

Universal Periodic Review
(24th session, January-February 2016)
Contribution of UNESCO to Compilation of UN information
(to Part I. A. and to Part III - F, J, K, and P)

Sierra Leone

I. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

Scope of international obligations: Human rights treaties which fall within the competence of UNESCO and international instruments adopted by UNESCO

I.1. Table:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)	State party to this Convention	<i>Reservations to this Convention shall not be permitted</i>		Right to education
Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989)	Not state party to this Convention			Right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	07/01/2005 Ratification		N/A	Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)			N/A	Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the			N/A	Right to take part in

Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)				cultural life
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II. Input to Part III. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law to items F, J, K, and P

Right to education

1. NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

1.1. Constitutional Framework:

1. The **Constitution of Sierra Leone of 1991**,¹ last amended in 2008², stipulates in **Article 9**, that :

2. “(1) The Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal rights and adequate educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels by:

- a. ensuring that every citizen is given the opportunity to be educated to the best of his ability, aptitude and inclination by providing educational facilities at all levels and aspects of education such as primary, secondary, vocational, technical, college and university;
- b. safeguarding the rights of vulnerable groups, such as children, women and the disabled in security educational facilities; and
- c. providing the necessary structures, finance and supportive facilities for education as and when practicable.

3. (2) The Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy, and to this end, shall direct its educational policy towards achieving:

- a. free adult literacy programmes;
- b. free compulsory basic education at primary and junior secondary school levels; and

¹ <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/constitution1991.pdf>,
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/63a49d8d32aabce497e0c9a58655e02735aeda27.pdf>,
 Accessed on 13/03/2015

² <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2008-09.pdf>,
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/e490e49d907e71f552f28bae5905cb7e20704672.pdf>,
 Accessed on 13/03/2015

c. free senior secondary education as and when practicable.

4. (3) The Government shall promote the learning of indigenous languages and the study and application of modern science, foreign languages, technology, commerce and business.”

5. Also, **Article 8** states that "(3) The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that: [...] f. the care and welfare of the aged, young and disabled shall be actively promoted and safeguarded."

6. With regard to religion, **Article 24** specifies that “(2) Except with his own consent (or if he is a minor the consent of his parent or guardian) no person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or to attend any religious ceremony or observance if that instruction, ceremony or observance relates to a religion other than his own.

7. (3) No religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for persons of that community or denomination in the course of any education provided by that community or denomination.”

8. **Article 27** enshrines the principle of non-discrimination and provides that "(1) Subject to the provisions of subsection (4), (5), and (7), no law shall make provision which is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect.

9. (2) Subject to the provisions of subsections (6), (7), and (8), no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting by virtue of any law or in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority.

10. (3) In this section the expression “discriminatory” means affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by race, tribe, sex, place of origin, political opinions, colour or creed whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject, or are accorded privileges or advantages which are not accorded to persons of another such description.”

1.2. Legislative Framework:

11. The main framework concerning the realization of the right to basic education is the **Education Act of 2004**³. “It outlines the structure of the entire education system from pre-primary to tertiary level including education for girls and women as well as special needs

³ http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Sierra%20Leone/SL_Act03_Education.pdf,
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/a2030b790f9db88c3149cbc7238d7dd419775cec.pdf>,
 Accessed on 13/03/2015

education. The Act focuses to a great extent on management and control and the role of the various actors in the system including local authorities.”⁴

12. In its **Article 3**, the Act provides for 9 years of “formal basic education” and guarantees to “every citizen of Sierra Leone [...] the right to basic education which accordingly shall be compulsory”. The article further specifies that “basic education shall be, to the extent specified by the Minister by statutory instrument, free in government assisted primary and junior secondary schools”. Article 3 also provides that “a parent [...] who neglects to send is child to school for basic education commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction [...]”.

13. **Article 4** enshrines the principles of non-discrimination by stating that “(1) This Act and any other enactment and administrative instructions relating to education shall be administered and interpreted in such a manner as to ensure that there is no discrimination between pupils or students in the matter of their admission to and treatment in any educational institution in Sierra Leone”.

14. **Article 5** concerns pre-primary education and provides as follows:

“(1) Pre-primary education shall be the education given to pupils between the ages of three and six years in kindergarten or nursery schools.

(2) Although optional and outside the formal system, preprimary education shall continue to be supported by Government because of its use in preparing children for primary education [...]”.

