

## JOINT CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT

### Sierra Leone National People's Assembly, September 9th, 2023

As Global Call to Action Against Poverty in Sierra Leone, we convene today at the National People's Assembly in Freetown. Our purpose is to address critical social justice issues unique to and to present concrete demands to our government, the African Union, the United Nations, and the international community, tailored to the specific context of Sierra Leone.

**1. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Acknowledging the ongoing efforts by Sierra Leone toward achieving the SDGs, we express concerns about the challenges we face in making substantial progress within the given timeframe. With less than eight years remaining until the 2030 target year, we urge our government to prioritize adequate budget allocations and resources for essential socio-economic sectors, formulate effective policies, and foster cooperation to accelerate progress. As highlighted in SDG 17, we emphasize the principle of Leaving No One Behind, urging our government to embrace inclusive and sustainable development that benefits all segments of society, particularly marginalized groups.

**2. Pandemic Preparedness:** Sierra Leone remains vulnerable to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic due to lack of vaccine production and limited access to it. We call upon the Government of Sierra Leone and the African Union to strongly support the WHO's public-centered mRNA Technology Transfer initiative, which can promote sustainable local vaccine production. Successful implementation of this initiative can not only address COVID-19 but also help combat other deadly tropical diseases prevalent in Sierra Leone. We further call for our government to allocate sufficient budgets for vaccine procurement through this initiative and actively engage in global discussions on the development of a Global Pandemic Treaty, with a focus on equitable vaccine distribution mechanisms.

**3. National Debt Challenge:** Sierra Leone is grappling with unsustainable levels of national debt, hindering resource allocation to critical socio-economic sectors and undermining poverty reduction, SDG attainment, and overall development. We recommend the establishment of a comprehensive debt relief framework, including innovative financing mechanisms. We advocate for a fair global financial system that ensures equitable access to development financing. Moreover, we propose the creation of a practical and binding mechanism, allowing public participation in the process of contracting national loans that exceed certain thresholds, frequencies, or purposes to enhance public accountability beyond taxation for loan repayment.

**4. Social Protection:** We commend the Government's commitment to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Citizens to Social Protection and Social Security. However, we further urge to expedite the ratification of this Protocol and establish national policy frameworks to operationalize it, ensuring that all Sierra Leonean citizens can be shielded from frequent socioeconomic shocks.

**5. Climate Change:** Climate change poses a significant threat to people's livelihoods and national economy. We call upon government and development partners to urge developed countries, the largest carbon emitters, to honor their commitments in providing financing for climate change mitigation and adaptation in Sierra Leone. We urge the UN to establish an



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effective mechanism to promote, monitor, and discourage countries from failing to honor their commitments.

**6. Peace and Security:** Sustainable development can only thrive in an environment of stable peace and security. Sierra Leone faces challenges to national security, and we call on the international community to join hands with us in supporting our efforts to address these challenges. We also urge the international community to provide genuine and unconditional support and solidarity to Sierra Leone to strengthen our national democratic governance institutions, accountable to our citizens.

In conclusion, we call upon the Government of Sierra Leone, development partners and the African Union to provide balanced and visionary leadership to realize the aspirations of every Sierra Leonean. Together, we believe that by addressing these pressing issues and working collaboratively with our government and international partners, we can build a more just and sustainable future for all citizens of Sierra Leone.

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