



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **CEDAW DELEGATION ADDRESSES THE PRESS IN FREETOWN**

*Freetown, Sierra Leone* – Following a series of consultative meetings held with the Government of Sierra Leone and other stakeholders on the implementation of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), a nine-member group of international experts and advisers from the Committee on CEDAW yesterday held a press conference at the headquarters of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in Freetown.

The head of delegation, Christine Brautigam told journalists that they were in Sierra Leone to find out about obstacles and opportunities on the implementation of the Convention, which Sierra Leone ratified on 11 November 1988 but is yet to submit a report in accordance with that instrument's requirements.

They also want to know how far Government has been strengthening the capacity of gender and children's affairs in relation to the implementation of the Convention.

"Gender empowerment is something Government should be committed to...Part of the school curriculum should include women's rights education," Ms Brautigam said, adding that though other institutions should be involved, the primary responsibility of Government was to educate people on women's rights.

Another member of the delegation said they had a beneficial meeting with a coalition of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Sierra Leone in which issues such as best practices on how to combat discriminations against women came up. "NGOs have an important part to play in the implementation of the Convention," she noted, stating that there was the need to have a lot of public campaigns to give legitimacy to women's rights.

The delegation, which arrived on Sunday 24 October, left Sierra Leone yesterday for New York. The CEDAW, an expert body established in 1982, comprises 23 experts on women's issues from around the world and monitors progress for women in those countries that are parties to the Convention.

During its biannual meetings, the Committee reviews national reports submitted by States parties within one year of ratification or accession, and every four years following. Currently, some 179 countries, over 90 per cent of UN member states, are party to the Convention.

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