

Submission
by the United Nations Country Team Sierra Leone



Universal Periodic Review: *4th Cycle*

October 20225

Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

- I.** This report, prepared by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Sierra Leone, offers a comprehensive assessment of the country's implementation of recommendations received during its fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR). It highlights key achievements, identifies persistent and emerging challenges, and examines recent developments in Sierra Leone's human rights landscape. The report concludes with actionable recommendations aimed at supporting the Government of Sierra Leone in further strengthening its national human rights framework and improving the enjoyment of human rights for all.
- II.** The Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations in Sierra Leone have formulated the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for the years 2025 - 2030. The UNSDCF is the joint UN contribution to national priorities outlined in Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) and the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- III.** Sierra Leone continues to demonstrate commitment to engaging with international human rights mechanisms. This report seeks to contribute to a constructive dialogue during the country's fourth UPR cycle, reflecting the UNCT's collaborative approach with national stakeholders in promoting human rights protection and sustainable development.

II. Methodology

This report is a joint submission of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Sierra Leone, in which ten (10) UN entities provided inputs on thematic issues pertinent to their mandates. This included an assessment of Sierra Leone's implementation of recommendations from previous Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycles. The preparation of this report was coordinated under the auspices of the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Sierra Leone. The process ensured alignment with national frameworks, including Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024-2030) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

III. Thematic areas: Observations and recommendations

a) Ratification of & accession to international instruments

1. Sierra Leone has ratified or acceded to seven of the nine core international human rights treaties (no ratification/accession during the 4th cycle), demonstrating a clear commitment to upholding global human rights standards.
2. The Government of Sierra Leone, in March 2022, ratified some international labour standards (ILS) comprising of Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160), the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006.
3. Despite this progress, several important instruments remain pending, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, both of which are crucial for safeguarding vulnerable groups.

4. Furthermore, Sierra Leone has not ratified the Optional Protocols to CEDAW and ICESCR, which provide mechanisms for individuals to submit complaints and hold the state accountable for rights violations. The country has also not signed the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aimed at abolishing the death penalty. At the regional level, while Sierra Leone has signed the Protocol to the African Charter establishing the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, it has neither ratified it nor deposited the Article 34(6) declaration, which would allow individuals and NGOs direct access to the Court.
5. Sierra Leone's has not signed or ratified the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, accession to this instrument remains a national prerogative and responsibility. Technical guidance on this matter may be sought from international partners.

Recommendations

- i. By 2027, ratify the second optional protocol to the ICCPR on the abolition of the death penalty.
- ii. By 2026, ratify the Optional Protocol to CEDAW to enable individuals and groups to submit complaints to the CEDAW Committee, strengthening accountability and protection of women's rights.

b) Constitutional and Legislative framework

6. Sierra Leone's constitutional review has spanned three successive governments without reaching finality, two decades since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report of 2004 called for a simple, accessible, and unifying constitution that reflects the aspirations of the people. Two White Papers on constitutional review were launched in 2017 and 2022, the process is yet to be finalized. There is growing demand from stakeholders, including society, for inclusivity and accountability.
7. Sierra Leone has pursued significant legislative reforms to align with its obligations. Key milestones include the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act (2022), the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2024), and the Child Rights Bill (2025). Further reforms such as the Criminal Procedure Act (2024), the Police Bill (2025), and the Mediation Bill (2025), Customary Land Rights Act (2022), Public Elections Act (PEA) (2022), Employment Act (2023), alongside the Overseas Employment and Migrant Workers Act (2023) and the Work Permit Act (2023).

Recommendations

- i. Finalize the constitutional review by 2027 through an inclusive, participatory process that aligns with international human rights standards and national aspirations.
- ii. Achieve 30% of women's representation in all elective and appointive positions by 2028 resulting from review of the PEA and GEWE Act to promote women's leadership in political parties.
- iii. Review and repeal discriminatory laws (such as section 27 of the Constitution) and practices by 2027 to ensure equality for women, children, and persons with disabilities.

c) Structure of the National Human Rights Machinery

The National Human Rights Institutionⁱⁱ

8. Sierra Leone has strengthened the operational capacity of its Human Rights Commission (HRCSL) since in the commencement of its operations in 2007. The Commission has advanced institutional and human resource development, mobile outreach to rural communities, SGBV prevention initiatives, complaint handling mechanisms, and human rights advocacy programs, etc. These efforts have been instrumental in maintaining the Commission's compliance with the Paris Principles, resulting in Sierra Leone's continued attainment of "Grade A Status" accreditation from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions in 2011, 2016, and again in 2022.
9. The commission's effectiveness is challenged by its limited operational independence which constrains enforcement of its decisions. While challenges in resources and enforcement persist, the Commission remains a model of accountability and advocacy both nationally and internationally.

