

# Project Report

## Treaty Body Focused Review Pilot of Sierra Leone

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## Introduction

From 7 to 9 December 2021, the Geneva Human Rights Platform (GHRP) and the Commonwealth Secretariat - in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the UN in Geneva, the Government of Sierra Leone and TB Net/CCPR Centre - conducted the first pilot of a UN treaty body (TB) focused review in Freetown, Sierra Leone. This new pilot procedure consists of a review carried out between full reporting cycles at the national level, designed to provide an update on how countries implement specific recommendations issued by different TBs. The pilot in Sierra Leone focused on the recommendations for follow-up of four TBs, namely the Human Rights Committee (HRCtee), the Committee against Torture (CAT), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC).<sup>1</sup>

The concept of focused reviews is based on the details developed in the academic proposal for a [Technical Review of Implementation Progress \(TRIP\)](#) and the [NGO proposal for focused reviews](#) submitted in the context of the TB Review 2020 process. The [2019 non-Paper issued by Costa Rica on behalf of other 43 States](#) (Towards the 2020 treaty bodies review), the [Report of the Co-facilitators of the TB Review 2020](#) and the [Report of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of TB Chairpersons](#) all recognize the interest in further exploring the possibilities offered by such focused reviews, both regionally and nationally.

The [84<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Outreach Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Samoa \(2020\)](#) was the first time that TBs held an official *regional session* to review *multiple countries* outside of Geneva or New York. With a view to test the potential for *national sessions* involving *multiple TBs* through empirical evidence, the GHRP developed a model for in-country focused reviews, inspired by the successful [series of follow-up missions implemented by CCPR-Centre](#) and the [follow-up visit by the CEDAW delegation to the State of Palestine \(2019\)](#). The TB focused review pilot of Sierra Leone represents the first opportunity in which this specific model has ever been tested. The GHRP and the Commonwealth Secretariat plan to conduct further pilots in Africa and the Caribbean during the first half of 2022. The GHRP is also considering the possibility of focused review simulations in European, Asian, Latin American and Pacific Island States during the latter part of 2022.

This report wishes to give an account of the project's *objectives, scope, planning and logistics* and provides an *evaluation of its short-term outcomes and lessons learned* from the perspective of both the organizing partners and national participants. Within the annexes, this report also includes the pilot's *programmatic documentation* (agenda, focused review questionnaire, list of participants) as well as the opening speech by the

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<sup>1</sup> The HRCtee, CAT and the CEDAW have adopted written follow-up procedures. The CRC has not adopted a follow-up procedure, which led to an ad hoc selection of recommendations for focused review. The methodology for selection is explained in p.7 below.

OHCHR Regional Representative for West Africa. In addition, the GHRP - in collaboration with the four participating TB experts - drafted a *compilation of updates on the recommendations under focused review*. These updates – the substantive outputs of the TB focused review pilot - are the result of exchanges between the TB delegation and national actors participating in each of the dedicated sessions of the three-day pilot, namely representatives from relevant ministries in Sierra Leone, independent state institutions and CSOs. This compilation will be shared with the relevant national authorities and the four TBs, thus informing the next cycle of reviews.

The innovative nature of this procedure, as well as its potential for bringing the TB system closer to the national level, makes the lessons learned from this first pilot useful for evaluating focused reviews in-country as potentially complementary to the ordinary Geneva-based TB sessions.

## Objectives

### *Overall objectives*

Overall, the objective of this pilot initiative is to test through empirical evidence the benefits and challenges of implementing the focused review procedure at the national level.

The idea of a focused review combines the current efforts to strengthen the follow-up procedure, and the new approach by Convention Bodies to change the model of their reporting cycle, moving to an eight-year review cycle for comprehensive reviews in Geneva. Such developments may be mutually beneficial in light of the evolving needs of today's TB system. This includes the need to maintain the reporting schedules foreseen in the treaties whilst, at the same time, effectively adapting to situations which may require more contextually appropriate ways of reporting. In particular, this applies to State parties moving towards full reporting compliance, due to several factors including an increase in ratifications, new conventions, a stagnating budget and ongoing obstacles that challenge the full participation of domestic stakeholders and rights holders at large.

The focused review complements the current modalities of the reporting procedure with a national follow-up component, spaced in between the comprehensive, Geneva-based reviews. Focusing on the follow-up to concluding observations (COBs) of multiple TBs adds coherence and contributes to a stronger national-level perception of the TBs as one integrated system. Another aim of this new procedure is to strengthen the visibility of the TB system in arenas distant from Geneva and allows for the consideration of a selection of (different) COBs between reviews. In addition, it ultimately helps to avoid a protection gap during the time-lapse between full reviews and to move towards a stronger focus on national implementation.

One should consider this first pilot in the context of the broader GHRP-led initiative dedicated to the TB focused review, which consists of a series of country-specific pilot projects to be organized throughout 2022 in different regions. Each focused review pilot will differ in terms of the following characteristics:

- host country/participating Member State;
- pilot implementation partners;
- TB selection (e.g., number of participating TBs, involvement of sitting or former TB members);
- meeting modalities (e.g., fully in-person, online or hybrid);
- project-related side-events (e.g., training component, outreach component/media presence, visits to ministries/institutions of interest).

The lessons learned from the broader pilot series will ultimately form the basis for a comprehensive and comparative analysis of the benefits and challenges resulting from the different contexts and modalities involved.

### *Procedural objectives*

From a procedural perspective, the TB focused review is designed around a triple purpose, namely, assessment, assistance and accountability:

1) Assessment - the monitoring function of the focused review represents one key purpose, hence the need to schedule it sufficiently distant from the issuing date of the selected COBs. The assessment is made in relation to updates provided by the participating national actors on the implementation of the selected COBs under focused review.

2) Assistance - technical cooperation provided by the focused review includes country specific assessment and advice on practical avenues for implementation of the selected COBs. This aspect of the focused review responds to the need of domestic stakeholders for guidance and information, raising awareness on issued COBs whilst embedding them in the national context.

3) Accountability – to become part of a regular (8-10 year) TB reporting cycle, the focused review would have to contribute to accountability, providing information on the assessment to the concerned TB and the elaboration of the List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LOIPR) of the following review. Ultimately, this would strengthen the accountability of States on human rights issues in general and the implementation of the selected COBs in particular.

### *Project partners and participants*

The GHRP of the Geneva Academy and the Human Rights Unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat coordinated this first pilot, supplemented by consultations with the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the UN in Geneva and the Government of Sierra

Leone. CCPR Centre and the broader Geneva-based CSO coalition TB-NET facilitated the participation of Sierra Leonean civil society representatives. The GHRP briefed and consulted with the OHCHR and the four TBs sitting in plenary where necessary, such as when selecting the participating TB experts and recommendations under focused review.

In total, 52 participants attended the two-and-a-half-day pilot in Freetown, Sierra Leone, including a variety of actors and institutions. This number was the result of careful considerations among members of the core-planning group and the government of Sierra Leone, in order to balance the need for an inclusive representation of all relevant stakeholders and the focused nature of the exercise.

The international team that took part in the planning and implementation of the pilot project included:

- Representatives from the TBs, participating in their personal capacity:
  - Imeru Tamrat Yigezu (Ethiopia), member of the Human Rights Committee
  - Abdelwahab El Hani (Tunisia), former member of the Committee Against Torture
  - Benoit Van Keirsbilck (Belgium), member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (online participation)
  - Huguette Bokpe Gnancadja (Benin), former member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (online participation).
  
- Representatives from the *core planning group*:
  - Domenico Zipoli, Research Fellow and Project Coordinator, GHRP
  - Yashasvi Nain, Human Rights Officer, Human Rights Unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat
  - Julio Veiga-Bezerra, Consultant, GHRP
  - Florence Simbiri-Jaoko, Advisory Board Member, GHRP
  - André Kangni Afanou, Africa Coordinator, CCPR Centre
  - Anis Mahfoudh, Human Rights Officer, Capacity Building Programme, West Africa Regional Office of the OHCHR.

The composition of the national team that contributed to the pilot included a total of 42 representatives from different institutions, both governmental and non-governmental. More specifically, national participation was divided according to three groupings:

- 25 members of the focused review national taskforce, coordinated by the Inter-Ministerial Committee (NMRF). This taskforce was established ad hoc for the implementation of this pilot and comprised representatives from all relevant national ministries

- 13 members of national CSOs, divided among the four TBs' areas of competence
- 2 members of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (NHRI)
- 2 members of the National Commission for Children of Sierra Leone.

The Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the UN in Geneva played a key role in both the planning and implementation stages of the project.

- Representatives of the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the UN in Geneva:
  - H. E. Samuel U. B. Saffa, Deputy Ambassador & Deputy Permanent Representative
  - Patrick Hassan Morlai Koroma, Minister Counsellor

The full lists of participating national stakeholders can be accessed in Annex D.

## Planning and logistics

During the first months of 2021, the GHRP developed the first general drafts of the focused review pilot initiative, including the modalities of the focused review procedure, the project concept note, and a draft agenda for the focused review pilot sessions.

The planning for the TB focused review pilot of Sierra Leone began on 15 July 2021, with the signing of a Letter of Understanding between the GHRP and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat - the intergovernmental organisation that supports member countries to achieve the Commonwealth's aims of development, democracy and peace – greatly facilitated the selection, outreach and communication between the core planning group and the host country. In this context, the GHRP and the Commonwealth Secretariat prepared a functional timeline, simplified into the following seven steps:

### Step 1: Selection of pilot country (15 July - 15 August 2021)

As a first step, the GHRP and the Commonwealth Secretariat considered both the status of treaty ratification (more than three UN human rights treaty ratifications) and the reporting status of ratified conventions (at least two years since the latest adoption of COBs to the country) of a number of Commonwealth member states. Such parameters were necessary for the planning of *national sessions* focusing on issued *recommendations for follow-up* involving *multiple TBs*. Also relevant for country selection were previous successful technical assistance projects implemented by the Human Rights Unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat and a number of Commonwealth member states, showcasing political interest in the implementation of such projects.

