contribute to a successful implementation process. *UPR Info* together with the Core UPR Working Group will continue to support them in their UPR endeavours.

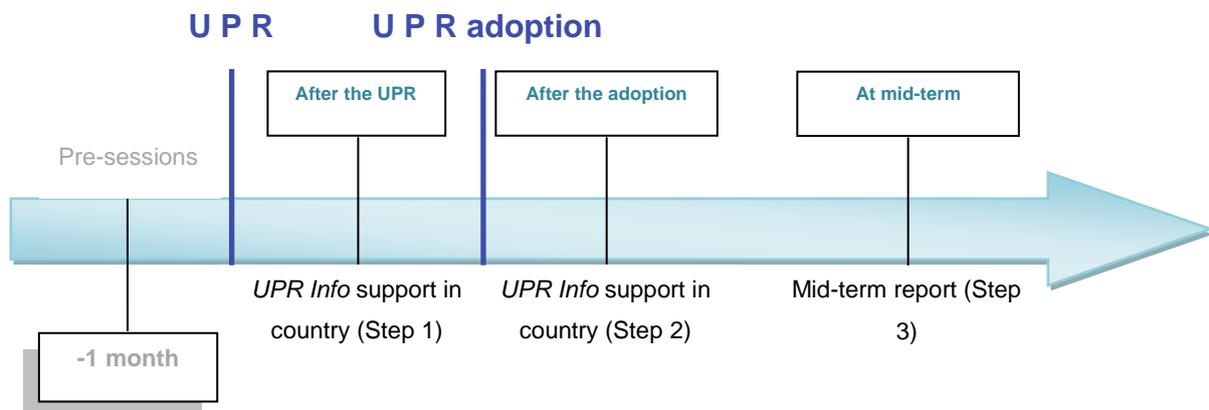
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## 1. Conceptual background

The most crucial measure of the credibility and legitimacy of the UPR mechanism is whether or not the recommendations that the State under Review receives are fully implemented. Data from *UPR Info's* publication, **Beyond promises: The impact of the UPR on the ground**<sup>2</sup>, indicates that, in the first cycle, 48% of recommendations had triggered action by mid-term, 2.5 years after the UPR.

While the Government is the main duty bearer of the implementation process, given the wide reach of UPR recommendations, national stakeholders must cooperate in a transparent manner in order to ensure that implementation is as effective and sustainable as possible. Such cooperation is the vision that guides *UPR Info's* project **Building CSO coalitions and empowering human rights defenders through the UPR**. The CSO Strategy Workshop constitutes Step 1 of this project.



To ensure an effective implementation process, preparations begin before the UPR takes place. Firstly, *UPR Info* sends information to national civil society stakeholders one year before the UPR to explain the modalities of the UPR. Secondly, *UPR Info* holds pre-session meetings in Geneva that assist civil society members to maximise their efforts in lobbying the Permanent Missions based in Geneva. Upon arrival in

<sup>2</sup> UPR Info, *Beyond Promises: The Impact of the UPR on the ground*, 2014.

Geneva, CSOs attend training seminars, facilitated by *UPR Info*, to learn more about the UPR, the pre-sessions, and lobbying.

### 1.1. Step 1: CSO Strategy Workshop

After the UPR of Sierra Leone in January 2016, a **CSO Strategy Workshop** was implemented in April in order to strengthen civil society, particularly by:

- Increasing CSOs' theoretical and practical knowledge of the UPR process;
- Raising awareness of the UPR recommendations made that Sierra Leone received during its review on 27 January 2016;
- Defining CSOs activities for the next 4,5 years;
- Adoption of an "Outcome harter" underlining the key thematic issues to be promoted in the near future.

