**16th Session Universal Periodic Review**

**BURKINA FASO**

**Statement by Sierra Leone**

**Mr. President,**

**Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Sierra Leone would like to congratulate Burkina Faso for its tremendous progress in addressing human rights issues since the first cycle of the UPR In 2008. Such progress has been recorded not only in the normative work of passing legislation, but also in the putting in place of the institutional framework and drawing up policies and in the implementation of concrete action.

According to the National Report, since 2008, Burkina Faso ratified six international conventions, passed 16 Acts of Parliament. In addition, it set up and reinforced seven institutions, most notably the Ministry of Human Rights and the Promotion of Civil Responsibility. Furthermore, some 10 national policies were drawn up.

The actions taken by Burkina Faso to fulfill international obligations, to educate and raise public awareness on human rights issues, to protect and defend human rights, as well as to cooperate with human rights bodies are commendable.

Sierra Leone notes the difficulties and constraints faced by Burkina Faso, which are typical for countries of the Region - persistence of harmful traditional practices, poverty, corruption and mismanagement of public resources by some state actors, ensuring the rights of women and persons with disabilities, and improving conditions in prisons and reform institutions. These need to be aggressively addressed in the second cycle.

Now that the stage has been set the emphasis should be placed on action on four main fronts;

* Intensifying public awareness programmes on human rights issues;
* Enforcing laws that address harmful traditional practices, such as witchcraft, forced marriages and wife-inheritance;
* Translating laws and policies into strategies and action plans that should form the basis for action of all stakeholders, particularly in ensuring the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights;
* Exchange of experiences within the West African Region.

It is clear that in all these areas, technical and financial assistance would be required and Burkina Faso’s requests for such assistance should be favorably considered. Burkina Faso has demonstrated its commitment to improve human rights within the country, but it needs support in translating its commitments into action.

I thank you.