The GHRP conducted a mapping exercise of several member states, through the creation of a series of “focused review working tables” centering on specific elements including:



- A detailed reporting history;
- the collation of follow-up recommendations;
- relevant recommendations from other UN human rights mechanisms; and
- the mapping of each country's national human rights system, based on the list of state delegations, independent state institutions, and non-state actors who have participated in TB and UPR cycles in the past (either as part of delegations or by submitting parallel reports).

Following the analysis, Sierra Leone was identified as potential country and two meetings were held with the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the UN in Geneva (22 and 29 July 2021). These initial meetings served the purpose of introducing the concept and expectations of the project as well as determining its scope. At this initial stage, the GHRP and the Commonwealth Secretariat finalized the project concept note and a draft agenda, which formed the basis of the discussions with the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone.

Soon thereafter, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone notified their agreement to participate in the pilot project, following a series of consultations between the Permanent Mission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. On this occasion, it was agreed that the focused review pilot session would take place on 7 – 9 December 2021 in Freetown, as part of the lead up to Human Rights Day (10 December 2021).

**Step 2: Selection of participating TBs and recommendations for focused review (15 August 2021 – 1 September 2021)**

Upon agreement by Sierra Leone to participate in the pilot, TB selection fell on those that had issued their latest COBs to Sierra Leone within the last 10 years and that had not yet received a response to the identified recommendations for follow-up. Sierra Leone thus agreed to include, as part of the focused review pilot, the following four TBs:

- Human Rights Committee ([CCPR/C/SLE/CO/1](#), 2014)
- Committee against Torture ([CAT/C/SLE/CO/1](#), 2014)
- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women ([CEDAW/C/SLE/CO/6](#), 2014)
- Committee on the Rights of the Child ([CRC/C/SLE/CO/3-5](#), 2016 and [CRC/C/SLE/QPR/6-7](#), 2021)

As delineated in the project's concept note, the focused review pilot would serve the purpose of providing updates on the status of implementation of the recommendations for follow-up issued by the selected TBs. As such, the pilot organizers would base their identification on recommendations that the TBs themselves considered "urgent, priority or protective, and implementable within one or two years". The GHRP identified the

following recommendations for follow-up as subject of the focused review (“recommendations for focused review”):

- Human Rights Committee (CCPR/C/SLE/CO/1):
  - para 14: Abortion, adolescent pregnancy and maternal mortality
  - para 16: Prohibition of torture and ill-treatment
  - para 20: Pretrial and arbitrary detention
  
- Committee against Torture (CAT/C/SLE/CO/1):
  - para 10: Absolute prohibition of torture
  - para 11: Fundamental legal safeguards
  - para 13: Prompt, thorough and impartial investigations
  - para 24: Excessive use of force, including lethal force
  - para 28(b): Pre-trial detention
  
- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/SLE/CO/6):
  - para 11: Constitutional and legislative framework, harmonization of laws, and discriminatory laws
  - para 33 (a), (b), (c) and (d): Health

As the CRC had not yet adopted a follow-up procedure, the selection of recommendations for focused review followed a different methodology. The GHRP identified those COBs in respect of what the Committee considered as needing “urgent measures [to be] be taken”<sup>2</sup> that also appeared within the latest output of the Committee vis-à-vis Sierra Leone.<sup>3</sup> As such, the CRC focused review would still “focus” on issues considered as most urgent and at the same time, strictly adhere to the official outputs of the Committee. The following recommendations for focused review were identified for the CRC:

- Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/SLE/QPR/6-7)
  - para 16: Freedom of the child from all forms of violence
  - para 17: Sexual exploitation, abuse and gender-based violence
  - para 18: Harmful practices
  - para 20: Children with disabilities
  - para 22: Adolescent health
  - para 25: Education, rest, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities

Once identified, the GHRP compiled all recommendations for focused review in one document, the “focused review questionnaire”, pending approval by the participating

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<sup>2</sup>CRC, Concluding Observations issued to Sierra Leone, IV. Main areas of concern and recommendations, para 5, CRC/C/SLE/CO/3-5, 2016.

<sup>3</sup>CRC, List of Issues Prior to Reporting issued to Sierra Leone, CRC/C/SLE/QPR/6-7, 2021.

TB members. This document represents the core instrument to be issued to the different actors engaged in the focused review pilot (see Annex B).

Step 3: Selection of participants for the focused review pilot (1 September 2021 – 17 November 2021)

The GHRP and the Commonwealth Secretariat coordinated the selection and invitation of participants to the focused review pilot according to four main categories: TB members and OHCHR, ministerial representatives, human rights state institutions and CSOs.

#### *TB Members - the “TB delegation” - and OHCHR*

The GHRP briefed all four TBs during the preparatory stages of the pilot project, either during the plenaries of Committees in session (HRCtee and CEDAW) or through email exchanges with the Chairpersons, who then consulted their Bureau (CRC and CAT). The GHRP then contacted the identified members bilaterally, for confirmation of participation and briefing on the nature of the exercise, including their approval of the identified recommendations for focused review specific to each TB.

Due to the inaugural nature of this exercise and the ongoing pandemic, the timeline for TB member selection protracted longer than envisaged, implying that a confirmed list (the “TB delegation”) was only available on 3 November 2021. The TB delegation included two sitting members and two former members, thus displaying the feasibility of including both categories of experts if the in-country focused review procedure were to be integrated in the formal cycle of TB reviews.

Due to the nature of the pilot project and its regional focus, the GHRP consulted with different divisions of the OHCHR, including the Secretaries of the four TBs, the TB Capacity Building Programme and the West Africa Regional Office (OHCHR-WARO). A representative of the Treaty Body Capacity Building Programme of OHCHR-WARO attended the pilot focused review session in Freetown as observer.

#### *Government representatives - the “national taskforce”*

The GHRP and the Commonwealth Secretariat invited the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to set up a “national taskforce”, comprising representatives of all relevant ministries, in order to coordinate cooperation ahead of the focused review pilot session. By 30 September 2021, the government of Sierra Leone identified 25 different ministries and government institutions relevant for such a taskforce, nominating one focal point per ministry/institution. The Inter-ministerial Committee (IMC) led the taskforce coordination throughout the pilot project. The IMC had the responsibility to ensure that all TB reports are prepared and submitted on time and that all relevant stakeholders are involved in the process.

### *Independent state institutions and CSOs*

The GHRP also reached out to both the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) and the National Commission for Children (NCC), due to their mandate specific to monitoring the implementation of TB recommendations. Following bilateral meetings, the GHRP invited two representatives from each institution to participate in the focused review pilot.

The GHRP, upon consultation with TB-NET and its member organizations (11 November 2021), prepared a list of national CSOs actively involved in monitoring and reporting to the four selected TBs. The selection of CSOs took into consideration submitted parallel reports during the latest cycle of reviews (GHRP mapping of the national human rights system) as well as ongoing collaboration between TB-NET member organizations and Sierra Leonean CSOs. In total, the GHRP invited 11 CSOs, divided among the four TBs' areas of competence. Two CSOs also facilitated the participation of two youth representatives.

A confirmed list of participating independent state institutions and CSOs was finalized by 15 November 2021. The full list is available in Annex D.

#### *Step 4: Briefings with national stakeholders (26 October 2021 – 4 December 2021)*

In order to instruct all national actors on the modalities of the focused review and to clarify any possible query regarding their participation, the GHRP and the Commonwealth Secretariat organized a series of briefings. These briefings were tailored to each of the three national actor categories.

- Specific to members of the **national taskforce**, the GHRP and the Commonwealth Secretariat jointly organized two briefing sessions on Zoom during the weeks preceding the focused review pilot session (26 October 2021 and 11 November 2021)
- Aside from bilateral meetings between the GHRP and each participating TB expert, the GHRP organized two briefing sessions on Zoom with the whole **TB delegation** during the weeks preceding the focused review pilot session (22 November 2021 and 4 December 2021).
- During the weeks preceding the focused review pilot session, the GHRP also organized two briefing sessions on Zoom with representatives of **CSOs** and two analogous sessions with **independent state institutions** (22 and 30 November 2021).

#### *Step 5: Submission of focused review questionnaire to national taskforce, independent state institutions and CSOs (10 and 17 November 2021)*

Once all four TB members approved the recommendations of the draft focused review questionnaire, the GHRP finalized the document and prepared it for submission to all participating national actors.

- On 10 November 2021, the GHRP and the Commonwealth Secretariat submitted the focused review questionnaire to the Sierra Leone national taskforce
- On 17 November 2021, the GHRP submitted the same focused review questionnaire to the HRCSL, the NCC and the 11 CSOs participating in the pilot

The disparity in time was due to the late submission of CSO invitations, which resulted in late confirmation of participating CSOs.

**Step 6: The national taskforce, independent state institutions and CSOs submit reply to focused review questionnaire (by 1 December 2021)**

As part of the focused review pilot, all participating national actors had the option to submit their reply to the recommendations in the focused review questionnaire by 1 December. The GHRP and the Commonwealth Secretariat considered this a reasonable timeline, bearing in mind the date in which national actors received the questionnaire and the time required by the TB delegation to prepare for the focused review session.

The purpose of these replies was to provide updates to the TB delegation on the government's progress towards implementing the identified recommendations. In addition, the replies also provided clarification on how to achieve full implementation of the identified recommendations.

