



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

### List of issues in relation to the initial report of Sierra Leone\*

1. The State party is invited to submit in writing the information requested below (preferably not exceeding 10,700 words) by 30 November 2024.

#### A. General information

2. Please describe the efforts taken to raise awareness, particularly among judges, prosecutors and lawyers, of the economic, social and cultural rights enshrined in the Covenant. Please provide examples of cases in which the provisions of the Covenant have been invoked before the State party's domestic courts,<sup>1</sup> as well as measures taken, and their impact, to ensure access to justice and remedies in civil court cases regarding economic, social and cultural rights. Please provide information on any eventual steps to render the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights justiciable in the State party.<sup>2</sup>

3. Please provide information on training received by the staff of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone to ensure the promotion and protection of the full range of Covenant rights, as well as on measures taken to ensure its ability to fully discharge its functions, including measures taken to ensure an independent appointment process and the functional independence of the Commission's members. Please provide information on consultation with civil society organizations and other stakeholder groups in the development of new legislation and policies related to economic, social and cultural rights, including organizations of and for persons with disabilities, persons with albinism, persons living in poverty and ethnic minorities.

4. Please provide information on any legislative and/or policy measures taken, and their impact, to ensure that businesses exercise human rights due diligence in the conduct of their operations, including their supply chain, particularly concerning human rights under the Covenant. Please provide concrete information on the implementation of the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency Act (Act No. 16 of 2015), including results after 2021.<sup>3</sup> Please provide information regarding eventual plans to formulate any national action plan for human rights and/or any national action plan for business and human rights.

5. Please provide information on measures taken by the State party with regard to the mitigation of climate change, including specific measures, and their impact, to meet the nationally determined contributions for reducing emissions that the State party has set itself under the Paris Agreement. Please also provide information on the progress made in reducing per capita greenhouse gas emissions and on targets that the State party has set for further

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\* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group at its seventy-fourth session (4–8 March 2024).

<sup>1</sup> E/C.12/SLE/1, para. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., para. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., para. 56.



reductions. With respect to climate change adaptation policies and measures, please provide information on:

(a) How the State party assesses the effects of climate change on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, in particular for marginalized and disadvantaged individuals and groups;

(b) Whether the State party has developed or plans to develop a national adaptation plan, with adequate allocation of all required resources, to address the impacts of climate change on, inter alia, economic, social and cultural rights;

(c) Measures taken to strengthen preparedness for and responses to natural disasters, disaster risk reduction measures and measures taken to adopt a strategy to this end, with an adequate allocation of financial resources;

(d) Which institutions are tasked with the development and implementation of climate change adaptation measures and policies for slow-onset impacts in different areas, such as agriculture, housing and health, and how coordination among the institutions responsible for disaster preparedness and management is ensured.

## **B. Issues relating to the general provisions of the Covenant (arts. 1–5)**

### **Maximum available resources (art. 2 (1))**

6. Please provide updated information on the evolution of the following, covering the past 10 years:

(a) The proportion of the population living below the nationally defined poverty line;<sup>4</sup>

(b) Levels of inequality,<sup>5</sup> before and after taxes and transfers, if possible defined as the ratio between the total income of the richest 10 per cent of the population and the total income of the poorest 40 per cent and as the ratio between the assets owned by the richest 10 per cent of the population and the assets owned by the poorest 50 per cent;

(c) The economy, in particular through the annual variations of gross domestic product (GDP), GDP per capita and the level of public debt in proportion to GDP;

(d) The proportion of public revenue generated through taxes and as a percentage of GDP, the proportion of public revenue obtained through direct and indirect taxes, the corporate tax revenue rate and the percentage of total revenue generated from personal tax collected on the incomes of the richest 10 per cent of the population, as well as provide an evaluation of the amount of tax evasion and tax avoidance and the fiscal cost of the main tax benefits;

(e) Public expenditure as a percentage of GDP and, within total public expenditure, the proportion of the public budget allocated to social spending, including social security, food, water and sanitation, housing, health and education;

(f) Funds received through international cooperation, including overseas development assistance, in proportion to GDP, as well as the conditionality pertaining to economic or monetary adjustments of those funds;

(g) Any fiscal policies adopted in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

7. Please provide information with regard to the implementation of the State party's anti-corruption legislation, and describe efforts to combat bribery and other acts of corruption, paying particular attention to mining, logging and general resource extraction concessions, land administration, public procurement and the criminal justice system.<sup>6</sup> Please also provide information on measures taken, and their impact, to strengthen the existing formal legal

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., para. 126.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., para. 127.

