

**24th session of the Universal Periodic Review
Statement by Ireland on the review of Sierra Leone**

27 January 2016

Ireland warmly welcomes the high level delegation of Sierra Leone and thanks it for its presentation.

We recognise the serious challenge which Sierra Leone faced in dealing with the Ebola crisis. We commend Sierra Leone for positive steps nonetheless taken since the last UPR cycle, in particular establishment of a Constitutional Review Committee. While we understand delays in the process due to Ebola, we urge speedy action to ensure completion within the intended time-frame.

We call on Sierra Leone to take urgent action in relation to recommendations accepted in the first cycle and not yet implemented, including on the death penalty. We further regret that consensual same-sex relations between adults remain criminalised.

Ireland shares the concerns of the UN Country Team regarding discrimination against pregnant girls in relation to enjoyment of the right to education. We **recommend** that Sierra Leone reverse the policy barring pregnant girls from attending schools and sitting state examinations; and encourage girls to return to school after childbirth.

Finally, we are concerned that laws are being used to detain and prosecute journalists. Ireland **recommends** that the Public Order Act and Criminal and Seditious Libel laws be repealed or revised, and that freedom of expression is guaranteed for journalists.