Recommendations

1. Expedite the amendment of the HRCSL Act, by 2026.
2. By 2027, provide adequate funding for the HRC, including ensuring timely disbursement of funding to enable it to carry out its human rights protection and promotion mandate in the regions

d) Equality And Non-Discrimination

Discriminationⁱⁱⁱ and violence against women^{iv}

10. Sierra Leone has enacted significant legislative and policy measures to advance gender equality and expand opportunities for women and girls. Key among these are the GEWE Act (2022), which mandates a 30% quota for women in public and private sectors, provides 14 weeks of paid maternity leave, ensures equal access to financial services, and criminalizes gender-based discrimination. This legislative measure also represents a transformative step towards achieving gender parity and strengthening women's political participation within the country's governance structures.
11. The national Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools (2021) has dismantled systemic barriers which lead to educational exclusion contributing to protection of the right to education for pregnant girls and adolescent mothers, resulting in increased school enrollment figures. The direct reintegration of 8,000 marginalized girls into formal education since 2022 is a notable achievement.^v
12. Sierra Leone enacted the Customary Land Rights Act in 2022, establishing a significant legal framework that recognizes and protects community land rights under customary tenure systems. The Act specifically aims to secure land tenure for vulnerable groups, particularly women, and safeguards against unfair exploitation or dispossession of their lands.
13. Sierra Leone has established the Women's Empowerment Fund through the GEWE Act to provide financial support to women entrepreneurs and promote economic empowerment. This initiative forms part of the country's comprehensive legislative measures to address

gender disparities, combat violence against women, and enhance women's participation in decision-making processes and access to finance. Achievements include significant increase in female representation in governance, with parliamentary seats rising from 14.5% to 30.4% and local council seats from 19% to 34% during the 2023 general elections.

14. Sierra Leone's Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (SiLNAP III) (2024-2029) builds upon the foundation of earlier action plans and aligns with international standards acknowledging the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls. The plan currently under implementation underscores the importance of women's full and meaningful participation in peace, security, and social cohesion processes.
15. Sierra Leone maintains the operation of One Stop Centres dedicated to serving victims and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), more are required towards accelerating the addressing of gender-based violence issues.
16. Efforts have been made to criminalize the practice of FGM, albeit with mixed outcomes. In July 2025, Sierra Leone's parliament passed the revised Child Rights Act 2025, replacing the earlier 2007 law. While the Act overhauled child protection policies across the board and introduced stronger legal protections against harmful practices, it failed to criminalize FGM or introduce any penalty for it. On 8th July 2025, The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court of Justice found the Government of Sierra Leone in violation of women's and girls' rights for failing to explicitly criminalize FGM, which is in breach of the Maputo Protocol.

Recommendations

- i. By 2028, establish one stop centers in at least 50% of the districts to support services for victims and survivors of gender-based violence and other harmful practices, including counselling and legal assistance.
- ii. By 2028, actively popularize and institutionalize the Male Involvement Strategy to address patriarchal norms that perpetuates GBV and deepen accountability measures.
- i. Revitalize and implement the National Strategy for the elimination of FGM by 2027 and enact legislation criminalizing FGM.
- iii. By 2028, develop comprehensive regulations to fully operationalize the Child Marriage Act, ensuring its effective implementation and enforcement across the nation.