<sup>6</sup> [CCPR/C/SLE/CO/1](#), para. 22.

system, as well as on formalizing parallel justice systems, including tribal and other forms of justice systems, including the impact of such measures on discrimination against women. Please also provide statistical data on the number of cases of corruption prosecuted in the past five years, the sanctions imposed on the perpetrators and the assets resulting from corruption that have been recovered, taking into account the transnational dimensions of these crimes where relevant. Please indicate what legislative or other measures have been put in place to protect whistle-blowers and to ensure the protection of and remedies for victims of corruption.

#### **Non-discrimination (art. 2 (2))**

8. Please provide information on the status of effective implementation in practice of non-discrimination legislation. Please also provide information and disaggregated data related to the measures taken, and their impact, to combat stigma, stereotypes, harmful practices and deep-rooted beliefs against persons with disabilities, persons affected by HIV and AIDS, and against persons with non-traditional sexual orientations, as well as on ensuring their Covenant rights. Please provide information on the concrete legal and policy measures, and their impact, to protect persons with albinism.

#### **Equal rights of men and women (art. 3)**

9. Please provide updated information on the measures mentioned in the State party's report on achieving equality between men and women,<sup>7</sup> including disaggregated statistical data. Please provide information on measures taken, and their impact, as part of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy.<sup>8</sup> Please provide information on the status of adoption of the Gender Empowerment Bill (of 2021).<sup>9</sup> Please provide information on measures taken, and their impact, to close the gender pay gap. Please also provide information on the effect of measures taken to reduce gender-based violence.

### **C. Issues relating to the specific provisions of the Covenant (arts. 6–15)**

#### **Right to work (art. 6)**

10. Please provide information on any assessments that the State party has conducted to determine the impact of the projects and programmes listed in paragraph 69 of the State party's report on the improvement of formal employment rates, especially among groups that are particularly affected by unemployment, including young women and persons with disabilities.<sup>10</sup>

11. Please provide information on the steps taken to improve the quality of technical and vocational training programmes and to adapt them to facilitate access to and integration into the labour market.<sup>11</sup> Please also provide information on measures taken, and their impact, to prevent discrimination concerning employment and occupation.

#### **Right to just and favourable conditions of work (art. 7)**

12. Please provide information on measures taken, and their impact, to reduce the size of the informal sector and to guarantee access for persons employed in the informal economy to basic services and the enjoyment of their rights under the Covenant.

13. Please provide information on any extraordinary measures taken, and their impact, to ensure the effective application of labour legislation, including the Sexual Offences Act,<sup>12</sup> and international conventions protecting the rights of employees to just and favourable conditions of work, particularly the implementation of laws and conventions to combat hazardous work and the worst forms of child labour. Please provide information on

<sup>7</sup> E/C.12/SLE/1, paras. 43 and 44.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., para. 50.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., para. 35.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., para. 69.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., para. 72.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., para. 76.

inspections carried out in the area of health and safety at work by the Ministry of Labour, and on inspections of the working methods of personnel, and of staff resources, training and organization, as well as on the number of inspections and the industries covered. Please provide information on measures taken, and their impact, to ensure national and international companies' compliance with human rights due diligence standards, including in the mining sector.

#### **Trade union rights (art. 8)**

14. Please provide information on how the State party ensures, in law and in practice, that all workers can exercise their right to form, join and be members of a trade union, and their right to strike, without being subjected to unwarranted restrictions or fear of reprisals.

#### **Right to social security (art. 9)**

15. Please provide information on the progress of pending legislation and policy measures to implement the remaining social security contingencies. Please indicate what forms of social assistance besides those covered by the NASSIT Benefits Payment are provided in the event of loss of income, and please provide additional and updated information on the number of people benefiting from the NASSIT Benefits Payment, including broken down into categories such as age, sex and rural/urban areas.

