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SIERRA LEONE

20th Session of the Universal Periodic Review

Statement by Ambassador Yvette Stevens

FIJI

29 October 2014

Mr Vice-President,

Sierra Leone warmly welcomes the delegation of Fiji and thanks them for their comprehensive report, prepared through an inclusive process.

My delegation is pleased to note that remarkable progress has been made since the first cycle of the UPR, including the lifting of the Public Emergency Regulations, the successful completion of the national elections, with 84% voter participation and the recent adoption of the new constitution. Notable achievements also include the setting up of the Legal Aid Commission as well as the drawing up of the National Housing Policy and the National Ageing Policy.

While commending Fiji for its Women's Plan of Action (2010 – 2019), and for establishing the Fiji National Gender policy which my delegation believes reflects the government's commitment to promoting non-discrimination and empowering women, Sierra Leone observed that the comprehensive Bill of Rights itself, contains no specific provisions for the rights of women.

My delegation believes that further efforts which criminalize all acts of violence against women and children, and ensure access to justice for victims would help to better protect their rights.

Sierra Leone would like to ask the following questions:

First; what measures are the government taking to comprehensively protect children from abuse within the home?

Second; kindly elaborate on major domestic challenges which are currently hindering the full promotion of socio-economic rights in the country.

My delegation would like to make three recommendations:

1. Ratify the core international human rights instruments (such as the ICCPR, CAT, ICESCR and CPED)
2. Pass legislation to criminalise violence against women
3. Provide adequate funding to the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and take steps to ensure its conformity with the Paris Principles.

Mr Vice-President, I thank you.