During the three-day workshop from 7-9 April 2016, CSOs worked together in thematic groups towards completing an **implementation plan**, which identifies ways in which the UPR recommendations can be implemented by the government and how to measure the implementation rate. CSOs also worked on an **action strategy** which sets out CSO activities aimed at realising the implementation plan and supporting the government in the implementation process. CSOs will continue to work on these two documents with the active support of *UPR Info* in order to have them finalised. These documents will be instrumental as the country postponed to June 2016 whether to accept or note the UPR recommendations received in January. This timeframe allows CSOs and other stakeholders to meet and discuss the acceptance of these recommendations with the government prior to its final decision.

An **Outcome charter**, summing up the priorities of the participants, is also adopted.

### 1.2. Step 2: CSO-government dialogue-day

During the Adoption of the Working Group Report of Sierra Leone in June 2016 in Geneva, the Government will have 20 minutes to present information as to whether it accepts or notes the recommendations. The government is moreover expected to outline its implementation strategy. Given the limited amount of time that the Government has to intervene, it is important that CSOs and Government are provided with an opportunity to engage in a comprehensive dialogue after the

adoption of the report. In order to address this need *UPR Info* organises a second workshop, called “Step 2”.

Concretely, a two-day workshop will be implemented in Freetown after the adoption of the report that takes place in Geneva. During the first day, CSOs meet in order to debrief about results of the adoption – which recommendations did the government accepted vis-à-vis noted. Drawing on this, CSOs will update the implementation plans and action strategies as well as evaluating results and obstacles encountered during UPR activities undertaken between the first workshop and the adoption. If the government expresses a desire to engage in a technical training on the UPR, a similar event is organised in parallel to the CSO meeting, totalling one training session for CSOs and one for Government representatives.

On day two, an interactive dialogue takes place where thematic CSO groups introduce suggestions on implementation to representatives of the line ministries responsible for implementation of UPR recommendations. Government representatives offer their feedback to CSOs and in a spirit of transparency and cooperation a joint pathway towards implementation is carved out. During the second workshop, *UPR Info* strives to engage additional UPR stakeholders such as the HRCSL and the UNCT.

### 1.3. Mid-term report

Halfway between two cycles, a new momentum for UPR activities is created. In 2018, *UPR Info* will support stakeholders in Sierra Leone to conduct a national discussion on the process of implementation of UPR recommendations received during its second review. The tangible output of this workshop is a joint mid-term report taking stock of the implementation process. Governments are encouraged to submit voluntary mid-term reports and a CSO report lends itself as an alternative to the government submission, should they decide to publish one. This approach ensures that national stakeholders are aware of the opportunities that the mechanism offers and remain engaged in the UPR throughout the entire cycle.

## 2. CSO Strategy Workshop on Implementation of UPR Recommendations: Sierra Leone

Inclusiveness and diversity guide the CSO workshop that is designed to capture a wide plethora of human rights defenders from all districts of Sierra Leone protecting and promoting a broad array of human rights. A total of 45 defenders participated, out of these 11 were women, representing 40 CSOs. All of the five defenders that were given the floor during the *UPR Info* pre-session<sup>3</sup> in December 2015 attended the CSO workshop. The representative of the HRDNSL, who also participated in the pre-session, acted as our focal point in Sierra Leone and was instrumental in setting up the CSO workshop and securing a high number of qualified participants. This way we ensured that we have engaged in sustainable cooperation with national CSOs with the aim of strengthening national ownership of the UPR process.

On the initiative of the Core UPR Working Group, the workshop was held in Bo City, the second largest city in Sierra Leone. The chief value of this location was that Bo City is located approximately in the middle of country and thus facilitated participation of defenders from all 14 districts. It also contributed to ensuring that participants engaged in all sessions, even though some activities continued after the scheduled end time. While the advantage of having a satisfactory number of qualified participants outweighed any disadvantages, the facilities of the workshop venue could have been of a higher standard. Electricity cuts created a challenging working environment. These obstacles were however dealt with in a good-natured team spirit without having to compromise with the agenda. This experience demonstrates that it is imperative to strike a fair balance between an advantageous workshop location and the standard of facilities. *UPR Info* will continue to prioritise a high number of qualified participants even if that means that we will enjoy a slightly challenging working environment. It is moreover essential that the local partner is trusted with as much responsibility as possible in order to further their capacities and ownership of the workshop.