e) Rights Of Specific Groups

Rights of children^{vi}

17. Sierra Leone has strengthened its legal framework for child protection through the enactment of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2024) ^{vii} and the Child Rights Act (2025), which expand protections for vulnerable children. It enforces strict penalties against offenders and mandates comprehensive protection and support services for affected children. The Government has advanced efforts to strengthen child protection systems, promote inclusive education, and improve services for children with disabilities and those in rural areas.
18. The National Commission for Children continues to provide oversight on child rights, though underfunding and limited human resource capacity constrain implementation of child protection policies. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms, increasing resource allocation, and addressing systemic barriers remain priorities for advancing child rights in Sierra Leone.
19. Significant challenges persist, including discrimination against girls, children with disabilities, children affected by HIV/AIDS, and those in remote areas. Despite legislative progress, conflicts between statutory, customary, and religious law continue to create protection gaps, particularly regarding child marriage and sexual offences.
20. In the health sector, services have been partially integrated for children affected by HIV/AIDS, although access remains uneven. Social protection programmes insufficiently reach vulnerable children, and adolescent pregnancy rates remain among the highest in West Africa due to poverty, gender inequality, and limited access to adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services.
21. Sierra Leone has taken significant steps to address the worst forms of child labour in line with its international obligations, including the adoption of the National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (2021-2025). The Government has enhanced enforcement mechanisms through strengthened labour inspectorates and inter-ministerial coordination. National interventions have focused on awareness-raising, data collection, and the integration of child protection measures with social protection systems for at-risk households.
22. Despite these efforts, child labour remains widespread, particularly in the informal sector, mining, domestic work, and agriculture. Available data ^{viii} indicates that children in rural and poor households are disproportionately affected.
23. The Government of Sierra Leone continues to receive support for the broader advancement of child rights within established international frameworks. Notable progress is exemplified by the development and implementation of the National Framework for the Diversion of Children in Conflict with the Law.

Recommendations

- i. Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs (MOGCA) should allocate adequate funding for the popularization of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2024 in all 16 districts by 2027 and for the legal support for victims and successful prosecution of offenders.

- ii. The MOGCA should facilitate a multi-stakeholders review of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2024) and other related laws in 2027 to ensure consistency with human rights standards.

Rights of Persons with disabilities^{ix}

- 24. Following the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2010, the government has initiated pilot programs to improve data collection and disability certification systems. A disability inclusion tool has been developed to ensure that the SDG Monitoring Platforms consider and inform various aspects of disability inclusion. Achievements include more dedicated engagement and leadership by persons with disabilities on peace and social cohesion.
- 25. Sierra Leone's Basic and Senior Secondary Education Act of 2023 reinforce the country's commitment to inclusive education by mandating representation of persons with disabilities on the National Board of Education and within the Education Youth Advisory Group. The Act explicitly acknowledges diverse special educational needs, including autism spectrum disorder and learning disabilities, marking significant progress toward recognizing and addressing the requirements of all learners within the national education system.
- 26. Sierra Leone continues to face challenges in ensuring full physical accessibility of schools and in building a qualified teaching workforce for children with special needs. Approximately 38% of teachers lack formal qualifications and have not received training in inclusive, special needs and gender-responsive pedagogies, highlighting persistent structural barriers to equitable education.
- 27. The Government of Sierra Leone has engaged in efforts to align national legislation with international disability rights standards, particularly through advocacy and support for legal reforms that enhance protection and inclusion for persons with disabilities, including children.

Recommendations

- i. By 2027, establish and operationalize the Disability Fund as mandated by the 2011 Persons with Disability Act to accelerate government programmes and support disability services and programs that fall outside routine government operations as well as interventions requiring urgent attention, particularly those targeting girls with disabilities, who face compounded vulnerabilities.
- ii. By 2027, should institutionalize the data and checklist tool developed to aid in reviews of laws, policies, and strategies in a range of sectors for compliance with CPRD and the PWDA.
- iii. By 2028, ensure all public facilities and major institutions have inclusive infrastructure to enable accessibility by persons with disabilities.

- iv. By 2028, ensure that at least 50% of teachers nationwide should possess formal qualifications and training in inclusive and special needs pedagogy, enabling them to effectively support diverse learners and uphold the principles of equitable education.

Rights of migrants and asylum seekers

28. Sierra Leone continues to strengthen protection and service provision for refugees and displaced children, ensuring access to education, health, and social services in line with its international obligations. The Government is working to reduce discrimination and exclusion, although implementation challenges persist due to limited institutional capacity and budgetary constraints.
29. The government has demonstrated a sustained commitment to the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) by conducting voluntary national reviews in 2020 and 2022 and submitting corresponding national reports. The Government reinforced this commitment by joining the GCM Champion Countries Initiative in October 2023 and developing a National GCM Implementation Plan and a National Coordination Mechanism on Migration Management.
30. Sierra Leone remains committed to the protection of children in the context of migration. This includes efforts to ensure access to essential services for all children, irrespective of migration status, and to advocate for child-sensitive migration and service provision frameworks.

