



# PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

*by*

**H.E. MS. MIATTA B. KARGBO**  
**Minister of Health and Sanitation**

*at the*

General Debate on National Experience in Population Matters:  
Assessment of the Status of Implementation of the Programme of  
Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development

New York, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2014

*Check Against Delivery*

**Mr. Chairman,**

Sierra Leone associates with the statements delivered by Kenya on behalf of the African Group. We consider this 47<sup>th</sup> session of the CPD as a critical opportunity to advance our **collective** development efforts **in improving** the lives of our people, with equity and dignity; and **ensuring** sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Improving the health of the poor and vulnerable particularly women and children is an investment in economic and social growth, and a priority for the reduction of poverty in Sierra Leone. Over the years, efforts have been made in strengthening existing health programmes and introducing new policies and services that will elevate service quality and accessibility.

Sierra Leone believes that health fundamentally affects our national productivity and is therefore a critical input for development. Health, gender equality and women's empowerment, youth empowerment and employment, and human rights are among the eight key priorities in Sierra Leone's development agenda, the "*Agenda for Prosperity*". The "*Agenda for Prosperity*" symbolizes a promise renewed, a promise to enhance and improve the health of our people; a promise for better healthcare, especially for the most vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone; a promise for gender equity and women's empowerment; and a promise for youth empowerment and employment. In renewing that promise, we have reinforced the roadmap for a healthier Sierra Leone and sustained economic growth. The "*Agenda for prosperity*" therefore serves as a framework for Sierra Leone in implementing the ICPD beyond 2014, with the ultimate goal of improving the welfare of our people.

**Mr. Chairman,**

As a post conflict country our situation is changing. Through the leadership of His Excellency President Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, we are progressively improving on our maternal and child indicators and mortality rates. Sierra Leone has developed deliberate policies and laws to promote women empowerment, sexual and reproductive health rights, and access. These include access to education for all, with special emphasis on girls, implementation of the Child Rights Act and registration of customary marriage and divorce. A national strategy for the reduction of teenage pregnancy is currently being implemented using a multi-sectoral approach. For these, and many more, we thank our donors including UNFPA for making possible and supporting the processes.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The Government of His Excellency President Koroma continues to dedicate most of its programmes to the youths.

Efforts in promoting human rights and gender equality are ongoing with steady progress being recorded. However while we can boast of progress being made, there are challenges:

1. Employment for the youth remains a huge challenge

2. There is need to strengthen our health systems. A fully functional and efficient health system is required in all countries for the achievement of ICPD Action beyond 2014, and the MDGs
3. Adequate resource mobilization to fund high impact interventions based on the needs of the country needs to be accelerated and most important
4. Keeping the focus of partners to achieve optional results is most needed.

These challenges require partnerships and global leadership through the UN to overcome. These challenges also require all stakeholders and in this regard underscore the importance of the ICPD Programme of Action for the achievement of national development.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We need to sustain the momentum of the work we are doing in Sierra Leone, we need to increase advocacy and institutionalize initiatives for behavioral and attitudinal change. We need to build our health systems which we all know takes time and investment to show results, and this is not always attractive to most donors.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Sierra Leone reiterates support expressed in the context of the African regional review of the implementation of the ICPD beyond 2014; and in that regard, joined the adoption of the regional plan of action for the further implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, Sierra Leone is increasingly becoming sensitive to the needs of its people utilization all channels of government including our parliamentarians and stakeholders in the private sector to ensure that the appropriate legislations' are enacted to support the ICDP agenda. We will continue to make effort to achieve the best healthcare systems; the best educational institutions for our children; better roads that will create access to health facilities and food security for our people.

It is therefore our sincere hope that this special session will strengthen cooperation and collaboration among the varied partners present here today.

I thank you for your attention.