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<sup>3</sup> UPR Info, *Successful round of Pre-sessions concludes 2015*, 2015.

The morning of **Day 1** was dedicated to the Opening Ceremony during which the Deputy Mayor of Bo City Mr. Mohamed Wurie Jalloh, Commissioner Brima Sheriff of the Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone, Deputy Head of the Irish Embassy, Mr. John Callaghan, and *UPR Info's* Regional Representative, Mr. Gilbert Onyango, took the floor. Approaching the topic from different angles, all underscored that civil society is a legitimate stakeholder in the UPR process and key to improve the human rights situation on the ground. The Deputy Minister of Justice, Mr. John Arrow Bockarie, opened the workshop after giving the key note speech in which he stressed the readiness of the Ministry of Justice to work towards an inclusive implementation process.

The first training session of the workshop was provided by *UPR Info* and focused on debriefing the participants on the modalities and outputs of the second UPR of Sierra Leone in January 2016. Participants took a closer look of some of the recommendations and discussed their overall impression of the review and if recommendations they had suggested in their advocacy initiatives had been included in the recommendations that the government received. It was evident that a very limited number of participants had engaged in a structured way with the first UPR cycle of Sierra Leone. The human rights defenders that had participated in the pre-session implemented by *UPR Info* in Geneva one month prior to the review had a good understanding of the functioning of the UPR and stated that it was challenging to find space for dialogue with the government and that access to UPR documentation was limited. This sentiment was echoed by other CSO representatives as well. Several participants agreed that CSO efforts during the first cycle had been undermined by a lack of a joint UPR strategy and weak cooperation between civil society actors. In this light, they commended the workshop for its timely implementation.

*UPR Info* highlighted that the Sierra Leonean government left all recommendations pending which created a fruitful momentum for CSOs to engage the government to accept as many recommendations as possible ahead of the adoption in June. Emphasis was further put on the complementary nature of the UPR and the importance of bearing in mind the results of other regional and international mechanisms' assessments of Sierra Leone's human rights record. Before lunch, *UPR Info* gave a brief overview of the background, modalities and scope of the UPR. Some participants expressed concern about the recommendations not being legally binding. The plenary discussed the political environment of the peer-review mechanism and the fact the soft law mechanism has gained a high profile within the international community, even among states that are less prone to engage

constructively with the UN human rights machinery. From the feedback the facilitators received, it was evident that the participants benefited from refreshing their basic UPR knowledge.

In the afternoon, *UPR Info* presented the rationale behind the implementation plan and how to employ the document to track the process of implementation of UPR recommendations. A second set of slides introduced the concept of SMART indicators and proved useful as the majority of CSO representatives were not familiar with this tool. SMART indicators are pivotal to an effective implementation plan, in particular in the follow up on UPR recommendations. *UPR Info* had prior to the workshop divided the recommendations that Sierra Leone received into 6 implementation templates: women's human rights; rights of the child; economic, social and cultural rights; civil and political rights; justice and other vulnerable groups. Bearing in mind the interrelatedness of all human rights, participants decided to merge some of these clusters which resulted in four thematic CSO groups: 1) Women's human rights and rights of the child (previously Women's rights and Rights of the child respectively); 2) civil political rights and other vulnerable groups (previously CP rights and Other Vulnerably group respectively); 3) justice; and 4) economic, social and cultural rights. It was of particular interest to note that the LGBTI human rights defenders decided to work together with the civil and political rights group since they highlighted the importance of dignity, right to life and right to privacy in their work. This was an encouraging example of the interconnectedness of all rights and how national CSOs with a cross-cutting objective can establish new partnerships and benefit from synergy effects created in the workshop. Similarly, participants working on women's human rights respective rights of the child stated that their themes were interlinked to the extent that it would strengthen their activities to work together. Both cases were good examples of how CSOs take ownership and adapt the workshop to what they deem being most appropriate in the national context.