15. **Article 11** provides for adults’ education through the establishment of “an autonomous Council to be known as the Non-Formal Education Council to be responsible for developing and implementing programmes for adult and non-formal education in Sierra Leone.”

16. **Article 12** ensures the right to education to persons with disabilities by providing that “it shall be the responsibility of the National Commission for Basic Education to protect the right to basic education for every citizen, including the amputees and other disabled persons.”

17. “In 2001, the following three bills were passed by the Sierra Leone Parliament to improve the governance of the sector: (1) The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) Act; (2) The Polytechnic Act, and (3) The National Commission for Technical/Vocational and other Academic Awards (NCTVA) Act.”⁵

⁴ Sierra Leone education sector plan: a road map to a better future 2007 – 2015, p. 10,
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/8b1b32249f3ad5a0c6ef5a64cf3301ce2d494092.pdf>,
 Accessed on 13/03/2015

⁵ Sierra Leone education sector plan: a road map to a better future 2007 – 2015, p. 6,
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/8b1b32249f3ad5a0c6ef5a64cf3301ce2d494092.pdf>,
 Accessed on 13/03/2015

18. • **Tertiary Education Commission Act (2001)**⁶: This act established “the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) for the development of tertiary education and to provide for other matters concerned therewith”. Its functions include: advising the Government on tertiary education; fund-raising for tertiary education; vetting the budgets of tertiary institutions; ensuring relevance of programmes offered; ensuring equity in admissions; recommending modifications in conditions of service and ensuring parity in appointment and promotion of staff.

19. • **The Polytechnics Act (2001)**⁷: This Act established “polytechnic institutions [...], corresponding Polytechnics Councils, [and made] provisions for the management and supervision of polytechnic institutions throughout Sierra Leone [...]”. Among its functions are control and supervision of polytechnic institutions; provision of instruction for learning, research and documentation of knowledge. It also grants diplomas and certificates through the NCTVA; it determines the content of instruction, manages student admission and staff employment.

20. • **The National Council for Technical, Vocational and other Academic Awards Act (2001)**⁸ is “an act to establish the National Council for Technical, Vocational and other Academic Awards for the evaluation and certification of certain academic courses and programmes and to provide for certain related matters.” It established an independent body whose main functions are to validate and certify awards in technical and vocational education and teacher training; accrediting technical and vocational institutions and advising MEST on TVET and teacher training curriculum areas. It also provides the basis for the conduct of examinations for pupils of the SSSTV pursuing the NVQ course.

21. The **Local Government Act (2004)**⁹ re-established local councils and local governments and, amongst other things, describes the path for the transfer of the management and supervision of basic education from the central to local governments.

22. The **Universities Act (2005)**¹⁰ is “an act to reconstitute the University of Sierra Leone, to establish the Njala University, to provide for the establishment of other public universities and private universities and to provide for other related matters.” It made it possible for Sierra Leone

⁶ <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2001-8.pdf>,
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/4739640c3515e6c9f66b3510879054e297be11e6.pdf>,
 Accessed on 13/03/2015

⁷ <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2001-9.pdf>,
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/12d7d59eab64009c5b2c9c7d773826342aa80d5a.pdf>,
 Accessed on 13/03/2015

⁸ <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2001-10.pdf>,
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/74b1c6a553493a5f16273c920e0454a5eb226490.pdf>,
 Accessed on 13/03/2015

⁹ <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2004-1p.pdf>, Accessed on 11/03/2015

¹⁰ <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2005-1p.pdf>,
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/d67953e10a769a02236a54a2b5b83ac33ee54f62.pdf>,
 Accessed on 13/03/2015

to have more than a single university. It separated the 2 existing sets of institutions making up the then single university into two self-sufficient entities – Njala University and the University of Sierra Leone. It also allows for 11 university autonomy in matters of administration and academia and for the creation of private universities.

23. The **Corporal Punishment Act** was repealed by the **Child Rights Act of 2007**¹¹. This Act provides in **Article 26** that "(2) Every child has the right to [...] education." With regard to persons with disabilities, **Article 30** states that "(1) No person shall treat a disabled child in an undignified manner. (2) A disabled child has a right to special care, education and training wherever possible to develop his maximum potential and be self-reliant." Moreover, **Article 32** specifies that "(1) No person shall subject a child to exploitative labour as defined in subsection (2). (2) Labour is exploitative of a child, if it deprives the child of its health, education or development."

