



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

**STATEMENT**

by

**H.E. MR SOLOMON JAMIRU**

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**to the**

**Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly Seventy-**

**Fourth**

**“The Rule of Law on National and International Levels”**

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(Please Check Against Delivery)

**Chair,**

Thank you for giving me the floor.

The Republic of Sierra Leone aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of The Gambia and the Islamic Republic of Iran speaking on behalf of the African Group and Non-Aligned Movement respectively.

My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report A/74/139, and notes with appreciation the highlight on the work of the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone as it attends to its residual judicial and non-judicial functions.

Sierra Leone continues to show commitment to the strengthening of the rule of law at the national and international levels; taking concrete steps to strengthen the rule of law in the past 12 months, in line with our Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019-2023) and the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDG Goal 16.

In noting the sub-topic for this year's debate: "Sharing best practices and ideas to promote the respect of States for international law", this statement will highlight key actions taken at the domestic level to underscore the relevance of the Secretary-General's report in the areas of inclusion and functioning judicial system; accountability for serious crimes under international law; access to justice and efforts at addressing corruption. This statement will further shed light on our international collaboration in advancing the rule of law at the international level.

**Chair,**

During Sierra Leone's presentation here at the United Nations in July 2019 at the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process, specifically under progress achieved in implementing SDG 16 - inclusiveness and access to justice; we informed Member States of the United Nations on efforts made to expand access to justice through our Legal Aid Board. Since May 2015 when the Board was established to provide adequate legal representation for indigent people in conflict with the law, the number of cases for such legal aid services, including mediation for family and domestic disputes, has grown from 25,000 to more than 215,000 in 2018. About 14 percent of the beneficiaries were females and 19 percent minors.

Our new judicial strategy being framed will prioritize access to justice initiatives through the establishment of an access to justice directorate that will bring to the fore the justice mandate of the presently constitutionally fused office of the

Attorney-general and Minister of Justice. The framework for the restatement of customary law has been conceptualized with the objective of codifying the common elements into a national common law system. In accelerating action for justice for all, a centre for justice innovation has been proposed to collect and use justice data for policy formulation and decision-making.

**Chair,**

Sierra Leone continues to share her experience on the important issue of accountability for serious crimes committed under international law. The introduction of the dual and simultaneous transitional justice mechanism of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Special Court for Sierra Leone in the aftermath of our civil conflict 20 years ago has ensured our political and governance stability - with accountability for those ‘who bore the greatest responsibility’, truth telling, to forestall revision of the history of the conflict, and forgiveness, all happening at the same time. Transitional justice with peace and accountability before now may have been conceived of as binary, not to be pursued simultaneously. Sierra Leone, however, pulled it off, and we offer this experience to the international community as we grapple with the challenges of dealing with the present complex conflict situations globally.

As a way to ensure the legacy of the Special Court and the wider dissemination of its jurisprudence, the Residual Special Court judges this month published a digitalized volume of the consolidated judgments of the Special Court for Sierra Leone titled ‘Bearing the Greatest Responsibility: Select Jurisprudence of the Special Court for Sierra Leone’. The publication highlights the Court’s unique contribution to international criminal justice jurisprudence, including the use of child soldiers in armed conflict, terrorism, forced marriage as a crime against humanity, head of state immunity, and attacks directed against United Nations peacekeepers. On the basis of these bold strides, even in the darkest hours for accountability and ending impunity, we are valiant to say, even when we were unsure about how we will consolidate our peace, the people and Government of Sierra Leone requested the United Nations to partner with us in ensuring accountability, fostering reconciliation, and stability. We, therefore, call on all Member States to continue to support the Residual Special Court which has taken over the mandate of the Special Court since its work wrapped up successfully in December 2013.

**Chair,**

With respect to our national effort in the fight against corruption, we have articulated a new National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2019 – 2023) that takes a different approach in the fight against corruption focusing on enforcement. The strategy includes not only the formation of Integrity Management Committees in Ministries Departments and Agencies, but a holistic approach that incorporate religious bodies, schools, civil Societies, the three arms of Government and the general public. This document paves the road towards consolidating the fight against corruption. With the launch of this strategy, we have seen increased rate of convictions in the fight against corruption, running to about 98% in the last one year. A national perception survey conducted suggests that citizens' belief in Government's effort in the fight against corruption jumped from 40 percent in 2017 to over 66 percent in 2018.

**Chair,**

It is Sierra Leone's view that "respect of States for international law" must continue to be built on cooperation to ensure compliance with the rules we all have agreed to. For Sierra Leone, cooperation in advancing the rule of law especially in making progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in general and Goal 16 in particular, is demonstrated by our leadership in terms of peer-learning and sharing. In our capacity as founder and co-convener of the Pathfinder for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies and its Justice Task Force alongside Argentina and Netherlands, we continue to accentuate the need to accelerate action in order to deliver on Goal 16. We hosted the 16+ Forum annual showcase, in Freetown in November 2018, providing the platform and opportunity to learn from best practices on the implementation of Agenda 2030 through the sharing of implementation successes and challenges by the Forum States. This engagement was valuable in successfully undertaking our second VNR on SDGs in July this year.

In June 2019, Sierra Leone's Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, in her capacity as Chair of the Group of Seven Plus Justice Taskforce, convened the meeting of Ministers of Justice from Member States of the Group Seven Plus in the Hague, the Netherlands; and adopted an "Access to Justice for All in Conflict-Affected Countries Declaration and Joint Action Plan". The Declaration noted the important nexus between justice and sustainable peace, stability, and development in conflict-affected and fragile countries.

Moreover, on the sidelines of the [Global Conference on SDG 16](#) held in Rome on 27-29 May 2019, while dilating on how Sierra Leone has been championing access to

justice for the most vulnerable and marginalized, Sierra Leone's Attorney General and Minister of Justice also highlighted how SDG 16 has given the country a platform to help showcase the strides taken towards achieving peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Our engagements in these processes demonstrate our commitment to foster just and inclusive societies and communities, as well as building effective institutions not only in Sierra Leone but also in the global community of nations. These commitments are a collective measure of Sierra Leone's resolve to develop best practices to ensure that they are aligned with our global rule of law strengthening objective.

**Chair,**

Notwithstanding these efforts, some of the greatest constraints in deepening the culture of the rule of law in Sierra Leone includes inadequate investment in justice programmes, and the need to constantly build capacity. Let me conclude by noting that Sierra Leone continues to appreciate the valuable partnerships within the United Nations and international systems and call for further strengthening of such partnerships at the bilateral and multilateral levels in strengthening the rule of law.

I thank you for your kind attention.