Recommendations

- i. Set up a migrant “one stop shop” by 2027 to provide medical, legal, and psychosocial guidance to migrants and thus enhance their working experience as well as receive information about their migration for labor.
- ii. Expand the national referral mechanism for returned migrants to include all migrants by 2027.

Human rights & climate change

31. Sierra Leone has promoted inclusive participation in climate change and disaster risk reduction frameworks, particularly through the engagement of children and young people in climate policy dialogues. The Government has conducted structured consultations to integrate their perspectives into national strategies, including the Nationally Determined Contributions. These efforts aim to ensure climate and disaster risk reduction strategies are child-sensitive and inclusive of vulnerable groups, such as children with disabilities and marginalized communities.
32. A gender-sensitive environmental and socio-economic study has been conducted in the coastal communities of Yelibuya and Plantain Island to enhance government and stakeholder responsiveness to disaster and climate change impacts on human mobility.
33. The government has developed the first national Plan of Action for Human Mobility in the context of climate change, environmental degradation, and disasters. This comprehensive framework establishes evidence-based and rights-based interventions aligned with regional and global standards.

Recommendations

- i. By 2028, invest in awareness raising among frontline populations and host communities in the context of climate related mobility.
- ii. By 2028, take preventive measures to mitigate the impact of climate related displacement including on peace security.

f) Other Civil and Political Rights

Prohibition of torture, and cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment, including condition of detention ^x

34. Sierra Leone implemented an innovative "Prison Court" initiative to address correctional center overcrowding and enhance access to justice, particularly for vulnerable detainees. By deploying judges directly to correctional facilities, the program enabled expedited case reviews for individuals held for minor offenses, wrongful convictions, and prolonged pre-trial detention without legal representation.
35. Continued efforts to improve conditions for inmates and staff evidenced the construction of eight solar-powered borehole water system at Correctional centres in Bo, Moyamba, Kenema (Female centre), Kailahun, Kono, Port Loko, Tonkolili (Mafanta) and Western Rural (Waterloo) districts.
36. Sierra Leone has strengthened torture prevention efforts through capacity-building initiatives for police, justice officials, and social workers on child-friendly procedures, violence prevention, and the protection of children in contact with the law. These programs reinforce accountability and rights-based approaches within justice and security institutions, in alignment with international human rights standards.

Recommendations

- i. Accelerate the ratification of Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by 2028.

Administration of Justice and Fair Trial^{xi}

37. In 2024, the president of Sierra Leone signed into law a new Criminal Procedure Act (CPA) 2024 which modernizes criminal proceedings, reinforces compliance with international obligations by reducing trial delays, expands access to legal representation and introduces alternatives to detention.
38. In 2024, the president of Sierra Leone launched the Fifth Generation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan (JSRSI) 2024-2028, which serves as the blueprint for justice sector delivery in the next five years.
39. The obsolete Sierra Leone Police Act of 1964 which predates the 1991 Constitution has been reviewed through national consultations facilitated by the Law Reform Commission. The draft Police Bill, once passed into law, will improve police-communities' relations and

people-centred policing services with respect for human dignity and police accountability.

40. Sierra Leone has established two specialized Sexual Offences Model Courts in the Western Area and Southern Region to expedite the adjudication of gender-based violence cases. These courts aim to reduce case backlogs and enhance access to justice for survivors.

Recommendation

- i. By 2026, ensure improved knowledge of judicial and law enforcement officials on the Criminal Procedure Act 2024 by training 600 personnel including judges, magistrates, prosecutors, police officers, and correctional staff to ensure uniform application of the new law.
- ii. By 2026, comply with the landmark ruling of the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice by enacting a legislation to decriminalize petty offences which disproportionately affect the poor, women and children.
- iii. Accelerate the enactment of the Police Bill into law by 2026.