In total, the GHRP received 10 replies to the focused review questionnaire:

- 4 replies from the national taskforce (Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, Ministry of Information and Communication, Statistics Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone Correctional Service)
- 1 reply from HRCSL
- 1 reply from NCC
- 3 replies from CSOs (50-50 Group, Plan International, Human Rights Defenders Network Sierra Leone)

Upon receipt, the GHRP promptly forwarded each reply to the TB delegation for analysis and preparation toward the focused review pilot session.

**Step 7: The focused review pilot session (7 -9 December 2021)**

The pilot session took place over two-and-a-half days, from December 7 to 9, at The Hub Hotel conference facilities in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The agenda of the session is available in Annex A. Below is a short recount of the structure of the event.

### *Day 1 – opening ceremony*

The opening ceremony, attended by all participants, featured a series of introductory remarks by representatives of key national authorities as well as by the pilot organizers. The list of speakers included the following:

- Abath Kamara, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone
- H.E. Samuel Housman Buggie Saffa, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva
- Florence Simbiri-Jaako, Advisory Board Member, GHRP
- Yashasvi Nain, Human Rights Officer, Commonwealth Secretariat
- Imeru Tamerat Yigezu, Member of the UN Human Rights Committee
- Patricia Narsu Ndanema, Commissioner, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
- Andrea Ori, OHCHR Regional Representative for West Africa

The opening segment also featured a presentation of the foundations and procedure of the focused review pilot by Domenico Zipoli, Research Fellow and Project Coordinator of the GHRP. Due to the inaugural nature of this pilot, it seemed useful to provide an opportunity to clarify the modalities of participation and exchange specific to the different sessions of the pilot.

On this occasion, all participants received a “pre-focused review evaluation form” designed to square their prior knowledge of/experience with TB activity and expectations for the pilot project.

### *Day 1 – informal private briefings with HRCSL, NCC and CSOs*

The remainder of Day 1 was devoted to informal private briefings between the TB delegation and the HRCSL/NCC and between the TB delegation and CSOs. Replicating as much as possible the modalities of engagement with national stakeholders in Geneva, these briefings served the purpose of updating the TB delegation on the government’s action/inaction vis-à-vis the recommendations for focused review. In order to preserve independence and to forgo any potential risk of reprisals, all members of the national taskforce and other ministerial representatives were required to leave the meeting room for the remainder of Day 1. Due to the overlapping themes covered by the recommendations for focused review, the briefings covered two TBs at once (“combined NHRI/CSO sessions”). This allowed approaching similar topics covered by different TBs under one analytical lens, useful for constructive engagement across Committee mandates:

Combined HRCtee and CAT informal private briefings (11:15 – 13:15)

- 1 hr briefing with the HRCSL

- 1 hr briefing with CSOs

Combined CEDAW and CRC informal private briefings (14:00 – 16:00)

- 1 hr briefing with the HRCSL/NCC
- 1 hr briefing with CSOs

A representative of the GHRP acted as moderator to all informal private briefings. Each briefing started with short, back-to-back presentations by representatives of each national institution/organization who had submitted a reply to the questionnaire followed by all other national institutions/organizations in attendance. The TB delegation then responded with follow-up questions and requests for clarification, with priority given to the members of the TBs under combined consideration. All members of the TB delegation took the floor and posed questions, fostering inter-committee cooperation and benefiting from each TB member's specific expertise. Due to two members of the TB delegation attending the pilot remotely, the briefings were held in a hybrid format (via Zoom). The floor was then open for open exchanges between national representatives and the TB delegation.

#### *Day 2 – focused review pilot sessions with Sierra Leone national taskforce*

The focused review pilot sessions with the representatives from the national taskforce took place throughout day 2 of the pilot. In this instance, the agenda was divided into four TB-specific sessions, although the national taskforce and the TB delegation were required to attend all sessions in full. This was considered essential from both a substantive and technical assistance perspective, breaking down the traditional sectorial distinctions between TB and ministerial mandates. As for day 1, due to two members of the TB delegation attending the pilot remotely, the briefings were held in a hybrid format (via Zoom). One representative from the HRCSL/NCC and one representative from civil society attended all four sessions as observers. Due to the overlapping nature of a number of recommendations for focused review, the HRCtee and CAT sessions, and the CRC and CEDAW sessions, took place back-to-back:

Morning segment (9:45 – 13:00, incl. tea break)

- 1.5 hr HRCtee focused review session
- 1.5 hr CAT focused review session

Afternoon segment (13:45 – 16:45)

- 1.5 hr CRC focused review session
- 1.5 hr CEDAW focused review session

A representative of the GHRP/Commonwealth Secretariat acted as moderator to all focused review sessions. Each session started with a short presentation by the member of the TB in question. This initial part of the session served the purpose of

adding an element of capacity building to the exercise, providing an overview of the functioning of the Committee and substantive clarifications on specific treaty provisions. Each session then proceeded with an update on the implementation of the recommendations under focused review from the national taskforce focal point (e.g., for the CEDAW and CRC focused review sessions, a representative from the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs). The TB delegation then responded with follow-up questions and requests for clarification, with priority given to the member of the TB under focused review. When time allowed, an open discussion ensued.

### *Day 3 - Lessons learned, benefits and challenges of the focused review pilot*

The morning of day 3 – attended by all participants – closed the event with an open dialogue on lessons learned, benefits and challenges of the focused review pilot. All participants were asked to fill-out a “post-focused review evaluation form” designed to understand whether expectations were met and how an in-country focused review would affect their engagement with the TB system. The session continued with a *tour-de-table*, with each participant giving a short presentation on the benefits and challenges of the focused review pilot of Sierra Leone. These first-hand evaluations formed the basis of the outcome analysis that follows.

### *Visit to national authority and media coverage*

It should be noted that in addition to the activities listed on the official agenda, the TB delegation and the core planning group were received by the Director General of the Sierra Leone Correctional Service, which provided an opportunity of exchange on issues relevant to the recommendations under focused review. Furthermore, the pilot received notable media attention, in both printed and cable media outlets. A team from the national broadcasting corporation attended both the opening and closing of the event and representatives from the TB delegation and the GHRP were also invited to participate in a live morning show hosted by a national TV channel.

### **Outcomes and challenges of the focused review model**

The focused review resulted in a compilation of updates on the themes covered by the recommendations under focused review. Given the number of recommendations and overlapping issues, these can be broadly clustered around core themes: the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment, pretrial detention, women’s access to health, gender equality and children’s rights. This approach addressed a broad range of issues in a holistic way, not solely in relation to a specific committee or treaty. When possible, the discussions applied an ‘all mechanisms approach’, linking TB recommendations to both the relevant recommendations accepted by Sierra Leone during the latest UPR cycle as well as reports of relevant UN Special Rapporteurs.



The GHRP in collaboration with the four participating TB experts drafted a confidential *compilation of updates on the recommendations under focused review*, which contain a detailed account of the specific outputs following the focused review.

For the purposes of this report, what follows are some key points raised during the discussions in Freetown. Concerning prohibition of torture and ill-treatment, the Constitutional Review Process, which commenced in 2022, represents a promising development, although appropriate steps still need to take place in order to adopt a definition of torture compliant with both CCPR and CAT. There still appears to be high levels of overcrowding of prisons, with overly long-term pre-trial detention being one major element of concern. Further measures are required in terms of accessibility to reproductive health services and provision of education programmes on reproductive health. At present, there is no law on abortion in Sierra Leone, with a resulting need to accelerate the process of adoption of the Safe Abortion Bill into law. In terms of children's rights, Sierra Leone has taken notable steps in addressing access to education, ending early/child marriage and gender-based violence, by putting in place relevant laws and policies. However, there is a need for appropriate allocation of resources as well as a framework for effective monitoring to accompany such efforts.

On the last day of the pilot, all 42 national participants received a post-activity evaluation form. The GHRP received 32 responses, which formed the basis of the following analysis of the project's outcomes and challenges.

## Outcomes

### *Strengthened national capacity to engage with the TB system and its follow-up procedure*

The vast majority of participants underscored one fundamental outcome of the focused review pilot: a strengthened capacity to participate in the monitoring of TB recommendations for all categories of national actors involved (IMC, NHRI and CSOs). In this regard, the pilot:

- strengthened the institutional capacity to operate through the lens of official TB procedures (CSO);
- broadened the understanding on the TB reporting system and enhanced the capacity in effectively responding to the TB recommendations (NHRI);
- “brought to life” the reality of being accountable to TBs and to know that human rights are integral to the consolidation of democracy and governance (NHRI);
- provided a first-hand experience on how to interact with the TB system as the reporting functions of the country are realized (NHRI);
- provided rich insights about the practical modalities of operation of the TB system and how to contribute to it more efficiently as well as on the content of the provisions, such as prohibition of torture, treatment of suspects, etc. (IMC);

- provided guidance for future participation of ministerial representatives in the TB reporting procedure and the follow-up procedure more specifically (IMC);
- contributed to a deeper understand the State's obligations towards the TB System, especially with regards to reporting in a timely manner (IMC);
- “boosted confidence” to participate in subsequent TB reviews (IMC).

*“By holding this pilot in Freetown, the newly established National Reporting Mechanism to International Treaty Bodies of Sierra Leone has gained momentum and is now adequately equipped with the requisite capacity for the effective implementation of its core objectives”*

**Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Sierra Leone in Geneva.**

*“[The initiative] would be beneficial for CSOs if it were adopted. You would see more participation from CSOs, and people finding ways and resources to come to the city to be part of the process rather than trying to find funds to get to Geneva. Very few of us have the chance to go to Geneva, so in-country focus reviews would give more opportunity for other CSOs to be part of the process”*

**CSO representative**

*Increased role and accessibility for national stakeholders.*

Another outcome of the pilot project, and the focused review procedure as a whole, is the widened scope of participation, including national and sub-national governance structures and individuals and organizations that are usually marginalized from the standard Geneva-based TB proceedings. As an example, participants considered that the pilot:

- enabled national stakeholders to have a more sustained engagement with the TB system, whilst reducing the financial constraints/burden of travelling to Geneva (CSO);
- facilitated multi-sectoral participation that would have not happened in Geneva. This, in turn, allowed each topic to be covered face-to-face and simultaneously by different institutions under different thematic angles (IMC).