In order to ensure time efficiency all groups were encouraged to cluster identical recommendations. This way, one response was provided to all recommendations stating, for example, "Improve the situation for women's human rights". Participants were further encouraged to leave out recommendations calling for ratification of instruments as it was more meaningful to address complex recommendations during the workshop. Participants subscribed to this approach and agreed that all recommendations needed to be addressed in the each group's final versions of the implementation plan and actions strategy. Group Rapporteurs are due to submit these to *UPR Info* in the weeks following the workshop. As a result, each group was

able to work on a very encouraging number of recommendations and great progress was made on the implementation plan and action strategy during day two and day three. One potential disadvantage with clustering recommendations this way is that nuances might get lost. Recommendations calling to “Improve the situation for women’s human rights” should not be clustered with the recommendation “Improve the situation for women’s human rights, in particular in terms of access to affordable health care” as the latter part of the second recommendation will require particular attention in the implementation plan and action strategy. *UPR Info* stressed on several occasions that that one recommendation might contain several elements that need to be addressed in the implementation plan, and subsequently, the action strategy.

By utilising the implementation plan provided by *UPR Info* (see Annex), the groups defined the goals to be achieved, the action that they expected the Government to take in order to implement the recommendation, the indicators or data to track progress of implementation, and the Government bodies responsible for implementing the recommendations. In order to underscore that the UPR is not an isolated mechanisms, the implementation plan asks participants to identify similar recommendations made in other national and international mechanisms and to integrate these other mechanisms in their UPR strategies. While the vast majority of groups had an excellent knowledge about recommendations stemming from national and regional human rights bodies, the lack of computers compounded by weak internet access made it difficult to research recommendations coming out of international mechanisms. An interesting discussion whether a CSO should be deemed to be a mechanism arose as several national CSOs had made recommendations on the same issues that were reflected in the recommendations that Sierra Leone received during its UPR. *UPR Info* will consider to expanding this component of the implementation plan to include recommendations stemming civil society in addition to traditional human rights mechanisms.



On **Day 2**, the thematic groups continued working with their respective implementation plans up until tea break after which each Group Rapporteur presented on the work of the respective group. Following each presentation, *UPR Info* provided input and facilitated the ensuing discussion during which a very active plenary took the floor and provided insight and feedback which the Group Rapporteur incorporated into the implementation plan. After the final presentation, the rest of the afternoon was dedicated to the second main document, the action strategy. *UPR Info* introduced the action strategy and highlighted how it links up with the implementation plan. CSOs continued working in their groups, now focused on outlining their respective action strategy for the coming 4,5 years leading up to the next UPR of Sierra Leone in 2021. Participants made great use of their expertise to make their action strategies as detailed as possible. For every recommendation, the groups identified the action or activities that CSOs could undertake to ensure implementation, the resources needed to accomplish the action, the potential partners that could be involved, the timeframe needed to carry out the activities, potential risks and risk mitigation measures.

CSOs utilised the implementation plan to outline their expectations on the implementation of recommendations. An illustrative example is the “Civil and Political Rights/Other Vulnerable Rights” group that identified the recommendation made by Canada to Sierra Leone to “Decriminalize same-sex conduct between consenting

adults and pass legislation to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity”, as a priority. Drawing on this recommendation, the objective of the group was to guarantee LGBTI persons’ human rights and that violations of their rights are criminalized. In order to realise this objective the group expects the government to enact laws protecting LGBTI persons’ human rights and review relevant policies. As indicators to measure progress they mentioned the initiation of a national dialogue on the rights of LGBTI persons and cases of prosecution of individuals attacking LGBTI persons.

