



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

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STATEMENT

BY

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FIRST SECRETARY**

AT THE 78TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(SIXTH COMMITTEE)

AGENDA ITEM 83:
“THE RULE OF LAW AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS”

NEW YORK, 18TH OCTOBER 2023

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. The delegation of Sierra Leone respectively associates this statement with the statements delivered by the Distinguished Representatives of **Uganda** on behalf of the **African Group**, and the **Islamic Republic of Iran** on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.
2. Sierra Leone uses the occasion of this debate to reaffirm its commitment to the rule of law at both the national and international levels, appreciating that the rule of law is an enabler for the attainment of international peace and security, the promotion and protection of human rights and in achieving international cooperation for sustainable development.
3. We welcome the announced collaborative development of a new vision for the rule of law, building upon Sustainable Development Goal 16 and General Assembly resolution 67/1, that promotes a people-centred, gender-sensitive and forward- looking approach by the United

Nations system, firmly grounded in the Charter of the United Nations to advance the rule of law.

4. We are appreciative of the strong efforts of the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies in ensuring that all deterrents to achieving the full realization of the rule of law, at both national and international levels, that is corruption, sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination, climate risks and lack of access to justice by the most vulnerable groups are addressed by offering capacity-building and support initiatives.
5. We therefore welcome the report of the Secretary-General **A/78/184**, which outlines the UN supports for the actions of Member States to tackle corruption, advance security, and access to justice for all, counter terrorism, and crime, offering as well constitutional assistance and support for transitional justice.
6. We particularly welcome the support provided by the United Nations regarding the implementation and promotion of adherence to international legal instruments against terrorism in Sierra Leone. We look forward to the

continuation of our partnership in advancing efforts for the promotion of the rule of law at both national and international levels.

Chair,

7. At the **national level**, Sierra Leone continues to promote a stable democratic and peaceful environment aimed at promoting sustainable peace, security, development, and overall efforts to enhance the rule of law. This was demonstrated in the June 2023 multi-tier national elections, with the conduct of free, fair, transparent, and peaceful electoral process leading to the election of political leaders at four tiers of political governance system in Sierra Leone.

8. Elections, which in our view are vehicles of democratic transformation, fortify governance and allow for peaceful transitions. The Government of Sierra Leone in the resolve to strengthen our democratic foundations and the deepening of the country's democracy, has instituted a National Electoral Systems Review to address historical challenges in our electoral process. The aim is to address

the persistent logistical challenges since the first multi-tier General Elections conducted in Sierra Leone since the civil war ended in 2002.

9. The National Electoral Systems Review Committee which will comprise the government, civil society, political parties, professional organisations, and development partners, holds the mantle of evaluating existing legal frameworks, institutional arrangements, and observer mission reports. Its mandate extends to proposing vital reforms to strengthen Sierra Leone's electoral integrity. These actions encapsulate Sierra Leone's commitment to forging a fertile environment for dialogue, affirming democratic governance, and fostering enduring peace.

10. In line with building strong institutions in achieving peace and justice, Sustainable Development Goal 16, Sierra Leone is engaged in a political mediation process to provide the necessary avenue for political dialogue. The mediation is the initiative of the recently established Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion, with facilitation by the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, and the

Commonwealth. The mediation process, which offers the space for open, frank, and good faith dialogue, represents a model for conflict prevention in ensuring the maintenance of peace and national cohesion.

Chair,

11. Regarding the subtopic for our debate, “*the use of technology to promote the rule of law*”, the Sierra Leone Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan (2019-2023) recognizes the critical role of technology, including digital technologies to provide means to address challenges relating to access to justice. The use of technology will certainly form a critical component in the review of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan.

12. Additionally, the Judiciary in the roll out of a Case Management Systems (CMS) has outlined the value in allowing judges and magistrates to upload cases in the CMS to assist with the promotion of transparency and accountability in the delivery of justice. There is leadership commitment, based on collaboration and partnerships, to

introduce in Sierra Leone, E-access to justice and e-Court systems.

13. There is also a policy recommendation to restructure the Ministry of Justice to provide for the Directorate for Access to Justice which will provide the technical lead on justice policy formulation, implementation and the coordination of the justice institutions and partners under the Justice Ministry. The Access to Justice Directorate will implement the government's accelerated commitment on SDG 16 and all the related SDGs which have implications for ensuring access to justice for all. This involves continuing engagement with partners, including the GFP to develop a framework for cooperation and means of financing.

Chair,

14. At the **international level**, Sierra Leone continues to note with regret the systematic disregard for the fundamental principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly those related to maintenance of international peace and security, international law, including international humanitarian law, and compliance with

judgments and implementation of the opinions of the International Court of Justice. We therefore reiterate our principle position on the need for consistency and good faith in the application of the UN Charter principles and international law.

15. Adherence to the rule of law at the international level requires its consistent and non-selective application even in difficult and challenging circumstances. This includes compliance with international humanitarian laws principles in conflict situations.

16. In further reflecting on the rule of law landscape at the international level, the delegation of Sierra Leone uses this opportunity to reiterate our support for the strengthening of the international accountability system, in particular the strengthening of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

17. In relation to the subtopic for our debate, Sierra Leone looks forward to the negotiations of the Global Digital Compact to be agreed at the Summit of the Future as proposed by the UN Secretary-General in the Our Common Agenda report.

18. The Global Digital Compact is expected to “outline shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all”, and might cover, “digital connectivity, avoiding Internet fragmentation, providing people with options as to how their data is used, application of human rights online, and promoting a trustworthy Internet by introducing accountability criteria for discrimination and misleading content”.

19. “A Pact for the Future” which includes in the scope - Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation, must allow for the regulation of social media platforms, and artificial intelligence, given the demonstrable use of technology, data, and automated systems in ways that threaten the rights, security, and wellbeing of people.

20. In concluding, Chair, Sierra Leone continues to appreciate the Secretary-General’s annual report on the rule of law highlighting the work of the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone. Indeed, the RSCSL continues to pioneer and serve as a model as it monitors *“the enforcement of sentences of persons convicted by the*

Special Court for Sierra Leone, provide support services to protected witnesses and address requests for assistance from national authorities". The continuing financing of the RSCSL therefore is of high priority to Sierra Leone, and we express our gratitude for the continued support of the treaty counterpart, the United Nations.

21. **I thank you.**