*“Our presence here at the national level was very useful in terms of enhancing the participation of the state party, and also, more importantly, the civil society, which ultimately is helpful to enhance the implementation of the treaty bodies”*

**Treaty Body member**

### *Fostered cooperation among national human rights actors*

The establishment of a national taskforce among ministries and the focused review-specific CSO coalition brought together a number of key national stakeholders, thus fostering cooperation and coordination opportunities already before the focused review session in Freetown. The pre-focused review briefings and the two-and-a-half-day event further solidified these ties. On this point, participants considered that the pilot project:

- brought ministerial representatives, CSOs and the NHRIs to work as one in providing the results needed for the focused review pilot. This represented an opportunity to discuss issues in detail, agree and disagree, and then meet at mutual points on sensitive issues (IMC);
- allowed for strategies to be set up in order to provide effective and timely reporting in the future (IMC);
- fostered effective coordination among CSOs and the setup of consultation strategies including the establishment of a TB Reporting working group (CSO);
- assisted in establishing a constructive dialogue between ministerial representatives and CSOs as well as recommending critical solutions to salvage torture and other forms of abuse on both children and women (while respecting the universal human rights system) (CSO).

*“Some of the main challenges that small states face when engaging with the treaty body reporting process often relate to coordination issues between various ministries and state agencies, as well as capacity constraints. Such in-country focused review can help to address some of these challenges”*

#### **IMC representative**

### *More constructive environment*

Enhanced accessibility underscores the equality between TB members and domestic stakeholders, essential for a truly ‘constructive’ dialogue. A session “in capital”:

- improved the confidence of national stakeholders in engaging with TBs on a regular basis (CSO);
- resulted in more open and less adversarial dialogue between TB members and the national delegation (IMC).

*“[The national actors and CSOs] felt that we are now more accessible to them when present in the country, and they were very eager to learn from the process and to enhance their participation.”*

#### **Treaty Body member**

### *Contextualized recommendations and greater specificity/efficiency.*

TB members were better able to contextualize the issues faced by Sierra Leone, which led to more practical discussions on the best way to approach the recommendations under focused review, with a likely knock-on effect on implementation efforts. This may also lead to more context-sensitive COBs issued during the following review cycle. In addition, participants also stressed how the focused review contributed to a stronger national-level perception of the TBs as one integrated and coherent system. According to several participants, a focused approach and face-to-face interaction between national stakeholders and TB members in country:

- enabled more dedicated time to the most pressing human rights issues in the country (CSO);
- facilitated a deeper understanding of the situation on the ground by TB members (NHRI);
- ensured that national stakeholders focused on the vital issues without wasting time on peripheral issues (IMC);
- besides providing practical insights into how TB system operate, stakeholders gained better understanding on how different TBs make overlapping recommendations. This is something very useful for internal work in the ministries of competence and the Inter-Ministerial Committee more broadly (IMC).

*“It’s helpful to look at the reality on the ground and understand the challenges that both the civil society and the state party face in trying to engage with the treaty body system, and some of the other burdens they face such as the lack of resources, especially in developing countries”*

### **Treaty Body member**

#### *Strengthened visibility of the TB system*

The presence of TB members in Freetown spurred national media coverage in both printed and cable media outlets. A team from the national broadcasting corporation attended both the opening and closing of the event and representatives from the TB delegation and the GHRP were also invited to participate in a live morning show hosted by a national TV channel. As such, the focused review pilot increased the visibility of the system in different ways. This wide media coverage shows the potential of this exercise for bringing attention to the recommendations issued by TBs, as well as promoting the wider TB system by bringing it closer to the people. As an example, participants agreed that the pilot:

- created momentum within ministries and among CSOs but also among ordinary citizens in Sierra Leone through a sustained media campaign during the three days (CSO);

- invited sectors of the population to learn more about the rights contained in ratified international human rights treaties and encouraged different national stakeholders to acknowledge their limitations and learn their role and responsibilities with regards to their own mandate (IMC).

## Challenges

### *Selection of TB delegation*

This project was the first that piloted a TB focused review at national level. Perhaps due to the inaugural nature of this project, a confirmed TB delegation was only available one month prior to the session. This had a knock-on effect on the overall timeline, as the recommendations under focused review had to be “adopted” by the TB experts before submission to the different national stakeholders. Causes for this protracted process could have been a certain level of opposition to piloting such initiatives among a number of TB members.

### *Timeline*

A number of participants considered the overall project timeline too demanding, especially considering the submission date of the focused review questionnaire (mid-November) and the proximity of the session to the end of the year. More ample notice of the project should have been provided to all participants, including a more structured timeline leading up to the event on 7-9 December.

### *Submission of replies to focused review questionnaire*

The pilot would have benefited from a higher number of replies to the focused review questionnaire. The GHRP received only 4 replies from the national taskforce (Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs, Ministry of Information and Communication, Statistics Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone Correctional Service) and 3 replies from CSOs (50-50 Group, Plan International, Human Rights Defenders Network Sierra Leone). As such, the TB delegation did not receive information on every topic covered in the recommendations under focused review. In such instances, their preparation relied on desk research.

### *Online segments*

The TB delegation included two members attending the focused review session in person and two online, via Zoom. Throughout the event, several interruptions and poor audio/video quality hampered the possibility of the two online TB experts to contribute fully to the exchanges. Based on the feedback from almost all participants, in-person focused reviews were preferred due to the stark differences in terms of quality of engagement between the two modalities.

## *COVID-19 Pandemic*

Several national authorities across Europe announced border closures due to the spread of the Omicron variant one week prior to the event in Freetown. This put the whole event in jeopardy, as the decision to continue with the pilot was taken by the core planning group only days before the day of departure. Travel restrictions must be taken into consideration when planning such events.

## *Participation of stakeholders from the region*

According to various stakeholders, the opportunity to hold face-to-face exchanges with TB members facilitated a more inclusive and thorough representation of the human rights situation on the ground. However, further involvement of sub-national institutions at the regional level would have increased the quality of the exercise. Taking the focused review away from the capital would have granted others the opportunity to contribute to the process. The local context is quite different, and other provinces of the country, and not just the capital, should have had an opportunity to understand the obligations of the State as a member of the UN and as signatory to various UN human rights treaties.

## *Side events, in-situ visits and post-pilot planning*

The focused review pilot in Freetown was a unique opportunity for both the TB members to learn more about the human rights situation in the country and for the national stakeholders to learn more about the TB system. However, the potential of this in-country session was not fully realized. TB outreach and human rights promotion and education would have benefited from some side events and more visits to relevant national institutions. In addition, given the timeframe available for delivering the pilot, there was little to reflect on the most effective ways to follow-up on the national actors' participation.

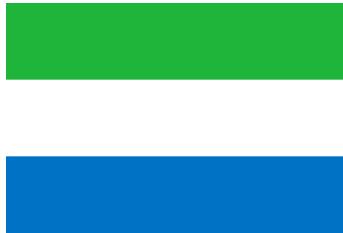
## **Conclusion and way forward**

This first focused review pilot was, in the opinion of all participants, a success, showing the benefits of such national follow-up between the full-scale Geneva-based reviews. It demonstrated the potential that in-country presence of TB members can have on meaningful national participation. Since its inception, the organizers designed the pilot to include all the relevant actors of the Sierra Leone national human rights system. The possibility to give updates and receive further guidance on the implementation of the recommendations issued by TBs during face-to-face, in-country meetings deepened the scope of action for both the international and national human rights monitoring mechanisms. Furthermore, benefits did not only apply to national stakeholders. For TB members, it was also fruitful to witness the national context first-hand, seeing the problems local rights-holders and duty-bearers face as well as simply liaising with local stakeholders who cannot often travel to Geneva.

Further pilots are scheduled in Africa and the Caribbean for the first half of 2022. For the latter part of 2022, the GHRP is scoping for focused review pilots in Europe and the Asia-Pacific.