24. In 2011, Sierra Leone adopted the **Persons with Disability Act, 2011** [No. 3 of 2011].¹² **Article 14**, entitled "right to free education" states that:

"(1) Every person with disability shall have a right to free education in tertiary institutions accredited by the Tertiary Education Commission and approved by the Ministry responsible for education.

(2) The Government shall ensure the structural adaptation of educational institutions to make them easily accessible to persons with disability.

(3) Every school shall provide facilities for learning by people with disability."¹³

1.3. Institutional Framework:

25. Sierra Leone adopted in 2011 the Sierra Leone Teaching Service Commission Act, 2011 [No. 1 of 2011]¹⁴. It provides "for the establishment of the Sierra Leone Teaching Service Commission to manage the affairs of teachers in order to improve their professional status and economic wellbeing and for other related matters."¹⁵

1.4. Policy Framework:

i) General information

¹¹ <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2007-7p.pdf>,
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/08ca923c5231b0fbc88f532d4f2cc6299909eb8c.pdf>,
 Accessed on 13/03/2015

¹² <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2011-03.pdf>, Accessed on 13/03/2015

¹³ <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2011-03.pdf>, p. 12, Accessed on 13/03/2015

¹⁴ <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2011-01.pdf>, Accessed on 13/03/2015

¹⁵ <http://www.sierra-leone.org/laws.html>, 2011, Accessed on 13/03/2015

26. In 2007, Sierra Leone launched its **Education Sector Plan: a road map to a better future 2007 – 2015**.¹⁶ “The Education Sector Plan of Sierra Leone is a strategic document which is based on the government’s 2006 Country Status Report (the diagnostic and analytical foundation of the situation of education in Sierra Leone) and the 2004 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Together they map out how GOSL [the Government of Sierra Leone] will build on the education gains made since the war so that by the year 2015 all children will be going to school and receiving a quality education.”¹⁷ It emphasizes “primary education and skills training as well as relevant and appropriate tertiary education to meet pressing and future developmental needs. At the same time, it attempts to lay the foundations for the achievement of universal basic education and expansion of post-basic secondary education after 2015.”¹⁸

27. The Government of Sierra Leone adopted a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2013 – 2018).¹⁹ It addresses education in the third pillar on “Accelerating Human Development”. “Appropriate education creates enabling conditions for economic growth and prosperity, with strong beneficial impacts on health, nutrition and socio-economic development. An educated labour force will meet employment demands in agriculture, mining, manufacturing, value addition, and the private and public sectors, and reduce dependence on foreign experts. In the next five years, Government will invest in and reform the educational system, especially basic education, to ensure quality learning and adequate human resource development.”²⁰ Objectives and strategies to improve access to and quality of education were adopted.²¹

28. UNICEF adopted a Country programme document 2013-2014 for Sierra Leone²² divided into 6 components:

- Child survival and development;
- Basic education;
- Child protection;
- Planning, monitoring and evaluation and social policy;

¹⁶ <http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/8b1b32249f3ad5a0c6ef5a64cf3301ce2d494092.pdf>, Accessed on 13/03/2015

¹⁷ Sierra Leone education sector plan: a road map to a better future 2007 – 2015, p. x, <http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/8b1b32249f3ad5a0c6ef5a64cf3301ce2d494092.pdf>, Accessed on 13/03/2015

¹⁸ Sierra Leone education sector plan: a road map to a better future 2007 – 2015, p. vii, <http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/8b1b32249f3ad5a0c6ef5a64cf3301ce2d494092.pdf>, Accessed on 13/03/2015

¹⁹ Government of Sierra Leone, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2013 – 2018), <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Agenda%20Prosperity.pdf>, Accessed on 13/03/2015

²⁰ Government of Sierra Leone, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2013 – 2018), p. 59, <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Agenda%20Prosperity.pdf>, Accessed on 13/03/2015

²¹ Government of Sierra Leone, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2013 – 2018), pp. 61-64, <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Agenda%20Prosperity.pdf>, Accessed on 13/03/2015

²² UNICEF, Country programme document 2013-2014 for Sierra Leone, http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/Sierra_Leone-2013-2014-final_approved-English-14Sept2012.pdf, Accessed on 13/03/2015

- Advocacy, partnerships and leveraging;
- Cross-sectorial.