Prohibition of slavery and trafficking

41. The Government has reviewed and updated its National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons, in August 2022 which focuses on preventing trafficking and protecting vulnerable groups including women, children, youth, and persons with disabilities from human trafficking and related forms of exploitation.
42. Sierra Leone has developed and implemented a National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking in accordance with the Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Act of 2022 that criminalizes both sex and labour trafficking. The Government is expanding this mechanism to cover all returned migrants and has outlined plans to establish a comprehensive support center providing medical, legal, and psychosocial services to enhance migrant protection and improve labor migration experiences.
43. The Government has strengthened its anti-trafficking in Persons Task Force Secretariat and conducted nationwide consultations with stakeholders to implement these frameworks. Since 2022, Sierra Leone has provided return and reintegration assistance to 13 children victims of trafficking (5 boys, 8 girls) in compliance with national legislation and international standards.

Recommendations

- i. Increase in funding to support anti-trafficking victims and witnesses by 30% by 2028.

Right to name, identity and nationality

44. The Government has prioritized strengthening civil registration and identity systems as a fundamental right for the child. The National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) has advanced reforms in digitization and system integration, although challenges remain. These gaps hinder children's access to education, social protection, and justice services, necessitating enhanced institutional capacity and resource allocation for the NCRA.

45. The National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) of Sierra Leone is receiving coordinated financial and technical support to strengthen its institutional capacity and enhance the effective delivery of its mandate. In 2025, the Authority's Strategic Plan was revised to integrate forward-looking initiatives aimed at advancing innovative approaches in civil registration and vital statistics management.

Recommendations

- i. Strengthen the civil registration mechanisms and ensure that every child is registered immediately after birth, by 2027.
- ii. Raise awareness on the importance of birth registration.

g) Economic and Social Rights

Human Rights and Poverty

46. Sierra Leone has established a robust framework for the progressive realization of economic and social rights. The enactment of the Social Protection Act (2025), which builds upon the revised National Social Protection Policy (2020) and Strategy (2022-2026), consolidates the right to social protection. The Act establishes a unified framework with a centralized Social Protection Authority and a dedicated fund to deliver services to vulnerable populations, covering maternity benefits, healthcare access, and pensions.
47. Sierra Leone has launched its National Mid-Term Development Plan (2024–2030), a comprehensive strategy aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and designed to support the country's progression toward an inclusive, green, and middle-income economy towards tackling development challenges including poverty. There are now more efforts in institutionalizing a fragility and conflict prevention approach towards achieving the Plan.
48. In addition, a dedicated fund known as the Social Protection Breadbasket Fund supports targeted initiatives, including cash transfers and services for women in poverty, informal work, or caregiving roles. The law was shaped by extensive consultations, ensuring that women's voices and needs were reflected in its design.

Right to safe drinking water & sanitation

49. Sierra Leone is advancing efforts to strengthen domestic financing and resource mobilization for the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector. The Government is enhancing advocacy for increased public funding while exploring private sector engagement. Furthermore, Sierra Leone has developed a climate-resilient WASH policy to serve as a key tool for evidence-based budget planning and sustainable financing in line with national climate and development goals.

Right to health, including sexual and reproductive health

50. In 2023, The Government established the National Public Health Agency to coordinate emergency response in collaboration with the National Disaster Management. There is continued government and partners support to enhance the capacity of health facilities to provide services even during any public health emergencies, including Minimum Initial Service Package for sexual and reproductive health care.
51. The Government continues to implement the Free Health Care Initiative (FHCI), which provides essential health services at no cost to pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under five years of age.
52. The national response on HIV and AIDS (aligned with Global AIDS Strategy) has advanced through the development of key strategies, including an HIV Prevention Roadmap, a Condom Strategy, and a Key Population Service Package, to enhance the implementation of the National Strategic Plan and achieve national and global targets. Significant progress has been made, mother-to-child transmission rates, including during breastfeeding, declined from 26.94% in 2010 to 11.5% in 2024.
53. Sierra Leone has significantly improved access to maternal and newborn health services, under-five mortality has decreased drastically by 15% from 109 deaths for 1,000 live births in 2019 to 94.3 deaths for 1,000 live births in 2023.
54. Sierra Leone addresses healthcare worker safety through national policies and guidelines that establish standards for occupational health, infection control, and disease surveillance. Key frameworks including the Basic Package of Essential Health Services, the National Community Health Worker Policy, and the Human Resources for Health Policy emphasize the provision of safe and healthy working environments for all healthcare personnel. In addition, Government is recruiting 3,000 health workers to address the human resource shortages in health sector.
55. To improve the coverage of adolescent-friendly health services, the Government developed a national guideline on Adolescent and Youth Friendly Services to equip health workers on provision of adolescent-friendly services in health facilities and SRH hubs.
56. Sierra Leone has contextualized Comprehensive Sexuality Education as Child and Adolescent Health Life Skills (CAHLS), developing age-appropriate and culturally relevant content aligned with international technical guidelines. The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education has integrated CAHLS into the Basic Education Curriculum Framework and is currently building teacher capacity to facilitate nationwide implementation.
57. The Government has launched a national maternal and child health situation room, which enables real-time monitoring of maternal, child, and neonatal mortality under a strategic initiative in maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response (MPDSR). This digital platform enhances accountability and facilitates evidence-informed decision-making to accelerate improvements in maternal and newborn health outcomes.
58. Sierra Leone's policy environment for sexual and reproductive health is advancing, to be complemented by the Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Bill currently under