*'Experimenting this new in-situ and in-between model of states' reviews by TBs puts us at the gate of changes'*

**OHCHR Regional Representative for West Africa**



# AGENDA

## Treaty Body Focused Review Pilot of Sierra Leone

7 - 8 December 2021, 09:30 – 16:30/17:00,

9 December 2021, 09:30 – 13:00

The Hub Hotel, 6 Regent Road, Wilberforce,  
Freetown, Sierra Leone



## Agenda

### Day 1

09:00 – 09:30

#### **Welcome Tea**

09:30 – 10:20

#### **Welcome and Introductory Remarks**

- Representative from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone
- Representative from the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva
- Representative from the Geneva Human Rights Platform
- Representative from the Commonwealth Secretariat
- Representative from the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
- Representative from the National Commission for Children
- Representative from OHCHR Regional Representative for West Africa Mr. Andrea Ori
- Representative from the Treaty Body delegation

10:20 – 10:30

#### **Ministerial Address**

- High level representative from the Government of Sierra Leone (Ministerial level)

10:30 – 11:00

#### **Presentation of the Focused Review Pilot Initiative**

- Representative from the GHRP
- Representative from the Commonwealth Secretariat

11:00 – 11:15

#### **Tea Break**

A project of the:

**GENEVA  
ACADEMY**

Académie de droit international  
humanitaire et de droits humains  
Academy of International  
Humanitarian Law and Human Rights

The Geneva Academy, a Joint Centre of



- 11:15 – 12:15      **Combined NHRI session - Human Rights Committee and Committee against Torture**
- Member of the Human Rights Committee
  - Member of the Committee against Torture
  - HRCSL Representatives
- Technical moderation: Representative from the GHRP/Commonwealth*
- 12:15 – 13:15      **Combined CSO session – Human Rights Committee and Committee against Torture**
- Member of the Human Rights Committee
  - Member of the Committee against Torture
  - CSO Representatives
- Technical moderation: Representative from the GHRP/Commonwealth*
- 13:15 – 14:00      **Lunch Break**
- 14:00 – 15:00      **Combined NHRI session - Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and Committee on the Rights of the Child**
- Member of the Committee the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
  - Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
  - HRCSL Representatives
  - NCC Representatives
- Technical moderation: Representative from the GHRP/Commonwealth*
- 15:00 – 16:00      **Combined CSO session – Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and Committee on the Rights of the Child**
- Member of the Committee the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
  - Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
  - CSO Representatives

*Technical moderation: Representative from the GHRP/Commonwealth*

- 16:00 – 16:30      **Concluding Remarks of Day 1 and evaluation form feedback**
- Representative from the GHRP/Commonwealth (first analysis of responses to evaluation forms submitted at the start of each session)

## Day 2

- 09:00 – 09:30      **Welcome Tea**

- 09:30 – 09:45      **Wrap-up from Day 1**
- Representative from the GHRP
  - Representative from the Commonwealth Secretariat

- 09:45 – 11:15      **Human Rights Committee Focused Review**
- Member of the Human Rights Committee
  - Ministerial Representatives
- Short initial presentation on the functioning of the Human Rights Committee, the Focused Review Pilot and technical moderation: Representative from the GHRP/Commonwealth*

- 11:15 – 11:30      **Tea Break**

- 11:30 – 13:00      **Committee against Torture Focused Review**
- Member of the Committee Against Torture
  - Ministerial Representatives
- Short initial presentation on the functioning of the Committee against Torture, the Focused Review Pilot and technical moderation: Representative from the GHRP/Commonwealth*

- 13:00 – 13:45      **Lunch Break**

- 13:45 – 15:15      **Committee on the Rights of the Child Focused Review**
- Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
  - Ministerial Representatives

*Short initial presentation on the functioning of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Focused Review Pilot and technical moderation: Representative from the GHRP/Commonwealth*

15:15 – 16:45

### **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Focused Review**

- Member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
- Ministerial Representatives

*Short initial presentation on the functioning of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Focused Review Pilot and technical moderation: Representative from the GHRP/Commonwealth*

16:45 – 17:00

### **Concluding Remarks of Day 2 and evaluation form feedback**

- Representative from the GHRP/Commonwealth (analysis of responses to evaluation forms submitted at the start of each session)

## **Day 3**

09:00 – 09:30

### **Welcome Tea**

09:30 – 09:45

### **Wrap-up from Day 2**

- Representative from the GHRP
- Representative from the Commonwealth Secretariat

09:45 – 11:00

### **Lessons learned, benefits and challenges of the Focused Review Pilot – NHRI and CSO session**

- Open dialogue on lessons learned, benefits and challenges with representatives from HRCSL and civil society organizations

*Short initial presentation on the results from evaluation forms and technical moderation: Representative from the GHRP/Commonwealth*

11:00 – 11:15

### **Tea break**

11:15 – 12:30

### **Lessons learned, benefits and challenges of the Focused Review Pilot – ministerial session**

- Open dialogue on lessons learned, benefits and challenges with Ministerial Representatives

*Short initial presentation on the results from evaluation forms and technical moderation: Representative from the GHRP/Commonwealth*

12:30 – 13:00

**Closing of Focused Review Pilot of Sierra Leone**

- Representative from Government of Sierra Leone
- Representative from the Treaty Body delegation
- Representative from the Commonwealth Secretariat
- Representative from the GHRP



# FOCUSED REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

## Treaty Body Focused Review Pilot of Sierra Leone

### Background

The *Focused Review Questionnaire* aims at identifying the steps taken by the State concerned towards the implementation of UN Treaty Bodies' follow-up recommendations as well as the needs/capacity necessary towards such implementation. These recommendations are clearly identified in a paragraph at the end of the concluding observations and represent specific Concluding Observations from the last review cycle that the Treaty Bodies have recognized as urgent, priority or protective, and implementable within one or two years.

The present questionnaire addresses the follow up recommendations to Sierra Leone made by the Human Rights Committee (HRCttee), Committee against Torture (CAT), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The focused review sessions will be based on a constructive dialogue between the national taskforce representatives and participating members of each of the four Treaty Bodies.

This questionnaire will be submitted to Sierra Leone and its governmental agencies as well as to all other national stakeholders, inviting them to report on the status of implementation of the above recommendations. It is thus expected that, upon receipt of this questionnaire, those stakeholders prepare and submit a written reply one week in advance of the event (1 December 2021), in order to provide an update - in the context of the Focused Review Pilot - on the measures taken to implement the above-mentioned recommendations.

## Human Rights Committee (HRCttee)

Review Cycle (I): 108th Session (2013), 110th Session (2014)

Concluding Observations (COB): [CCPR/C/SLE/CO/1](#)

FOLLOW-UP COB
<p>26. In accordance with rule 71, paragraph 5, of the Committee's rules of procedure, the State party should provide, within one year, relevant information on its implementation of the Committee's recommendations made in <b>paragraphs 14, 16 and 20</b> above.</p>

Selected Paragraph	Theme	Recommendation
Para.14	Abortion, adolescent pregnancy and maternal mortality	<p>14. The Committee notes with interest the Abortion Bill of 2012, but expresses its concern at the current general criminalization of abortion, which may oblige pregnant women to seek clandestine abortions that endanger their lives and health. The Committee is also concerned at the persistently high incidence of adolescent pregnancy and maternal mortality, despite the State party's prevention efforts (arts. 6 and 17).</p> <p><b>The State party should accelerate the adoption of a bill that includes provision for exceptions to the general prohibition of abortion for therapeutic reasons and in cases of pregnancy resulting from rape or incest. The State party should ensure that reproductive health services are accessible for all women and adolescents. Furthermore, the State party should increase education and awareness-raising programmes, both formal (at schools and colleges) and informal (in the mass media), on the importance of using contraceptives and the right to reproductive health.</b></p>
Para. 16	Prohibition of torture and ill-treatment	<p>16. The Committee is concerned that, although torture is prohibited in the Constitution, the State party has not adopted criminal legislation that defines and criminalizes torture explicitly. The Committee regrets the continued reports of torture and ill-treatment of detainees by law enforcement personnel, and notes with concern the information provided by the State party in its initial report that "at the present, there are no official complaints of torture." It regrets the lack of concrete measures by the State party to thoroughly investigate and prosecute alleged cases of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and ill-treatment by law enforcement</p>

		<p>officials and the delays in establishing the Independent Police Complaints Board (arts. 7 and 10).</p> <p><b>The State party should adopt in its legislation a definition of torture that fully complies with articles 1 and 4 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and with article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It should ensure that law enforcement personnel receive training on the investigation of torture and ill-treatment by integrating the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1999 (the Istanbul Protocol) in all training programmes for law enforcement officials. The State party should ensure that allegations of torture and ill-treatment are effectively investigated, alleged perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with appropriate sanctions, and victims are adequately compensated.</b></p>
<p>Para. 20</p>	<p>Pretrial and arbitrary detention</p>	<p>20. While acknowledging progress made, the Committee expresses concern at reports of arbitrary detention, lengthy pretrial detention (including detention during trial) and the unpredictable and, at times, overly restrictive exercise of power over the granting of bail. The Committee is concerned about the high number of persons held in pretrial detention, including juveniles, and the fact that pretrial detainees are not separated from convicted prisoners (arts. 9, 10 and 14).</p> <p><b>The State party should take appropriate measures to ensure that no one under its jurisdiction is subject to arbitrary arrest or detention and that detained persons enjoy all legal guarantees, in compliance with articles 9 and 14 of the Covenant. The State party should also encourage the implementation of alternatives to detention by courts, taking into account the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules), and take urgent measures regarding the situation of inmates who have been in pretrial detention for many years. It should further take appropriate action to ensure that convicted persons are not detained together with pretrial detainees.</b></p>



# Committee against Torture (CAT)

Review Cycle (I): 52nd Session (2014)

Concluding Observations (COB): [CAT/C/SLE/CO/1](#)

FOLLOW-UP COB
<p>35. The Committee requests the State party to provide, by 23 May 2015, follow-up information in response to the Committee’s recommendations related to (a) ensuring or strengthening legal safeguards for persons in detention; (b) conducting prompt, impartial and effective investigations into cases of the involvement of members of law enforcement agencies in unlawful killings; and (c) prosecuting suspects and sanctioning perpetrators of torture or ill-treatment, as specified in <b>paragraphs 11, 13 and 28 (b)</b> of the present concluding observations. In addition, the Committee requests follow-up information on the regulation of the absolute prohibition of torture in the Constitution and the use of alternative measures of detention, as contained in <b>paragraphs 10 and 24</b> of the present concluding observations.</p>

Selected Paragraph	Theme	Recommendation
Para.10	Absolute prohibition of torture	<p>10. The Committee notes with concern that section 20 of the Constitution does not absolutely prohibit torture under any and all circumstances, since paragraph 2 of the same section authorizes the infliction of any kind of punishment that was lawful before the entry into force of the Constitution. Neither does section 29 of the Constitution, regulating a state of public emergency, explicitly indicate either that the prohibition of torture is non-derogable (art. 2).</p> <p><b>The State party should repeal paragraph 2 of section 20, and make the necessary amendments to section 29, of the Constitution during its current Constitutional review process to legislate for the absolute prohibition of torture, explicitly providing that no exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture. The State party should also explicitly indicate in its national legislation that the statute of limitations shall not apply for the offence of torture.</b></p>

