**Recommendations by UN human rights mechanisms concerning the rights of persons with disabilities with respect to Sierra Leone**

**Main issues raised by TBs:**

* Pending ratification of the Optional Protocol to the CRPD
* Discrimination of women and children with disabilities
* Awareness-raising campaigns to combat the stigmatization, prejudice and discrimination, notably of children with disabilities
* Need for training for professional staff working with children with disabilities
* Inclusive education: lack of enrolment of children with disabilities in regular schools and of teacher training, and inaccessible facilities

Concluding observations of the CRC Committee, 2016

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Concluding observations of the CAT Committee, [CAT/C/SLE/CO/1](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/SLE/CAT_C_SLE_CO_1_17276_E.doc), 2014

4. The Committee welcomes the State party’s ratification of the following international instruments:

(b) The Convention on the Rights of **Persons with disabilities**, on 4 October 2010.

Concluding observations of the CEDAW Committee, [CEDAW/C/SLE/CO/6](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fSLE%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en), 2014

Disadvantaged groups of women

Elderly women and **women with disabilities**

38. The Committee notes with concern that there is a lack of information on the situation of elderly women and **women with disabilities** who suffer multiple discriminations and are less likely to access basic services including education, employment and health care.

39. Adopt special policy measures and programmes to address the particular needs of elderly women, and girls and **women with disabilities**, ensuring their social protection and access to education, health care, rehabilitation and employment opportunities.

Concluding observations of the CRC Committee, [CRC/C/SLE/CO/2](http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhsvGGAuSRoIGO1REqQZYCwihs1KLS7t7%2fe%2fVUfiuCi9MRL7Rdiz%2fC9ekTURJEnn8QIsNmipXTUD9LZDww6l3JzqFsI%2fU%2b0B6QE47hUU%2fBc20D), 2008

Data collection

19. The Committee expresses its concern at the inadequate data collection, including on different categories of vulnerable children. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned at the reported loss in 2005 of the database developed in cooperation with donors and that the data lost has not, as of yet, been retrieved.

20. The Committee encourages the State party to continue to strengthen its data collection system as a basis for assessing progress achieved in the realization of child rights and to help design policies to implement the Convention. The State party should ensure that information collected contains up-to-date data, allowing for disaggregation and analysis, on a wide-range of vulnerable groups including former child combatants, children living in poverty, street children, **children with disabilities**, child labourers, etc. The Committee also recommends that the State party seek technical assistance from, inter alia, UNICEF.

Non-discrimination

25. The Committee notes with appreciation the section on the principle of non-discrimination, including against girls, contained in the Education Act (2004) and the ongoing and increasing efforts to educate the public on the need for non-discrimination, particularly against the girl child and **children with disabilities**. The Committee regrets nevertheless that the Constitution continues to allow discrimination against women and children, particularly in matters relating to marriage and inheritance, through restrictions and privileges available under customs and tradition.

26. The Committee urges the State party to continue and strengthen its efforts to remove all discriminatory laws from its statute books. In particular, the Committee urges the State party to review the Constitution with a view to ensuring that its provisions on non-discrimination are in full compliance with article 2 of the Convention. The Committee also encourages the State party to adopt a comprehensive strategy, including awareness -raising campaigns, to eliminate discrimination on any grounds and against all vulnerable groups.

**Children with disabilities**

49. The Committee notes that the State party works with NGOs, Child Protection Agencies and other humanitarian agencies to provide for the welfare of disabled persons, including children. It also notes that there are a number of facilities in place to care for the needs and well-being of **children with disabilities** and in which enrolment has increased. While the Committee notes with interest that a National Policy for the Protection of **Persons with disabilities** is being developed by the State party, it remains concerned at the lack of appropriate legislation to cover the needs and protection of **persons with disabilities**. Further, the Committee regrets that no information is provided regarding any efforts to include **children with disabilities** in society. Finally, the Committee expresses its concern over reports that **children with disabilities** are excluded from the regular education system due to parents who do not want to send their children to school, the lack of teachers trained to teach **children with disabilities** and the inaccessibility of the infrastructure to **children with disabilities**

50. In light of the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for **Persons with disabilities** (General Assembly resolution 48/96) and the Committee’s general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of **children with disabilities**, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take all necessary measures to ensure the effective implementation of existing legislation, and take all necessary measures to expedite the completion and adoption of the National Policy for the Protection of **Persons with disabilities**;

(b) Make every effort to provide programmes and services for all **children with disabilities** and ensure such services receive adequate human and financial resources;

(c) Carry out awareness campaigns to sensitise parents as well as the public about the rights and special needs of **children with disabilities** and encourage their inclusion in society;

(e) Provide training for professional staff working with **children with disabilities**, such as teachers, medical, paramedical and related personnel and social workers; and

(f) Consider ratifying the Convention on the Rights of **Persons with disabilities** and its Optional Protocol.

Adolescent health

55. The Committee notes that campaigns against sexually transmitted diseases are helping to reduce their spread amongst teenagers. However, the Committee is concerned at the absence of an adolescent health policy or strategy and a mental health policy catering to adolescents affected by conflict and post conflict situations. The Committee also notes with concern that the levels of substance abuse, especially alcohol and marijuana, are increasing and yet the Child Rights Act omits any provisions referring to substance abuse. Furthermore, there are no minimum ages for the sale of alcohol or cigarettes to children and no penalties are set out for adults who encourage the use of illegal substances by children.

56. The Committee recommends that the State party, taking into account the Committee’s general comment No.4 (2003) on adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC/GC/2003/4), establish a comprehensive policy on adolescent health, develop effective programmes and services in this area and collect valid data on adolescent health concerns through, inter alia, studies on the issue. The Committee also recommends that the State party, in consultation with affected youth, elaborate clear policies and, when applicable, legislation, to address the prevention of adolescent health-related issues, in particular, suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, early pregnancies, and mental health concerns.