

**SIERRA LEONE**

**19th Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

Nicaragua

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR YVETTE STEVENS**

7 May 2014

Mr. President,

Sierra Leone joins the other delegations in welcoming the high-level delegation from Nicaragua and thanks Nicaragua for its report which provides a detailed overview and an update of the efforts to implement various human rights norms since its last UPR.

Nicaragua’s commitment to the promotion of human rights norms is evidenced by the fact that Nicaragua is party to most of the core international human rights treaties and its ongoing reform process of the national Constitution and for the Strategic Plan against Trafficking in Persons (2010 – 2014).

My delegation commends Nicaragua on its macroeconomic growth which has been praised by the IMF. We are further encouraged by the social policy strategies which have helped Nicaragua significantly mitigate and reduce extreme poverty.

Nevertheless, Sierra Leone is concerned by reports of a high number of children living on the streets. In this connection, my delegation would urge Nicaragua to further develop strategies aimed at providing social assistance, vocational training and healthcare services to these children.

Sierra Leone has the following recommendations:

* Nicaragua should raise the minimum age for marriage for both boys and girls to 18.
* Facilitate birth registration and provide easy registration procedures for indigenous and Afro-descendants.
* Further promote freedom of expression and the independence of the media.

Finally, Sierra Leone wishes Nicaragua a successful outcome to its UPR.

Mr. President,

I thank you.