<p>Para. 11</p>	<p>Fundamental legal safeguards</p>	<p>11. While noting that section 17, paragraph 2, of the Constitution provides that detainees have the right to access a lawyer from the outset of their deprivation of liberty, the Committee is concerned that this safeguard cannot be effectively implemented, since most detainees cannot afford a lawyer, and the National Legal Aid Board created in the Legal Aid Act, 2012 is yet to commence its work. The Committee is further concerned that, under section 17, paragraph 3, of the Constitution, detainees can be held for as long as 10 days in police custody before being brought before a judge in the case of a capital offence, and are reportedly held for longer periods than those prescribed in the Constitution. Moreover, detainees do not have a legal right to an independent medical examination as soon as they are admitted to a place of detention, nor, in the case of foreigners, to communicate with the consular authorities. The Committee is further concerned at the fact that the registration of detainees is not regulated and registers are poorly kept (art. 2).</p> <p><b>The State party should:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Ensure that detainees enjoy, de jure and de facto, all legal safeguards from the moment when they are deprived of their liberty, particularly the rights to be examined by an independent doctor; to notify a relative and, in the case of foreigners, consular authorities; to be brought promptly before a judge; and to have prompt access to a lawyer and, if necessary, to legal aid;</b></p> <p><b>(b) Take effective steps without delay to ensure that the National Legal Aid Board, created in the Legal Aid Act, 2012, commences its work as soon as possible and, with the Sierra Leone Bar Association, is provided with sufficient resources to provide legal aid to all persons in need;</b></p> <p><b>(c) Adopt effective legislative, administrative, judicial and other measures to regulate the registration of all detainees in the country, which should indicate the type of detention, the crime and period of detention or imprisonment, the date and time of deprivation of liberty and of being taken into detention, the place where they are being held, and their age and sex;</b></p> <p><b>(d) Make the necessary amendments to its laws to abolish the provision under which people may be held in police custody for a 10-day period or 72 hours, depending on the offence, and introduce in its place a maximum 48-hour period.</b></p>
<p>Para. 13</p>	<p>Excessive use of force, including lethal force</p>	<p>13. The Committee is highly concerned about allegations of excessive use of force, including lethal force, by police and security forces, especially when apprehending suspects and quelling demonstrations, and about the broad threshold for the use of lethal force in section 16, paragraph 2, of the Constitution. In particular, the Committee is concerned that the alleged excessive use of force by</p>

		<p>the police in Bumbuna, Tonkolili, in April 2012 led only to a confidential Coroner's inquest (arts. 2, 12 and 16).</p> <p><b>The State party should take immediate and effective action to investigate promptly, effectively and impartially all allegations of excessive use of force, especially lethal force, by members of law enforcement agencies and to bring those responsible for such acts to justice and provide the victims with redress. The State party should also ensure that confidential Coroner's inquests are complementary and not a substitute for criminal prosecutions and court proceedings.</b></p> <p><b>The Committee urges the State party to make the necessary amendments in section 16 of the Constitution and the police rules of procedure to ensure that lethal use of firearms by law enforcement officials can only be employed as a measure of last resort and if strictly unavoidable for the purpose of protecting life, in accordance with the Convention, the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990). The State party should provide regular training to law enforcement personnel in order to ensure that officials comply with the above rules and are aware of the liabilities they incur if they make unnecessary or excessive use of force.</b></p>
<p>Para. 24</p>	<p>Pretrial detention</p>	<p>24. The Committee welcomes the ongoing reform of the Criminal Procedure Act, aimed at accelerating trials and enabling the imposition of alternative methods of serving sentences. The Committee remains concerned, however, at the fact that pretrial detainees reportedly account for more than half of the prison population. The Committee notes with concern the excessive resort to imprisonment for minor offences and the current restrictive use of alternative measures of detention, due in part to the lack of sureties. The Committee also takes note of information indicating that, although the remand warrant cannot legally exceed eight days, it is normally not renewed, due to the lack of magistrates, or not respected. The Committee observes, with concern, that these aspects have a direct impact on the serious overcrowding of prisons (arts. 2, 11, 12 and 16).</p> <p><b>The State party should:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Ensure that the Criminal Procedure Act 2014 is promptly adopted, incorporating these recommendations, and is given force of law;</b></p> <p><b>(b) Review the provisions on alternative measures of detention in order to remove the obstacles to their effective application;</b></p> <p><b>(c) Reduce the length and the number of pretrial detentions and ensure that pretrial detainees receive a fair and prompt trial;</b></p>

		<p><b>(d) Increase the use of non-custodial measures and community service orders, especially for minor offences, and sensitize the relevant judicial personnel to the use of such measures, in accordance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules).</b></p>
<p>Para. 28(b)</p>	<p>Prompt, thorough and impartial investigations</p>	<p>28. While welcoming the recent establishment of the Independent Police Complaints Board, the Committee notes with concern that the disciplinary bodies within the Army and prison system are still hierarchically connected to the officials being investigated, as acknowledged in the State report (CAT/C/SLE/1, para. 74). The Committee also considers that the function of the Attorney General as a Minister of Justice could compromise its institutional independence. The Committee is also concerned as to the independence and effectiveness of the criminal investigations into allegations of torture or ill-treatment committed by public officials, since at magistrate courts crimes are prosecuted by police prosecutors, and any private citizen may also carry out a prosecution, which can be taken over or terminated at the discretion of the Attorney General. The Committee is further concerned that the State party was unable to provide disaggregated data on complaints, investigations, prosecutions and convictions in cases of torture and ill-treatment (arts. 2, 11, 12, 13 and 16).</p> <p><b>The State party should:</b></p> <p>(...)</p> <p><b>(b) Take appropriate measures to ensure that a prompt, thorough and impartial criminal investigation is opened ex officio by a State counsel where there are reasons to believe that an act of torture or ill-treatment has been committed, bring the suspects to trial and, if found guilty, sentence them to penalties that take into account the grave nature of their acts;</b></p>

# Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Review Cycle (VI): 57th Session (2014)

Concluding Observations (COB): [CEDAW/C/SLE/CO/6](#)

FOLLOW-UP COB
<p>49. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in <b>paragraphs 11, and 33 (a), (b), (c) and (d)</b> above.</p>

Selected Paragraph	Theme	Recommendation
Para.11	Constitutional and legislative framework, harmonization of laws, and discriminatory laws	<p>11. The Committee welcomes the commitment of the State party to finalizing the constitutional review and holding a referendum by March 2015. <b>In this regard, it calls upon the State party:</b></p> <p><b>(a) To ensure that the constitutional review is finalized within the given time frame and that section 27 (d) (4) is accordingly repealed, inter alia, through raising the awareness of all relevant stakeholders, including local chiefs and community leaders, regarding the importance of incorporating the prohibition of sex-based discrimination and gender equality provisions in legal texts;</b></p> <p><b>(b) To take a holistic approach to law reform that will ensure women’s de jure and de facto equality within the framework of the ongoing legislative and constitutional review processes;</b></p> <p><b>(c) To undertake intensive awareness-raising campaigns so as to ensure that section 27 (d) (4) of the Constitution, as well as all discriminatory laws, including customary law, are amended or repealed and brought into full compliance with the Convention and the Committee’s general recommendations, as a matter of priority.</b></p>
Para. 33(a), (b), (c) and (d)	Health	<p>33. The Committee urges the <b>State party to ensure the effective implementation of all measures aimed at facilitating women’s affordable access to health care, including through the allocation of sufficient resources and the implementation of the</b></p>

		<p><b>Initiative for Free Health Care throughout the State party. The Committee recommends that the State party:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Strengthen its efforts to reduce maternal mortality, address its causes and increase the number of skilled health-care personnel, in particular in rural areas;</b></p> <p><b>(b) Provide effective access for women and girls to comprehensive information regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights, including on contraceptive use in order to reduce the rate of unwanted pregnancies, teenage pregnancies and unsafe abortions, and ensure that modern contraceptives are available and affordable for all women;</b></p> <p><b>(c) Enhance women’s access to health-care facilities and skilled birth attendance, postnatal and maternal care, especially in rural areas and in Northern Province;</b></p> <p><b>(d) Accelerate the adoption of the abortion bill;</b></p>
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## Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Review Cycle (VI-VII): 90th Session (2021)

List of issues prior to reporting (LOIPR): [CRC/C/SLE/QPR/6-7](#)

<b>LOIPR</b>
<p>1. The State party is requested to submit in writing the information requested below (21,200 words maximum), if possible before 15 February 2023. The replies should take into consideration the Committee’s recommendations contained in its concluding observations (CRC/C/SLE/CO/3-5) adopted on 1 November 2016. The Committee may take up all aspects of children’s rights set out in the Convention and its Optional Protocols during the dialogue with the State party.</p>

Review Cycle (III-V): 73th Session (2016)

Concluding Observations (COB): [CRC/C/SLE/CO/3-5](#)

<b>FOLLOW-UP COB</b>
<p>5. The Committee reminds the State party of the indivisibility and interdependence of all the rights enshrined in the Convention and emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. The Committee would like to draw the State party’s attention to the recommendations concerning the following areas, in respect of which urgent measures must be taken: <b>abuse and neglect (para. 19)</b>,</p>

**sexual exploitation and abuse (para. 21), harmful practices (para. 23), children with disabilities (para. 28), adolescent health (para. 32) and education (para. 35).**

44. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that **the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations are fully implemented.** The Committee also recommends that the combined third, fourth and fifth periodic reports, the written replies to the list of issues and the present concluding observations be made widely available in the languages of the country.

