



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

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**STATEMENT**

by

**H.E. DR. MICHAEL IMRAN KANU**  
Deputy Permanent Representative

at the 76<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Agenda Item 147:  
***“Administration of Justice at the United Nations”***

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*Check Against Delivery*

**Madam Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

1. The delegation of Sierra Leone aligns this statement with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of **Morocco** on behalf of the African Group.
2. We thank the Secretary-General for his reports on the agenda item "*Administration of Justice at the United Nations*" contained in document **A/76/99** and **A/76/140** respectively. We also take note of the "Report of the Internal Justice Council on administration of justice at the United Nations" document **A/76/124**. We further take note of the work of the various bodies and units within the system of the administration of justice established by General Assembly resolutions 61/261, 62/228 and 63/253.
3. Sierra Leone underlines the importance of an independent, impartial, transparent, and professional system of administration of justice at the United Nations. We register our support for the system to the extent it exemplifies these attributes and principles. This is underscored by the fundamental principle of fairness, which in our mind is characterized by equity, respect, justice, with the people and not the UN as an institution at the centre.
4. This is more relevant as we address the issue of workplace culture, institutional racism, and discrimination within the context of the "Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination", and the work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate that the system

of administration of justice has continued functioning notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic challenges, and the financial liquidity crisis.

5. Much like the African Group, we take note of the adoption of remote working arrangements to enable the UN Justice System to continue conducting its work in a virtual environment. As we commend such an approach to ensure business continuity, my delegation, however, sees the need for performance audit to ensure the tenets of justice and fairness are not consequently adversely impacted. Procedure must not come in the way of substantive justice without reference to the challenging COVID-19 circumstances. In welcoming these efforts, care must be taken to ensure that the fundamental principles of fairness and non-discrimination continue to form the bedrock of the system, even as it strives to be efficient, transparent, and coherent.

**Madam Chair,**

6. Sierra Leone notes the trends in and observations on the operation of the formal system of administration of justice. We certainly deem it appropriate for the trend in the requests received by the Secretariat's Management Evaluation Unit to identify the reason(s) for the decrease of the requests received from 704 in 2019 to 404 in 2020. As we cautiously commend the downward trend, indicative of an improving working environment, we also hold the view that improvements must be quantitative and qualitative.
7. Sierra Leone further notes the increase in the delivering of judgements by the Dispute Tribunal, with a 28% year-over-

year increase. The Appeals Tribunal also had a year-over-year increase in the delivery of judgments and disposal of appeals. The Secretary-General's Report indicates that the financial liquidity situation on the Appeals Tribunal was averted. While we welcome such an important feat, it may be useful to determine whether this was because of the transition to remote work, and whether the aversion of the liquidity situation is sustainable.

- 8.** We also note with appreciation the steps taken to address the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 26 of resolution 75/248 on backlog of cases. With the commendable reduction to 36.5% of caseload in December 2020, we look forward to the full implementation of the case disposal plan.
- 9.** Sierra Leone welcomes the informal resolution of applications pending before the Dispute Tribunal. We also welcome the swift and efficient use of the informal dispute resolution system. In the seeming complex relationship between the work of the Dispute Tribunal, Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Service, with unsuspecting grey areas, care must be taken so the overall objective of justice is not lost.
- 10.** We use this opportunity to express support for the development of a fully searchable database of judgment and orders, following the prior issuance of the Digest of Case Law containing key judgments and orders of the Dispute and Appeals Tribunals in the first 10 years of the internal justice system. This is a laudable progress which will enhance access to the jurisprudence of the tribunals. Access to jurisprudence and outreach, in our view, are vital

components in building and sustaining a fair system for the administration of justice.

**11.** Let me conclude, **Madam Chair**, by stressing Sierra Leone's grave concern about reports of harassment and discriminatory behaviours. Gender protection and advancement as well as anti-discrimination are some of the core values of the UN. They should be replicated across its systems. Sierra Leone therefore continues to strongly condemn all forms of discrimination, based on gender, race, religion and ethnicity in the UN and the international system. We call for the promotion of a safe, just, impartial, and non-discriminatory work place built on integrity, fairness, and humane work ethics.

**12. I thank you.**