29. “26. The country programme planning was carried out by UNICEF, in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, line ministries, United Nations agencies and other development organizations, which did a critical assessment of the situation of children and identified priorities. Preparatory work was directly linked to the process of developing the 2013-2017 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the United Nations Transitional Joint Vision (2013-2014). The outcomes of the midterm review (2009) and the updated equity-focused Situation Analysis of Children and Women, undertaken by UNICEF in 2011, were used. The proposed programme builds on the previous country programme and is a transition to the next five-year country programme (2015-2019).”²³

30. “27. The overall goal of the country programme is to support the Government of Sierra Leone in enhancing sustainable national capacities to achieve the aims of the PRSP so that all children can enjoy their rights. The programme will contribute to the outcomes of the United Nations Transitional Joint Vision on access to quality basic education and health services, as well as strengthened capacity for improved equity, gender mainstreaming, social and child protection.”²⁴

31. “37. Basic education. This programme component will support the revision and implementation of Sierra Leone’s Education Sector Plan (2007-2015). This involves support for capacity development, including teacher management, and strengthening planning, supply and distribution systems. The programme will focus on reducing disparities in access to quality basic education and increasing right-age entry and school completion rates in primary education, especially for girls and the poorest and rural children. The programme will improve the quality of education through child-friendly schooling approaches and support all five teacher-training colleges. Together with the child survival and development programme component, interventions in sanitation, hygiene education and school-led total sanitation will be implemented in all schools in six districts with the worst water, sanitation and hygiene education (WASH) indicators. Emergency preparedness and peacebuilding will be integrated throughout the programme. Research to inform the next country programme will be undertaken through communication for

²³ UNICEF, Country programme document 2013-2014 for Sierra Leone, p. 7,
http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/Sierra_Leone-2013-2014-final_approved-English-14Sept2012.pdf,
Accessed on 13/03/2015

²⁴ UNICEF, Country programme document 2013-2014 for Sierra Leone, p. 7,
http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/Sierra_Leone-2013-2014-final_approved-English-14Sept2012.pdf,
Accessed on 13/03/2015

development on parenting skills and social norms in early childhood development and on opportunities for out-of-school adolescents.”²⁵

ii) Teachers

32. “A survey of 1,300 students from 123 primary and secondary schools in Sierra Leone found that 27% of incidences of unwanted sexual touching and 22% of incidences of verbal abuse were perpetrated by male pupils at school. A small percentage of cases were attributed to male teachers (4% and 3%, respectively). Almost a third of cases of forced or coerced sex in exchange for money, goods or grades were perpetrated by male teachers (Concern et al., 2010). Conviction rates for sexual violence are notoriously low, however; in Sierra Leone, 1,000 cases of sexual assault were filed in 2009, but no action was taken against perpetrators (Concern et al., 2010).”²⁶

iii) Gender equality

33. “A national study in Sierra Leone noted that girls were often fearful of reporting teachers, and schools, parents and community members may be complicit in helping teachers avoid prosecution, especially for serious offences (Concern et al., 2010). Complex bureaucratic processes also tend to dissuade victims and their families from pursuing matters. The establishment of **Family Support Units** within the Sierra Leone Police, set up to tackle gender-based violence, is a more innovative approach to the problem. ‘Mother clubs’ in Sierra Leone negotiate difficulties faced by girls wishing to report cases of abuse, and provide moral and sometimes financial support (Concern et al., 2010).”²⁷

iv) Other (as appropriate)

34. “In Sierra Leone, many people cannot use the formal court system because it operates in English, which only people with a higher level of education speak. Translators sometimes interpret into Krio, the lingua franca, but some people only speak local languages, for which interpreters are not available. Accused persons who are less educated can easily be isolated by a system that should support them.”²⁸

35. “Further evidence of education’s power to change attitudes comes from Sierra Leone, where the expansion of schooling opportunities in the aftermath of the civil war led to a steep increase

²⁵ UNICEF, Country programme document 2013-2014 for Sierra Leone, p. 9, http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/Sierra_Leone-2013-2014-final_approved-English-14Sept2012.pdf, Accessed on 13/03/2015

²⁶ EFA GMR 2013-14, p 171 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002256/225660e.pdf>, Accessed on 13/03/2015

²⁷ EFA GMR 2013-14, p 271 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002256/225660e.pdf>, Accessed on 13/03/2015

²⁸ EFA GMR 2013-14, p176 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002256/225660e.pdf>, Accessed on 13/03/2015

in the amount of education completed by younger women. An additional year of schooling reduced women's tolerance of domestic violence from 36% to 26%.”²⁹

2. COOPERATION:

36. Sierra Leone is a **party** to the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education since 02/06/1967.

37. Sierra Leone **did not report** to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education within the framework of the:

- **Sixth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 1994-1999),
- **Seventh Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2000-2005),
- **Eighth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2006-2011).

