

## **CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT FOR THE PRESENTATION OF SIERRA LEONE'S 4TH VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW (VNR) AT THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Sierra Leone's fourth Voluntary National Review is being undertaken against the backdrop of a post-election era, the launch of a roadmap for achieving the SDGs by 2030 through the alignment of the Goals with the Medium Term National Framework, economic regression and negative impacts of climate change. While noting the efforts by the Government to address inequalities, the country's much-celebrated economic gains over the period have regressed significantly.

We acknowledge the Government's efforts to leave no one behind including progressive legislations on women's rights and gender equality. However, the most vulnerable in society, are still prone to multiple shocks, in addition to dealing with the effects of a fragile context. At-risk groups such as children, women, and persons with disabilities, are among those who continue to experience the negative impact of the significant socio-economic challenges.

CSOs, therefore call on Government to:

1. take concrete measures required to address hardships for those left behind to cushion the effects of inadequate health, education and social safety nets.
2. strengthen institutions such as local authorities, primary healthcare facilities, justice and security, and social safety measures capable of transforming a fragmented society.
3. Implement legislations geared towards promoting gender equality and meaningful participation of women, persons with disabilities and youths in decision-making at all levels.
4. Urgently deliver socio-economic transformation in collaboration with the private sector to identify priority areas for investment based on national needs. It is critical for all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to take full ownership of the SDGs.
5. translate global recognition into practical results for the people, recognising our role as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, in addition to key leadership in the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding, Statebuilding and the g7+.

Thank you.