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# **Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU)**

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**[Sierra Leone]**

**Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review**

**11<sup>th</sup> session of the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council**

**May 2011**

**[Sierra Leone]**

**NGOs submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review**

**11<sup>th</sup> session of the UPR Working Group, May 2011**

**Introduction**

In this submission, Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU) addresses Sections B,C and D as provided for in the *General Guidelines for the Preparation of Information under the Universal Periodic Review*.<sup>1</sup> In section B SLTU raises concern over the need to enhance, implement and update the 1996 Agreement, and the review of the Education Act. SLTU highlights concerns about human rights violations in the context of inadequate salaries and conditions of service for teachers as well as lack of respect for the human dignity of teachers. In Section D, SLTU makes five recommendations for action by the government.

**B. Normative and institutional framework of the State**

The 1996 Collective Agreement between the Sierra Leone Teachers Union and the Government is the only agreement that specifically protects the rights of teachers in Sierra Leone. Though there is an Education Act that guides the operation of the teaching profession, this act tends to limit the authority of SLTU in regards to union bargaining.

**C. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground**

In March 2010, SLTU complained about the delay in approval process for replacement of teachers, by so doing many teachers were turned to volunteers and excluded from the pay roll. SLTU documented cases whereby about £400 was returned monthly to government account by the Sierra Leone Muslim Congress boys' secondary school. This money supposed to be used to pay new teachers.

The low salaries of teachers is challenging enough, teachers struggle on a monthly basis to make ends meet. Teachers find it difficult to deal with backlog or non payment of salaries. In 2006/2007, SLTU documented a case of a female teacher who was owed about five months worth of salaries. She was in desperate need of the money to support her medical bills, as she was ill. Until her death the money never arrive. SLTU believes that her death is partly because she is unable to get enough money for her medical bill.

**D. Recommendations for action by the State under review**

1. Review and ensure that teachers are paid adequate salaries and allowances, benefits and pensions.
2. Ensure that Ministry of Education approvals should be limited to recruitments that will lead to increase in the numbers of teachers, approvals and authority for replacement of existing teaching post should be given to the school.

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<sup>1</sup> Contained in Human Rights Council Decision 6/102, Follow-up to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, section I adopted 27 September 2007.

3. Respect the collective agreement with SLTU, which limits the maximum numbers of student per class to 45 and ensure more schools are built to accommodate the overflow and ensure removal of barriers to childrens' rights to education.
4. Government should reform the Education Act to ensure that SLTU is empowered to bargain with the government on issues affecting teachers rather than the Teaching service commission.
5. Teaching Service Commission should be replace with the Education Service Commission