**STATEMENT BY ZIMBABWE ON THE OCCASION OF THE THIRD CYCLE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE: 12 MAY 2021**

Thank you, Madam President,

Zimbabwe welcomes and thanks the delegation of Sierra Leone for their report.

During the period under review, key developments took place in Sierra Leone, including the following: the launch of a 2-pronged anti-COVID-19 support package focused on saving lives and protecting livelihoods, respectively; scrapping of the ban on pregnant school girls from returning to mainstream education after delivery; and the launch of the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy to ensure gender parity, including in the areas of political participation and public leadership roles.

Regarding its international obligations, Sierra Leone submitted a number of initial and periodic reports to UN Treaty Bodies overseeing the implementation of the Treaties to which it is a party.

My delegation recommends that Sierra Leone:

* Strengthens existing laws and policies designed to advance women’s empowerment and violence against women; and
* Accelerate the domestication of provisions of the human rights Treaties to which it is a party.

I thank you, Madam President.