

STATEMENT BY BOTSWANA DURING THE REVIEW OF SIERRA LEONE AT THE 24TH SESSION OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

(27 January 2016, Geneva)

Mr. President,

1. Botswana welcomes the Delegation of Sierra Leone to their second UPR and thanks them for their comprehensive national report.

2. Since its last UPR, Sierra Leone has implemented many of their accepted recommendations, particularly in the area of legislative reforms. These include the adoption of the 2013 Right to Access to Information Act; and the 2012 Sexual Offences Act.

3. We also note with appreciation Sierra Leone's efforts in addressing gender issues. The implementation of a National Gender Strategic Plan; the launch of a National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence; and the National Referral Protocol on Gender-Based Violence are key milestones in the promotion of and protection of human rights in this area.

4. However, we remain concerned about reports of the prevalence of female genital mutilation, domestic and sexual violence against women and the extremely low conviction rate on reported cases.

5. There are also reports about lack of independence of the judiciary, which is exacerbated by inadequate court infrastructure and capacity constraints. We encourage Sierra Leone to continue measures of safeguarding the independence of the judiciary.

6. Botswana therefore wishes to make the following two recommendations:

- (a) ensure the protection of the rights of women, especially by criminalising and implementing laws on female genital mutilation, domestic and sexual violence;
- (b) ensure adequate allocation of resources towards court infrastructure and capacity building in the judiciary.

7. We wish Sierra Leone a successful review and adoption of their UPR report.

I thank you, Mr. President!