parliamentary consideration. If enacted, this legislation would broaden access to contraceptives and safe termination of pregnancy services under specified circumstances, thereby strengthening the country's sexual and reproductive health framework.

59. Sierra Leone has made notable progress in expanding access to contraceptives, with the modern contraceptive prevalence rate (mCPR) rising to 27.4%, unmet need declining to 19%, and demand satisfied with modern methods increasing to 59%. The country's FP2030 commitment (2023 - 2030) sets a target to increase the mCPR to at least 32% by 2027 through improved quality of service delivery, ensuring commodity security, strengthened supply chains, and social norm transformation.

Recommendations

- i. By 2028, government health spending and compliance with financial commitments e.g. Compact with at least 30%.
- ii. Enhance the legal and policy environment for universal access to sexual and reproductive health and upholding of reproductive rights by enacting Safe motherhood and Reproductive health Bill, including clear frameworks for age of consent, by 2027.
- iii. Reduce mother-to-child transmission rates to below 5% by 2028.
- iv. By 2027, strengthen Legal and Policy Frameworks to Safeguard Rights and enhance access to health services, by amending the HIV/AIDS Commission Act 2011 to address inequalities.

Right to Education, including Human Rights Education^{xii}

60. Sierra Leone has enacted and operationalized the Basic and Senior Secondary Education Act (2023), a foundational legislative measure that enshrines the right to quality education. In support of this Act, the Government has developed and implemented a suite of complementary policies, the National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools, the Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) policy, localized Comprehensive Sexuality Education Curriculum, the Comprehensive School Safety Policy, and the Curriculum Framework and Guidelines for Basic Education.
61. The Education Sector Plan (2022–2026) further mainstreams gender equality as a central objective, working to address disparities and promote inclusive learning environments with the guaranteed tuition-free education in government and government-assisted schools.. The implementation of the plan has contributed significantly to increased enrolment and improved learning outcomes; however, persistent challenges related to resource allocation, teacher training, and school infrastructure require continued attention.
62. Prohibition of Child Marriage Bill (2024) protects children's rights, especially girls', and creates a complete system of multisectoral services for affected children. This law is expected to reduce child marriage, keep girls in school, and enable them to reach their full potential.
63. The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone has established 76 Human Rights and Peace Clubs in secondary schools across the country, engaging students as ambassadors for human

rights in their communities. In 2024, 10 new clubs were established in seven districts, involving 167 students and teachers who received training on human rights and peacebuilding. An additional 25 existing clubs received refresher training and educational materials to further strengthen their capacity.

Recommendations

- i. Encourage the mainstreaming of human rights education in the national primary and secondary school curriculum
- ii. Ensure adequate and equitable resource allocation to fully operationalize education reforms, particularly in underserved and rural areas and strengthen intersectoral coordination on education, health, and child protection by 2028.
- iii. Develop and implement a comprehensive teacher workforce management strategy by 2027.

Conclusion

The observations above illustrate Sierra Leone's active engagement in advancing its human rights agenda through legislative reform, policy development, and strategic partnerships. The recommendations above are offered aimed at addressing identified gaps in implementation and resource allocation, and to support the Government in ensuring that these commendable efforts translate into tangible improvements in the lives of all its people, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized. They are primarily directed at the Government of Sierra Leone and by extension, the partners supporting the government.