Document	Selected Paragraph	Theme	Recommendation
COB (2016)	Para.19	Abuse and neglect	<p>19. In the light of its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, and taking note of target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals on ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children, the Committee urges the State party to:</p> <p>(a) Strengthen the technical and operational capacities of the Family Support Units to increase their outreach at the village level;</p> <p>(b) Take the necessary measures to ensure that child victims of violence receive psychological and recovery support and encourage them to report cases of abuse, violence and neglect;</p> <p>(c) Establish mechanisms for the early detection and prevention of child abuse at the community level by, inter alia, strengthening the capacity of the existing local councils, child welfare committees and other community-based child protection mechanisms;</p> <p>(d) Ensure that criminal proceedings are systematically brought against the perpetrators of violence against children in order to eliminate impunity and raise awareness among families and community leaders about the negative consequences of the culture of impunity;</p> <p>(e) Establish a national database on all cases of violence against children, including ill-treatment, sexual abuse, child abuse and neglect and domestic violence.</p>
LOIPR (2021)	Para. 16	Freedom of the child from all forms of violence	<p>16. Please provide an update on the measures taken or envisaged to:</p> <p>(a) Prohibit corporal punishment by law in all settings and enhance awareness of non-violent parenting;</p> <p>(b) Investigate and sanction the reported police and military violence in enforcing</p>

			<p>the COVID-19 measures;</p> <p>(c) Tackle and combat domestic violence, bullying and violence at schools, including by teachers and school staff;</p> <p>(d) Ensure that the perpetrators of violence against children are systematically held accountable;</p> <p>(e) Strengthen the capacities of the Family Support Units to increase their outreach at the village level;</p> <p>(f) Ensure the availability of legal support and child-friendly confidential complaint mechanisms and age-friendly information on access to counselling and redress, including compensation and rehabilitation.</p>
COB (2016)	Para. 21	Sexual exploitation and abuse	<p>21. Drawing attention to target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals on eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, the Committee urges the State party to:</p> <p>(a) Prioritize and ensure adequate resources for the implementation of the Sexual Offences Act and other relevant legislation and adopt comprehensive measures to address such violence;</p> <p>(b) Ensure the effectiveness of mechanisms, procedures and guidelines for mandatory reporting of cases of sexual abuse and exploitation and ensure accessible, child-friendly and effective reporting channels for such violations;</p> <p>(c) Ensure that all child victims receive psychosocial medical support and access to post-rape health services;</p> <p>(d) Take all necessary measures to investigate reported cases of sexual violence and prosecute and punish the perpetrators without any exception, including by not accepting any out-of-court settlements in such cases;</p> <p>(e) Conduct awareness-raising activities and combat stigmatization of child victims of sexual violence, including incest.</p>
LOIPR (2021)	Para. 17	Sexual exploitation, abuse and gender-based violence	<p>17. With reference to the Committee's previous concluding observations (CRC/C/SLE/CO/3-5, para. 21), please provide information on:</p> <p>(a) Whether the age below which it is prohibited to engage in sexual activities with a child has been established by law;</p> <p>(b) The functioning, information management, availability and accessibility of the child helpline established in 2020 in response to gender-based violence and child sexual abuse, including on-line;</p> <p>(c) Measures to enhance awareness of the harmful impact of child sexual abuse,</p>



			<p>ensuring reporting and the availability of the referral services, particularly in the rural areas;</p> <p>(d) The availability of legal aid and psychological support personnel in the onestop centres for gender-based violence and child sexual abuse and whether they are ageappropriate;</p> <p>(e) The funding for the post-rape services and social integration of child victims of sexual violence;</p> <p>(f) Multisectoral measures to investigate reported cases of sexual violence against children and prosecute and punish the perpetrators without any exception, including by not accepting any out-of-court settlements in such cases, in order to eliminate impunity;</p>
COB (2016)	Para. 23	Harmful practices	<p>23. In the light of the joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2014) on harmful practices, the Committee urges the State party to:</p> <p>(a) Continue its fight with the assistance of former female practitioners of female genital mutilation to eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation on children nationwide;</p> <p>(b) Accelerate efforts and programmes to sensitize and assist practitioners of female genital mutilation to find alternative sources of income and encourage them to abandon the practice;</p> <p>(c) Take concrete and consistent measures, including the harmonization of laws, to prevent and eliminate child marriage and undertake comprehensive awareness-raising campaigns on the negative consequences of child marriage on girls.</p>
LOIPR (2021)	Para. 18	Harmful practices	<p>18. With reference to the Committee's previous concluding observations (CRC/C/SLE/CO/3-5, para. 23), please provide an update on the legislative and practical steps taken or envisaged to prohibit and eradicate child marriage and female genital mutilation. In particular, please provide information on measures taken or envisaged to:</p> <p>(a) Prohibit female genital mutilation by law;</p> <p>(b) Implement the National Strategy for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Marriage (2018-2022);</p> <p>(c) Conduct awareness-raising campaigns on the negative consequences of child marriage on girls and of female genital mutilation, and on the African Union campaign to end child marriage.</p>

COB (2016)	Para. 28	Children with disabilities	<p>28. In the light of its general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities, the Committee urges the State party to:</p> <p>(a) Adopt the National Policy for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities;</p> <p>(b) Set up a comprehensive strategy for the inclusion of children with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Ensure sufficient funding for the National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities, in particular to support children with disabilities;</p> <p>(d) Support communities, local councils and NGO partners to build capacity for family and community-based care and support for children with disabilities;</p> <p>(e) Ensure that children with disabilities have access to inclusive early childhood care and education, early development programmes, health care and other services, and ensure that such services receive adequate human, technical and financial resources;</p> <p>(f) Adopt measures towards fully inclusive education;</p> <p>(g) Collect and analyse data on the situation of all children with disabilities, disaggregated by, inter alia, age, sex, type of disability, ethnic and national origin and geographic location.</p>
LOIPR (2021)	Para. 20	Children with disabilities	<p>20. Please provide information on measures taken or envisaged to:</p> <p>(a) Address the three challenges identified by the Social Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities (2019-2023), namely the data, stigma, and lack of coherent institutional mechanism to support implementation of the legislative framework in relation to children with disabilities;</p> <p>(b) Ensure that children with disabilities and their families have access to social support programmes, such as the National Social Safety Net, at the community level;</p> <p>(c) Ensure that children with disabilities have access to inclusive early childhood care and education, early development programmes and health care;</p> <p>(d) Provide adequate human, technical and financial resources for the implementation of the Radical Inclusion Policy;</p> <p>(e) Provide children with disabilities with rehabilitation and reasonable accommodation for their full inclusion in all areas of public life.</p>
COB (2016)	Para. 32	Adolescent health	<p>32. In the light of its general comment No. 4 (2003) on adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention, the Committee urges the State party to:</p>

			<p>(a) Allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to the secretariat dealing with teenage pregnancy and to the strategy for the reduction of teenage pregnancy;</p> <p>(b) Improve adolescent girls' access to reproductive health-care and related services and increase support for reproductive health and family planning services and access to affordable contraceptive methods;</p> <p>(c) Decriminalize abortion in all circumstances and review its legislation with a view to ensuring children's access to safe abortion and post-abortion care services, and ensure that the views of the child are always heard and respected in abortion decisions;</p> <p>(d) Take measures to raise awareness of and foster responsible sexual behaviour, particularly among boys and men;</p> <p>(e) Ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum and targeted at adolescent girls and boys, with special attention on preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, particularly HIV, and ensure access to confidential counselling;</p> <p>(f) Protect pregnant girls and adolescent mothers and their children against discrimination;</p> <p>(g) Address the incidence of drug use by children and adolescents by, inter alia, providing children and adolescents with accurate and objective information, as well as life skills education, on preventing substance abuse, including tobacco and alcohol, and develop accessible and youth-friendly drug-dependence treatment and harm reduction services.</p>
LOIPR (2021)	Para. 22	Adolescent health	<p>22. Please provide information on:</p> <p>(a) Concrete measures taken and resources available for the implementation of the National Strategy for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Marriage (2018-2022);</p> <p>(b) Steps taken to decriminalize abortion in all circumstances;</p> <p>(c) Availability of and access to age-appropriate reproductive health services, affordable contraceptive methods and free and safe abortion and post-abortion services to girls;</p> <p>(d) Comprehensive education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including information on family planning, contraceptives and the risks related to early pregnancies, as well as on the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections;</p> <p>(e) Measures to address the consequences of female genital mutilation, including by ensuring access to free treatment for obstetric fistula;</p> <p>(f) The prevalence of drug, alcohol and tobacco use by adolescent children;</p>

			(g) Any measures to adopt a policy framework on mental health of children and strengthen the provision of mental health and psychological services for children, particularly on the community level.
COB (2016)	Para. 35	Education	<p>35. In the light of its general comment No. 1 (2001) on the aims of education, and taking note of target 4.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals on eliminating gender disparities in education, the Committee urges the State party to:</p> <p>(a) Ensure that primary school is genuinely free and remove all other additional costs that are barriers to access in order to ensure the participation of all children;</p> <p>(b) Immediately lift the discriminatory ban on pregnant girls attending mainstream schools and sitting exams;</p> <p>(c) Ensure that pregnant girls and adolescent mothers are supported and assisted in continuing their education in mainstream schools;</p> <p>(d) Take appropriate measures to address charges of sexual abuse in schools and prosecute perpetrators;</p> <p>(e) Taking note of target 4.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals on ensuring that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education, allocate sufficient financial resources for the development and expansion of such services, based on a comprehensive and holistic policy of early childhood care and development.</p>
LOIPR (2021)	Para. 25	Education, rest, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities	<p>25. Please inform the Committee of the measures taken to:</p> <p>(a) Ensure free early childhood education, primary and secondary education as per the Free Quality School Education policy, to discourage teachers to charge for extra lessons;</p> <p>(b) Improve the equity and quality of education, including the quality and availability of school facilities, educational materials and teaching staff, and improve educational outcomes, particularly in functional literacy;</p> <p>(c) Provide children, in particular children with disabilities, children in rural areas, asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children and children in disadvantaged socioeconomic situations, with accessible and inclusive education;</p> <p>(d) Ensure that the new policy issued on 31 March 2020 is effectively implemented to keep pregnant students and adolescent mothers in school;</p> <p>(e) Strengthen professional development for teachers;</p>

