**UPR38**

**12 May 2021**

**Canada’s recommendations for Sierra Leone’s UPR**

Thank you, Madam President.

Canada commends Sierra Leone on its considerable progress, particularly in promoting gender equality and protecting the rights of women and girls.

Canada recommends that Sierra Leone:

1. Explicitly criminalize the practice of female genital mutilation regardless of age and promote social awareness through education campaigns.
2. Decriminalize same-sex sexual relations between consenting adults by repealing sections 61 and 62 of the *Offences Against the Persons Act 1861*, and pass legislation to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
3. Repeal or expunge Part III of the Public Order Act 1965 dealing with Processions in order to protect freedom of peaceful assembly.
4. Combat impunity by ensuring prompt, thorough and transparent investigations of all violations against human rights defenders by law enforcement, and by prosecuting perpetrators.

Canada applauds Sierra Leone’s adoption of a Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy in December 2020, and looks forward to the adoption of an Affirmative Action Bill to address key gender disparities in Sierra Leone.