On **Day 3**, the participants continued working on their action strategy in their thematic groups up until tea break. All groups were working in the same venue which



facilitated the process of *UPR Info* monitoring their progress and addressing any questions or doubts the participants raised. This provided an informal platform to exchange experiences between facilitators and groups, but also between groups themselves, which strengthened their implementation plan and action strategy. After some well deserved refreshments, Group Rapporteurs once again took the floor to introduce the action strategy on behalf of their respective groups. *UPR Info* seized the opportunity after each presentation to advice on how to best integrate the opportunities offered by the UPR cycle into the action plans. Group Rapporteurs

presented timelines for specific activities enveloped in the action strategies. *UPR Info* commended this commitment to detail and stressed the importance of distributing activity timelines along a 4.5 year axis to captures the full UPR cycle. The feedback sessions led by *UPR Info* following the presentations of the implementation plan and the action strategy, proved a very fruitful exercise as Group Rapporteurs could expand on the reasoning behind their implementation plan and action strategies. In addition, participants from all groups were active in providing input and questions to each other in a positive manner.

In its action strategy, the “Civil and Political Rights/Other Vulnerable Rights” group defined activities that could contribute to the implementation of Netherlands’ recommendation to Sierra Leone to “Repeal sections 61 and 62 of the ‘Offences Against the Persons Act 1861’ which criminalize consensual same-sex relations”. The group identified several activities that civil society could undertake in order to facilitate implementation such as a submission of a position paper to CRC to calling for a repeal of sections 61 and 62 of the ‘Offences Against the Persons Act 1861’; conducting national consultations among stakeholders on the need to repeal sections 61 and 62 of the ‘Offences Against the Persons Act 1861’ and implementing public awareness raising events on the need to protect and promote the human rights of LGBTI persons. In order to carry out these efforts the group identified that they would need increased funding. As potential partners, they identified LGBTI groups, parliamentarians, CSOs and recommending states (the states that made recommendations to Sierra Leone). The group also thought about potential risks that could undermine their activities. Such obstacles included religious and social backlash; attacks on LGBTI persons and campaigners and their property and lack of political commitment. In order to mitigate these risks, the group decided that it was crucial to work with religious leaders, the police, interest groups and recommending states.

Anchored in the success of the Outcome Charters adopted in Armenia, Kenya, Malawi and Mongolia, *UPR Info* staff had circulated the floor to collect 3 priority issues from each group that they wanted participating CSOs to continue working on after the workshop. By using these issues as a backdrop, *UPR Info* introduced the Outcome Charter (see Annex) to the plenary who subsequently was invited to offer their comments and to improve the first draft. In order to adopt a strong Charter, each of the priority issues contained in the draft was discussed with a view to achieve consensus. The Outcome Charter binds CSOs to work on 23 priority objectives, including: lobbying for the finalisation of the Constitutional review process; contributing to the speedy investigation and trial of cases of GBV and to lobby for the

criminalisation of FGM. The wide range of the objectives covering core areas of human rights reflects the universality and non-selectivity of the UPR and the human rights doctrine itself. The one topic that elicited a strong debate was criminalisation of FGM. A vocal minority stated that if adult women consented to the practice they should be allowed to undertake it and that other harmful traditional practices should be mentioned in conjunction with FGM. Participants reacting to this position asked what benefits FGM brought to women arguing that if it was criminalised no women would pursue the practice. As a response to this sentiment it was said that if FGM was to be criminalised the practice would continue underground (which some participants said was already happening). In the end, the plenary went back to the accepted recommendation itself which clearly called for criminalisation of FGM. The plenary finally agreed that it would be counterproductive to add language to an already accepted recommendation and that disassociating from full criminalisation would hamper the process of implementing the recommendation. As a result it was unanimously decided that criminalisation of FGM should be included as an objective in the Charter.

While the idea underpinning the Outcome Charter is that all participating CSOs agree on a set of common UPR objectives, they will not confine their work to these objectives but will in parallel continue working in their specific areas. The charter does moreover lend itself as a reminder to CSOs to keep advocating for the priority objectives. Finally, it constitutes a valuable advocacy tool as it shows stakeholders that CSOs has a joint UPR strategy and are committed to working as one in order to ensure successful implementation of recommendations. The workshop was concluded by final remarks from HRDNSL and *UPR Info*.