			<p>(f) Address any disproportionate impact of closing of schools in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the right of children in disadvantaged situations, including</p> <p>pregnant girls;</p> <p>(g) Expedite the approval of government grants and school subsidies for community schools and support the community schools in meeting the minimum standards,</p> <p>quality and safety;</p> <p>(h) Strictly enforce the Teacher’s Code of Conduct and take appropriate measures to address charges of sexual abuse by teachers in schools and prosecute the perpetrators</p>
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## **Annex C – Opening Speech, OHCHR Regional Representative for West Africa**

Excellency,

Distinguished human rights experts, Distinguished State’s officials, Partners, namely representatives of the Geneva Academy and the Geneva Human Rights Platform, Representatives of the Commonwealth Secretariat Freetown based UN Colleagues and elsewhere Friends and human rights defenders

I am pleased to address you today as representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office that services the treaty bodies, the guardians of the human rights treaties, as we embark on this first ever simulation exercise of a focused review which may one day be a feature of the treaty body system.

In my brief remarks, allow me to recall some treaty body system- related basics. As you all know, we call them treaty body (or conventional bodies) because all of them were created by the legally binding human rights treaties. Their main function is to monitor their respective field-related scopes and focus, in law and in practice, by States parties through different procedures. Together, treaties and their bodies are the foundation of the international human rights protection system.

To date, there are ten treaty bodies. Two monitor the implementation of the human rights covenants which cover broad range of rights. The others are devoted to tackle specific human rights issues or to enhance protection of a specific groups or rights holders in focus.

Most treaty bodies devote much of their meeting time to state party reviews, involving examination of reports from, and dialogue with States, enriched by contributions from civil society, NHRIs and others. These result in concluding observations by treaty bodies. Every year, around 150 States are reviewed and receive recommendations

that seek to influence domestic policies and laws.

They also have quasi-judicial mandates, through specific procedures dealing with complaints from individuals or of inter-state nature in some specific cases. In addition to that and as authoritative interpreters of their respective treaties, they have *this* specific role of providing orientations and others interpretational-doctrines that reflects their multidisciplinary authoritative and informative jurisprudences in tackling human rights issues.

**“Rome Wasn't Built in a Day”**; exactly like the TB system. The building process has been piecemeal over decades, since the first treaty body, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, was established in 1969. During those decades, challenges have led to various initiatives to strengthen the system in place.

**TBs are an evolving system**; as many of you know, there were four major reform initiatives led by the UN between 1988 and 2014. The last in date, is the legacy of the former High Commissioner's Navya Pillay treaty body strengthening process. Started in 2009 by a series of consultations, the initiative resulted in the adoption of GA resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the treaty body system in April 2014.

We can trace back the roots of today's simulation exercise to the OHCHR 2012 report (result of the series of consultations started in 2009) that informed the 2009-2014 reform. The report highlighted the fact that the percentage of States that comply with their reporting obligations remained extremely low. New ideas and paradigms emerged from the last reform, all starting from the same baseline as an imperative of the necessity to strengthen the TBs system and address underreporting.

The [2014 GA resolution 68/268](#) envisaged an evaluation of how its measures-related implementation progressed after six years. The 2020 inter-governmental review-process has sought to take stock on successes and challenges of the implementation of the resolution 68/268.

A predictable review cycle is one of the proposals that arose along the 2020 review and presented by the Chairpersons of Treaty Bodies in their [position paper of 2019](#). The paper announces the intention of the two Covenant Committees (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Human Rights Committee) to review all States parties on an 8-year cycle and to synchronize the timing of their reviews.

The fixed nature of the comprehensive calendar is its most important feature, providing for predictability and stability in reporting for both States parties and treaty bodies. This responds to the GA resolution 68/268, whereby States invited the treaty bodies to work to increase coordination and predictability in the reporting process.

The subject of our event, a focused review, is one of the ideas being contemplated to complement the predictable review cycle. Different modalities were put forward, including a suggestion of alternating between full and focused reviews, which may

consist of an in-situ visit. In other words, the focused review would complement the Geneva-based review with a national follow-up component. It would bring the treaty body system, the pillar of the international human rights protection system, closer to the duty-bearers and rights-holders.

**We have high hopes in innovative ideas like this simulation exercise as we have seen that treaty bodies and us are committed to continue evolving and ready to lead changes.** The Covid-19 crisis prompted us to find creative ways to pursue our work. It has created serious gaps and delays in the TBs work as in-person interaction and dialogues, which are essential components of the work of treaty bodies, could not proceed as usual. At the same time, the crisis, with the increasing use of digital tools, has also opened new opportunities that can complement the way TB work is traditionally carried out.

**We are piloting this new model, we are at the gate of change today!**

We are fortunate to have an organization like the Geneva Academy which is ready to use its resources and expertise to test new ideas. Let me acknowledge today the Geneva Academy's role in supporting the reflections on the treaty body system for over years. We are also grateful that Sierra Leone accepted to conduct to pilot this model.

As I said earlier, I will leave the words of thanks for the conclusion because accepting and hosting the current event is only a chronological culmination of preceding steps. It is an honour for us to share with Sierra Leone this first unique experience. As an Office, we are glad that by taking part in this simulation exercise, our field work also contributes to the thinking and experimentation of ideas for the future of the treaty body system.

Lastly, let me express thanks to the commonwealth secretariat that co-organize this event for their commitment to human rights issues and for the involvement in such unique experience.

Friends, colleagues and Excellency, I will conclude with extending my warmest wishes for a successful exercise.

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## Annex D – List of Participants

### List of Participants - National Taskforce of Sierra Leone (IMC)

IMPLEMENTATOR USERS	MDAS
1.Mr. Patrick George Vandi Statistician	<b>Statistics Sierra Leone</b>
2. Alieu Vandi Koroma Esq (State Counsel)	<b>Ministry Of Justice and Attorney General's Office</b>
3.Rev. Gibrilla Kargbo Director	<b>National Commission for Democratization</b>
4.Chief Superintendent of Police Amadu M.Turay	<b>Sierra Leone Police</b>
6 Mr. Thomas Ansumana	<b>Ministry of Agriculture</b>
7 Mr. Osman Joseph Tarawally Data Processor	<b>Sierra Leone Correctional Service:</b>
8 Ms. Marliatu Walon-Jalloh Senior Information Officer	<b>Ministry of Information and Communication</b>



<p><b>9</b> Mr. Momoh Conteh Senior Policy and Public Affairs Officer</p>	<p><b>Ministry of Political and Public Affairs</b></p>
<p><b>10</b> Dr. Philip D. Kargbo Director of Finance and Admin</p>	<p><b>Ministry of Health and Sanitation:</b></p>
<p><b>11</b> Mr. Olushogo A. David Mediation and Programmes Officer- Western Region</p>	<p><b>Political Parties Registration</b></p>
<p><b>12</b> Ms. Sylvia A. Kabia Senior Programmes Officer</p>	<p><b>Justice Sector Coordination Office</b></p>
<p><b>13</b> Mr. David A.K Abu Senior Planning Officer</p>	<p><b>Ministry of Planning and Economic Development</b></p>
<p><b>14</b> Mohamed Kallon Esq Legal Officer</p>	<p><b>Ministry of Finance</b></p>
<p><b>15</b> Mr. Osman Kargbo SLEO</p>	<p><b>Ministry of Labour and Social Security</b></p>
<p><b>16</b> Mr. Benjamin Gegbe M&amp;E Manager</p>	<p><b>NaCSA-National Commission for Social Action</b></p>
<p><b>17</b> Dr. Alimamy Kargbo</p>	<p><b>NASSIT</b></p>

H/Actuarial Statistics	
18 Ms. Elizabeth M. Yajah Manger	<b>Ministry of Transport and Aviation</b>
19 Alieu Wurie	<b>Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary School Education</b>
20 Abdul R. Sesay	<b>Ministry of Youth Affairs</b>
21.Mr. Aloysius Alpha Foday-Kai Principal Legal Research Officer	<b>Law Reform Commission of Sierra Leone</b>
22. Ms. Monica Kamara AGCH-Architect	<b>Ministry of Works and Public Assets</b>
23. Mr. Harry Mahoi Senior Social Services Officer	<b>Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs</b>
24. Daniel Gbaw	<b>Ministry of Social Welfare</b>
25. Victor H. Kargbo Assistant Director	<b>Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources</b>

## List of Participants – CSOs and Human Rights State Institutions

NAME and SURNAME	ORGANIZATION
X	Human Rights Defenders Networks
X	Center for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL) - Sierra Leone, Executive Director
X	Prison Watch Sierra Leone
X	Independent activist lawyer
X	Child Rights Coalition Sierra Leone
X	Plan International Sierra Leone
X	Youth Representative
X	Youth Representative
	Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CDHR)
X	Legal Access through Women Yearning for Equality Rights &

	Social justice (LAWYERS)
X	Fifty Fifty Group
X	Amnesty International Sierra Leone
X	Commissioner, National Commission for Children
X	Deputy Commissioner, National Commission for Children
X	Vice Chairperson Commissioner, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
X	Officer, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone