

Position Paper for Human Rights Council

The two agenda before the Human Rights Council are: Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural Areas and Combating Contemporary Forms of Slavery in Cyberspace. The Republic of Sierra Leone prioritizes the elimination of all forms of discrimination including discrimination against women and people with disabilities and recognizing the importance of modern and equal distribution of technology around the country.

I. Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural Areas

The problem of digital divide is bridging information gap not just about the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) but also political matter of making information more accessible. Closing Digital Divide is important as it allows countries to improve communication with other countries and to encourage development within the nation. On 21 December 2001, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 58/163 on World Summit on the Information Society, in which all key players have opportunities in this global gathering to develop a shared vision of ways to bridge the digital divide and create a truly global information society. On December 22, 2011 United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 66/184 on Information and communications technologies for development.

The Republic of Sierra Leone has its computer literacy still on the rise with only half of its population a computer-literate. The lack of abundant resources and funds in the country has taken its toll on obtaining high average-specification computers and accessories and limited consultancies. The people of Republic of Sierra Leone recognize that it is necessary to modernize and spread ICT in the country especially in the rural areas to the socio-economic development of the country. Researchers believe that people of high socioeconomic status will acquire information faster than less privileged people, simply because they can afford technology leading them into developing knowledge faster. Republic of Sierra Leone has drafted a National ICT Policy in line with Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) policy as it attempts to plot ways to use ICTs to achieve basic development objectives of Sierra Leone. Republic of Sierra Leone has an internet exchanged point known as Sierra Leone Internet Exchange or SLIX which promotes general economic development by allowing more individuals to access to a cost-effective internet service and encourages investors to help in achieving to extend the development and availability of the Internet for all Sierra Leoneans. Republic of Sierra Leone is embarking on introducing ICTs on its education sector by having schools to include computer courses in their syllabus to be available for teachers and students.

The Republic of Sierra Leone proposes a Public-Private Partnership which allows private operators and providers to work with the government in establishing learning centers in every community and provide telecommunication services for these centers. The PPP aims to 1) boost the IT industry of the country 2) provide teachers and students ICTS to use as a tool in learning and administration 3) stimulate early childhood education on ICTs 4) lastly improve adults' literacy skills. The Republic of Sierra Leone hereby looks forward in seeing progress in closing digital divide with this action in our country but also around the world with assistance from other sovereign countries.

II. Combating Contemporary Forms of Slavery in the Cyberspace

With the development of technology in our today's generation, contemporary forms of slavery have changed and have become an important issue to deliberate in the international community. The internet has been available almost by everyone which makes way for human rights violations in

women and children but are not limited to concerns like forced labor, debt bondage and forced and early marriages in which affects different kinds of people around the world. On October 14 1996, United Nations adopted resolution A/51/492 on Promotion and Protection and of the Rights of Children focusing on exploitation of child labor and a resolution 6/14 Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery was made, which examines and reports on all contemporary forms of slavery and slavery-like practices. On December 1993 United Nations adopted A/RES/48/104 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Republic of Sierra Leone has 2005 Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act which prohibits all kinds of trafficking and imposes a 10 year imprisonment on criminals. Republic of Sierra Leone has also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on June 1990 which states that a child has the right to be free from abuse, to be given an education, and to play in which a child victim of exploitation would never get. The Government of Sierra Leone is making their best efforts to fulfill with the minimum standards of the elimination of trafficking. Just in 2014, the Government raided brothels to administer laws against commercial sexual exploitation and gave assistance to women domestic workers who were treated like slaves outside the country. The country's Ministry of Mineral Resources has also made actions against the use of child labor in mining activities by having Mines Monitors to enforce regulations. Republic of Sierra Leone has only one trafficking victim shelter operated by International Organization for Migration and located only in the capital, Freetown, far away from rural areas.

The Republic of Sierra Leone proposes in establishing International Cyber Slavery Awareness and Education Campaign fostering states to educate their people on their human rights in cyberspace and cybersecurity. This campaign aims to 1) increase public awareness of cyber safety, security and ethics 2) strengthen efforts to prosecute and convict trafficking offenders 3) encourage all states in enforcing law against in such cybercrime actions which will be sanctioned under the administration of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The Republic of Sierra Leone looks forward to co-operating with other sovereign states in combating contemporary slavery in cyberspace through these simple actions proposed by our country.

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