The workshop is a starting point, and CSOs will have to continue the discussion with their CSO colleagues, the NHRC and government representatives, until the dialogue-day with the government, preliminary scheduled for August 2016 after the official adoption of the UPR Working Group of Sierra Leone. In order to facilitate this process *UPR Info* circulated a Group Organisation Sheet which asks the group to identify a coordinator, schedule their next meeting and to address outstanding recommendations that they did not cover during the workshop. Each group keep the hard copy of the sheet and *UPR Info* files the soft copy in order to follow up on the progress of the respective groups. This procedure is expected to facilitate the internal coordination of each group's work by clearly dividing tasks among group members.

## 2.1. Workshop outcomes and outputs

### Outcomes

- Strengthened awareness of the recommendations Sierra Leone received during its 2<sup>nd</sup> UPR;
- Increased CSO knowledge on the UPR and how to follow up on the implementation of recommendations;
- Improved position to cooperate with the government, the NHRC and UN agencies;
- Established new partnerships between CSOs;
- Agreed on 23 CSO priority objectives;
- 24% of the participants were women.

### Outputs

- 4 draft Implementation Plans;
- 4 draft Action Strategies;
- 4 Group Organisation Sheets
- 1 Outcome Charter.

## 2.2. Lessons learned

- *UPR Info* relied significantly on the support of the Core UPR Working Group in Sierra Leone and HRDNSL who acted as our focal point in Sierra Leone. Drawing on this experience, they will keep this position for future activities.
- *UPR Info* will continue to prioritise a high number of qualified participants even if that means that we will enjoy a slightly challenging working environment.
- When our local partner organises the Opening Ceremony, *UPR Info* must take measures to ensure equal participation of women in the panel.
- *UPR Info* must ensure a 50/50 gender balance among Group Rapporteurs.
- The session on ‘What is the UPR’ must be given before the ‘Debriefing session’.
- The session on SMART indicators that was presented after the introduction to the implementation plan proved very useful and triggered an interactive debate on the use of indicators in following up to UPR recommendations.
- The practice allowing participants to merge thematic groups proves useful in terms of sharing experiences and establishing new partnerships between CSOs. It further gives participants increased ownership of the workshop.

- As not all participating CSOs have cooperated with each other in the past, it is important that *UPR Info* provides particular assistance to merged thematic groups in order to ensure meaningful input from all participants.
- The practice of clustering recommendations and encouraging groups to work on recommendations not calling for “ratification” during the workshop proved useful as participants could address more complex recommendations in the implementation plan and actions strategy. This process will facilitate their work after the workshop. In order for this to work in a satisfactory manner, it is essential to underscore that all elements of all recommendations must be addressed in the final versions of the documents.
- UNDP expressed its interest in *UPR Info* providing the UN Country Team with a technical training on the UPR. The potential for such a session ahead of the CSO-government dialogue must be explored.
- Even though it is challenging to accomplish (due to inadequate internet access or demanding costs for posting hard copies) it would be beneficial if participants received the full implementation plan and full action strategy covering all recommendations prior to the training in order to familiarise themselves with the content.

### 2.3. Improvements from last workshop

- *UPR Info* staff from headquarters and the Africa Office arrived to Freetown two days prior to the workshop in order to meet as many UPR stakeholders as possible with a view to inform about *UPR Info*'s Follow-up Programme and more specifically obtain support for the upcoming CSO-government dialogue. To this end, *UPR Info* managed to conduct an unprecedented number of meetings. More importantly than the quantitative aspect, all actors displayed a genuine desire to build on the national UPR momentum and to create a CSO-government dialogue guided by transparency and cooperation. These meetings also facilitated *UPR Info*'s introduction to the political actors in Sierra Leone and the division of UPR duties between the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the two days, *UPR Info* met with the Minister of Justice and representatives from UNDP, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prison Watch Sierra Leone, Open Society Initiative for West Africa, British High Commissioner, Delegation of the EU in Sierra Leone and the Irish Embassy.
- Instead of conducting one presentation where the respective Group Rapporteurs presented on both the Implementation Plan and Action Strategy, these presentations were divided so that the groups first worked on the

implementation plan before presenting it on the afternoon of the second day and then, on the afternoon of the third day they presented on the action strategy. This structure was useful for prolonging the attention span of the participants. It moreover increased the quality of the feedback session after each presentation as it addressed a more narrow scope and allowed groups to bring in the feedback received after their presentation on the implementation plan to their work on the action strategy.