38. Sierra Leone **did not report** to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms within the framework of the:

- **Fourth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2005-2008),
- **Fifth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2009-2012).

39. Sierra Leone did not report reported to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1976 UNESCO Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education within the framework of the **First Consultation** of Member States (1993). However, Sierra Leone did report to UNESCO within the framework of the **Second Consultation** of Member States (2011).

40. Sierra Leone is **not party** to the 1989 UNESCO Convention on Technical and Vocational Education.

Freedom of opinion and expression

1. CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

41. Freedom of Expression is enshrined in Chapter II, Article 25 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone.³⁰

²⁹ EFA GMR 2013-14, p182 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002256/225660e.pdf>, Accessed on 13/03/2015

³⁰ See the Constitution of Sierra Leone on the government's website: <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/constitution1991.pdf>.

42. Part V of the Public Order Act regards defamation as a criminal offense and foresees either fines or prison terms up to three years as punishment. The spreading of false news is similarly punished. There are some exemptions from criminal libel as defined in articles 29 and 30.³¹

43. The Right to Access Information Act has been passed in 2013.³²

2. MEDIA SELF-REGULATION

44. The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLJA) represents the journalists and media workers of the country.³³

45. The Independent Media Commission (IMC) is an institution, which members are appointed by the President and Parliament upon consultation with Sierra Leone's Journalist' Union. Its Complaints Committee is responsible for inquiring into complaints against the breach of the media Code of Practice thus, contributes to the self-regulatory process of the media. The code has been adopted by the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), the Independent Media Commission (IMC), PANOS Institute of West Africa (PIWA) and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB).³⁴

3. SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

46. UNESCO recorded no killings of journalists since 2008. Journalists operate in a safe environment.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

47. Recommendations made within the framework of the first cycle of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, considered on (please check the date on the following web site: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Documentation.aspx>)

³¹ See the Public Order Act on the government's website: <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/1965-46s.pdf>.

³² See the Right to Access Information Act on the government's website: <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2013-02.pdf>. The non-governmental organization Center for Law and Democracy ranks it as the fifth strongest in the world: <http://www.law-democracy.org/live/sierra-leones-right-to-information-law-is-5th-strongest-in-the-world/>.

³³ Apparently, they do not have an own website. They are mentioned for example on <http://www.thissierraleone.com/tag/sierra-leone-association-of-journalists-sljaj/> or <http://www.sierraexpressmedia.com/?p=72914>.

³⁴ See their website: <http://www.imc-sl.org/AboutIMC/tabid/55/Default.aspx>.

48. In the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of 11 July 2011, various recommendations were made to Sierra Leone.

49. The recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue have been examined by Sierra Leone and enjoy its support:

- i. **80.22. Train law enforcement officials to deal with sexual violence cases (Brazil);**
- ii. **80.36. Continue to apply programmes and measures to improve the enjoyment of the right to education and the right to health (Cuba);**
- iii. **80.37. Maintain the efforts to guarantee equal access to education, particularly for women and children (Chile);**
- iv. 81. The following recommendations enjoy the support of Sierra Leone which considers that they are already implemented or in the process of implementation:
- v. **81.23. Intensify its efforts to combat domestic violence including rape and work against the impunity for this violence; take measures such as awareness raising and training of the police officials in the judicial system and medical officers (Sweden);**
- vi. **81.39. Take effective measures to ensure local courts and traditional leaders operate in compliance with human rights obligations and the principles of equality and non-discrimination, including by ensuring adequate access to human rights training and by reviewing the appointment procedures for local and traditional leaders (Canada);**
- vii. **81.49. Mobilize the necessary resources for the successful implementation of national programmes in the area of economic, social and cultural rights, such as the second poverty reduction strategy, Agenda for Change, and the health and education strategies (South Africa);**
- viii. **81.52. Give special attention particularly to the education of girls and women (Turkey);**
- ix. **81.53. Incorporate human rights education and awareness training into the school curriculum through cooperation with and assistance from the international community (Indonesia);**