16. Please provide information on measures envisaged to be taken to ensure that workers in the informal economy, those who work on an occasional basis, and the self-employed can also enjoy their right to social security and social protection, access to pension services, health care and maternity care, and coverage for illness and disability, and that they have social protection against workplace hazards, such as accidents and serious health risks.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Protection of the family and children (art. 10)**

17. Please provide additional information on concrete policy measures taken, and their impact, to prevent child marriage, as well as on efforts to harmonize existing national legislation regulating child marriage with a view to prohibiting child marriage.<sup>14</sup> Please provide information on the tangible steps taken, and their impact, to reduce domestic violence, as referred to in paragraph 120 of the State party's report. Please provide information regarding the number of cases of female genital mutilation, as well as on the State party's response to the high number of cases of female genital mutilation that reportedly exist in the State party.

18. Please provide information on concrete legal and policy measures, and their impact, to ensure protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking and forced labour, and the worst forms of child labour. Please also provide information on the concrete steps taken, and their impact, to ameliorate the situation of children living in a hazardous environment, as described in paragraph 116 of the State party's report.<sup>15</sup>

#### **Right to an adequate standard of living (art. 11)**

19. Please provide information on the results of the Medium-term National Development Plan 2019–2023, as well as on measures taken to combat poverty, including child poverty and poverty among disadvantaged and marginalized groups and among families with three or more children, also in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>16</sup> In the context of rising inflation and climate change, please also provide additional information about the level of malnutrition and about measures taken to tackle child malnutrition and to ensure that everyone has access to adequate food supplies, including the results of the National Transformation Programme 2023.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., para. 112.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., para. 183.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., para. 116.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., para. 39.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., para. 139.

20. Please provide information and disaggregated statistical data covering the past 10 years on the measures adopted to ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation, in particular in informal settlements and rural areas, including the results of the 2018 National Water and Sanitation Policy. Please describe the specific measures taken to ensure access to affordable and adequate housing, including for disadvantaged persons and families living in slums, and the impact of these measures, including the results of the National Environmental Health and Sanitation Strategy 2015–2020.

#### **Right to physical and mental health (art. 12)**

21. Please provide information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the viability of the broader health-care system, including on the backlog of operations, medical examinations and other medical procedures. Please provide information on the assessment of the effectiveness and impact of various measures, including emergency laws and policies, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please provide information on the results of the World Health Organization Sierra Leone Country Cooperation Strategy 2022–2025, as well as information on the State party's disease prevention and vaccination campaigns. Please provide information on the status of the formulation of a new public health act. Please provide information about the State party considering decriminalizing drug use, as well as about the provision of harm reduction measures.

22. Please provide information on the status of the implementation of the Sierra Leone Social Health Insurance Act (Act No. 46 of 2017). Please also provide information on the preliminary results of the Sierra Leone Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV and Paediatric HIV Strategic and Operational Plan 2021–2025. Please also provide information on the provision of health care and medical services to persons deprived of their liberty, especially measures taken, and their impact, to screen and prevent tuberculosis, as well as for those living with HIV/AIDS. Please provide information on any measures taken to provide access to basic services in the area of sexual and reproductive health. Please provide information on measures taken, and their impact, to criminalize and combat harmful practices against children, including female genital mutilation.

#### **Right to education (arts. 13 and 14)**

23. With regard to the information presented in paragraphs 178 to 180 of the State party's report, please describe, with the support of statistics disaggregated by sex and age, the impact that the implementation of the Free Quality School Education Programme has had on school enrolment rates, also in the years 2020–2023, in primary and secondary education, particularly among girls, on rates of school dropout and on persistent disparities in access to education. Please also provide information on measures taken, and their impact, to educate children and their family structures about harmful practices, including female genital mutilation.<sup>18</sup>

24. Please provide concrete information on the results of the Radical Inclusion 2020 programme and its effects on the facilitation of access to inclusive education for children with disabilities and pregnant teenage girls.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Cultural rights (art. 15)**

25. Please provide additional information on any specific steps taken to protect and promote the cultures of the different religious, ethnic and linguistic groups that make up the population and to create favourable conditions for the preservation, development, expression and dissemination of information about their identity, history, culture, languages, traditions and customs. Please specify what steps have been taken to improve Internet coverage and guarantee affordable access, particularly for disadvantaged and marginalized persons and groups, including in rural and remote areas.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., para. 178.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., para. 184.