- The Group Organisational Sheet was successfully embedded in the work of the third day. When *UPR Info* staff circulated the floor to provide feedback to each of the groups they also introduced the sheet and its functioning.
- Implementation plans and action strategies were available in word format as experiences from previous workshops displayed that not all participants are comfortable working in Excel.

## 2.4. Challenges & responses

- The chief challenge during the workshop was the low level of the venue facilities. There was no running water and the electric generator proved less than reliable.
- As foreseen, only a minority of participants had access to computers.
  - **Each participant was provided with hard copies of the implementation plans and action strategies.**

## 3. Annexes

### 3.1. Agenda

#### Day 1 (7 April)

- 9:00 – 10:15** Official Opening
- 10:15 – 10:45** Debriefing on the 2<sup>nd</sup> UPR review of Sierra Leone  
*Objective: Give an overview to the participants about the UPR of Sierra Leone and its results*
- 10.45 – 11.15** What is the UPR?  
*Objective: Offer a general overview of the UPR mechanism*
- 11:15 – 12:00** Coffee break
- 12:00 – 12:45** The next opportunities in the UPR framework  
*Objective: To explain what are the modalities of the UPR for the next four years, to introduce the workshop activities in more detail.*
- 12:45 – 13:15** Discussion with participants
- 13:15 – 14:15** Lunch break
- 14:15 – 15:15** Introduction to writing the implementation plan  
Introduction to SMART indicators  
*Objective: Provide detailed instructions and examples for writing the implementation plan*
- 15.15 – 17:30** Participants divide into thematic groups, select a Group Rapporteur and begin to write the implementation plan

#### Day 2 (8 April)

- 9:00 – 10:30** Groups continue to write the implementation plan
- 10:30 – 10:45** Coffee break
- 10:45 – 12:30** Continued: Groups write the implementation plan

**12:30 – 13:30**                      *Lunch break*

**13:30 – 14:45**                      Introduction to writing the action strategy

*Objective: Provide detailed instructions and examples for writing the action strategy*

**14:45 – 17:00**                      Participants write the action strategy

### Day 3 (9 April)

**9:00 – 11:00**                      Participants work in thematic groups to plan and discuss the action strategy

**11:00 – 11:15**                      *Coffee break*

**11:15 – 12:30**                      Participants work in thematic groups to finalise the implementation plan and the action strategy

**12:30 – 13:30**                      *Lunch break*

**13:30 – 15:30**                      Participants come back together; Group Rapporteur presents implementation plan and action strategy; discussion with all participants

*Objective: To allow the participants to receive feedback from the bigger group and to share ideas*

**15:30 – 17:00**                      Concluding presentation and discussion; participants adopt the Outcome Charter

*Objective: To remind the participants of the UPR framework and encourage them to concretise their plans in regard to the ideas that they outlined*

### 3.2. CSO implementation matrix

Rec #	RS	Recommendation(s)	Response	Was the same recommendations made by other mechanisms?		Goal to be achieved	Expected action from government	Indicators/data to track progress of implementation	Government body responsible for recommendation
				National	International				
5.3	Benin	Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aimed at the abolition of the death penalty	Pending						
5.80	Canada	Decriminalize same-sex conduct between consenting adults and pass legislation to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity	Pending						

### 3.3. Action Strategy Template

NGO action / activities to ensure implementation	Resources needed to accomplish this action	Potential Partners	Timeframe	Risks	Risk response/mitigation



Promoting and strengthening  
the Universal Periodic Review  
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## Contact

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