ⁱ 143.27 Resume a meaningful constitutional review process and ensure that the White Paper is in line with international and regional human rights obligations (Ecuador); 143.28 Complete the constitutional review process (Ukraine);

ⁱⁱ 143.33 Provide the Human Rights Commission with the necessary resources to fulfil its mandate (Togo); 143.34 Exert further efforts aimed at the strengthening of national human rights institutions (Armenia); 143.35 Strengthen the National Human Rights Commission (Cameroon); 143.36 Continue to support the work of the National Human Rights Institution (Qatar);

ⁱⁱⁱ 143.168 Fully enforce the new policy of not banning pregnant girls and teenage mothers from attending school (Portugal); 143.186 Continue increasing gender equality (Plurinational State of Bolivia); 143.202 Enhance its efforts to combat all forms of gender-based discrimination (Georgia); 143.233 Expedite the enactment of the Gender Equality Bill and fully implement the Amended Sexual Offences Act of 2019, including through providing adequate resources for its implementation (Iceland); 143.234 Accelerate the enactment of the bill on gender equality (Albania); 143.238 Continue to implement the National Gender Strategic Plan, promote gender equality and better protect women's rights (China); 143.239 Pursue national efforts aimed at increasing women's empowerment and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women (Egypt); 143.240 Strengthen regulations on gender equality to expand meaningful and equitable opportunities for girls and women to learn and prosper (Indonesia); 143.244 Promote gender equality (Latvia); 143.245 Sustain efforts towards successfully implementing the gender equality and women's empowerment policy (Pakistan);

^{iv} 143.227 Take effective measures to combat violence against women (Russian Federation); 143.249 Harmonize laws to prevent and eliminate child marriage and undertake comprehensive awareness-raising campaigns on the negative consequences of child marriage on girls (Belgium);

^v UNFPA GPECM 2024 Annual Report

^{vi} 143.247 Intensify its efforts to eliminate discrimination against children in the most vulnerable conditions (Timor-Leste); 143.262 Eliminate discrimination against children in the most vulnerable situations, such as girls, children with disabilities, children living with HIV/AIDS, children orphaned as a result of Ebola and children in rural settings (Eswatini); 143.264 Take the necessary steps to review conflicting provisions in child protection laws (Kenya); 143.265 Strengthen efforts to eliminate discrimination against children in vulnerable situations, among others children with disabilities and children living with HIV/AIDS (Malaysia); 143.267 Strengthen its commitment to the

prevention of adolescent pregnancies and child sexual abuse through the prompt completion and implementation of the National Manual of Comprehensive Sexual Education, as well as through the full implementation of the National Strategy for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Marriage (Uruguay); 143.254 Combat exploitation of children, in particular through the implementation of the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) (France); 143.263 Strengthen efforts to promote and protect the rights of children, including ending child labour, early marriage, and sexual violence against children, as well as working towards the physical and psychological recovery of former child soldiers (Japan); 143.268 Continue efforts to eliminate child labour (Poland);
^{vii} 143.248 Adopt legislative and other measures to prevent and end the practice of child marriage (Togo); 143.252 Enforce the Child Rights Act and enact the bill on prohibition of child marriage (Chad); 143.253 Strengthen efforts to put an end to child marriage (Plurinational State of Bolivia); 143.255 Finalize the adoption of the bill on the prohibition of child marriage (Gabon); 143.256 Reform the measures adopted by the Government for the prohibition and elimination of child marriage.

^{viii} [Sierra Leone, 2023 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor](#)

^{ix} 143.272 Adopt and implement an inclusive education policy for persons with disabilities (Chad); 143.273 Further improve access of persons with disabilities to education and health care (Poland);

^x 143.84 Continue efforts to reform and develop the prison system, reduce prison overcrowding in line with international human rights standards, and take all the necessary measures to restore justice and combat impunity (Libya); 143.85 Allocate increased budget resources to address harsh and life-threatening prison conditions, including overcrowding, inadequate sanitation, and lack of clean water and health care (United States of America);

^{xi} 143.97 Continue progress achieved on the independence of the judiciary and the strengthening of the rule of law (Mauritania); 143.89 Continue to support the independence of the judiciary and combat impunity (Bahrain); 143.81 Introduce legislation to enhance accountability of police officers and military personnel, strengthen monitoring mechanisms, investigate any case of excessive use of force and bring perpetrators to justice (Germany);

^{xii} 143.161 Strengthen training and education in the field of human rights in school curricula (United Arab Emirates);