World Vision

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UPR Sierra Leone

This Statement is delivered on behalf of World Vision Sierra Leone.

World Vision Sierra Leone welcomes the Government's acceptance of several recommendations with respect to maternal and child health and its commitment to making improvements in this area. Sierra Leone has amongst the highest rates in the world for maternal, newborn and under-five mortality, and whilst we note and welcome that these rates have improved in recent years – in fact the under-five mortality rate has been reduced by more than half since 1990 – these rates remain very off-track for meeting MDG targets, particularly Goals 4 and 5 relating to maternal health and child mortality.

The Government is currently implementing the free health package across the country, but we remain particularly concerned for pregnant women and children living in rural and remote areas, many of whom continue to be denied access to care and medicines because of their inability to pay for these services, and because of limited outreach to remote communities by trained community–based health personnel.

Health in rural communities in Sierra Leone is especially affected by insufficient water and sanitation facilities, lack of access to mosquito nets despite a nation-wide program of bed net distribution in 2010, insufficient numbers of health workers, and inadequate birth registration facilities. The monitoring of the access of such communities to these services remains a daunting challenge for the Government.

Measures to combat these challenges would be greatly assisted if the Government of Sierra Leone would increase its annual expenditure for health to 15% - the figure committed to under the Abuja Declaration.

Finally, the World Vision partnership is fully committed to assisting the Sierra Leone Government in the implementation of health-related obligations, particularly through working with the Government to improve access to healthcare at household level through trained community health workers.

Thank you.