50. Analysis:

In 2011, Sierra Leone adopted the Persons with Disabilities Act that enshrine the right to free education for the persons with disabilities as well as the Teaching Service Commission Act to improve the teachers' professional status and economic wellbeing. Sierra Leone made efforts to further implement general programmes including education issues: Education Sector Plan: a road map to a better future (2007-2015); Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2013-2018). It also participated to the drafting of the UNICEF Country programme document (2013-2014). However, no sufficient additional measures have been taken to provide human right education and training, particularly for the law enforcement officials, as well as to promote gender equality in education and equal access to education.

51. Specific Recommendations:

1. Sierra Leone should be strongly encouraged to further submit state reports for the periodic consultations of UNESCO's education related standard-setting instruments.
2. Sierra Leone could be encouraged to further provide human rights education and training, especially for its law enforcement officials.
3. Sierra Leone could be encouraged to promote equal access to education, especially by implementing programmes to ban discrimination against girls and women.

Cultural rights

52. Sierra Leone is encouraged to ratify the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). UNESCO's cultural conventions promote access to and participation in cultural heritage and creative expressions and, as such, are conducive to implementing the right to take part in cultural life as defined in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In doing so, Sierra Leone is encouraged to facilitate the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors and NGOs from the civil society as well as vulnerable groups (minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, young peoples and peoples with disabilities), and to ensure that equal opportunities are given to women and girls to address gender disparities.

53. As a State Party to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), Sierra Leone is encouraged to fully implement the relevant provisions that promote access to and participation in cultural heritage and creative expressions and, as such, are conducive to implementing the right to take part in cultural life as defined in article 27 of the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In doing so, Sierra Leone is encouraged to give due consideration to the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors and NGOs from the civil society as well as vulnerable groups (minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, young peoples and peoples with disabilities), and to ensure that equal opportunities are given to women and girls to address gender disparities.

Freedom of opinion and expression

54. Sierra Leone is recommended to decriminalize defamation and place it within a civil code that is in accordance with international standards.³⁵

55. Sierra Leone is recommended to further introduce and strengthen self-regulatory mechanisms for the media.

Freedom of scientific research and the right to benefit from scientific progress and its applications

56. **Sierra Leone**, in the framework of the 2015-2017 consultations related to the revision and monitoring of the Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers is encouraged to report to UNESCO on any legislative or other steps undertaken by it with the aim to implement this international standard-setting instrument, adopted by UNESCO in 1974. The 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers sets forth the principles and norms of conducting scientific research and experimental development and applying its results and technological innovations in the best interests of pursuing scientific truth and contributing to the enhancement of their fellow citizens' well-being and the benefit of mankind and peace. The Recommendation also provides the guidelines for formulating and executing adequate science and technology policies, based on these principles and designed to avoid the possible dangers and fully realize and exploit the positive prospects inherent in such scientific discoveries, technological developments and applications. **Sierra Leone** did not submit its 2011-2012 report on the implementation of the 1974 Recommendation. In providing its report in 2015-2017 on this matter, **Sierra Leone** is kindly invited to pay a particular attention to the legal provisions and regulatory frameworks which ensure that scientific researchers have the responsibility and the

³⁵ See for example, General Comments No 34. of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 2006 Recommendation of the 87th Session Human Rights Committee, the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, and Resolution 1577 (2007) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

right to work in the spirit of the principles enshrined in the 1974 Recommendation, such as: i) intellectual freedom to pursue, expound and defend the scientific truth as they see it, and autonomy and freedom of research, and academic freedom to openly communicate on research results, hypotheses and opinions in the best interests of accuracy and objectivity of scientific results; ii) participation of scientific researchers in definition of the aims and objectives of the programmes in which they are engaged and to the determination of the methods to be adopted which should be compatible with respect for universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as ecological and social responsibility; iii) freedom of expression relating to the human, social or ecological value of certain projects and in the last resort withdraw from those projects if their conscience so dictates ; iv) freedom of movement, in particular for participation in international scientific and technological gatherings for furtherance of international peace, cooperation and understanding; v) guarantees of non-discrimination in application of rights to satisfactory and safe working conditions and avoidance of hardship; to access to educational facilities, occupational mobility, career development, participation in public life, and vi) right of association, etc.