

**SIERRA LEONE**

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

Portugal

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR YVETTE STEVENS**

30 April 2014

Mr. President,

Sierra Leone welcomes the delegation of Portugal and would like to thank it for the presentation of its national report which offers a comprehensive overview of the efforts taken by the government to address human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In this regard, my delegation commends the Government of Portugal, *inter alia,* on the establishment of their national human rights mechanism (PNHRC) and for the appointment of the Ombudsman.

In light of the economic crisis, Sierra Leone would like to stress that it is important to ensure that ensure austerity measures do not adversely affect the rights of vulnerable groups or the implementation of existing human rights obligations.

As a firm believer in economic, social and cultural rights, Sierra Leone applauds the efforts that Portugal is making to call on other States to sign and ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its Optional Protocol, including in the framework of the UPR.

Recommendations:

* Portugal should take strong action to address the hate speech and racial discrimination in access to housing, education and employment of ethnic minorities and intensify awareness-raising training for law enforcement officials.
* Portugal should ensure that victims of domestic violence have access to adequate counseling and protection, including the provision of shelters for women victims, and that acts are effectively investigated and perpetrators brought to justice.
* Portugal should make all efforts to increase its overseas development assistance to bring it more in line with the promised target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income, thus facilitating the promotion of human rights in poor countries.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone would like to encourage Portugal to ratify the ICRMW.

My delegation wishes Portugal every success in addressing human rights issues.

Mr. President,

I thank you.