

**Statement of H.E. Dr. Samura Kamara at the UNGA Side Event  
Accelerating the Implementation of SDG16+ – Launch of the Roadmap  
for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies. 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017.**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today marks an important milestone for the Pathfinders Group as we launch the roadmap for Peaceful Just and Inclusive societies. At the outset let me thank the Governments of Brazil and Switzerland who are Co Conveners with Sierra Leone for their tireless efforts in shaping the roadmap document. Special thanks should go to the Center on International Cooperation at New York University and especially Mr. David Steven for their creativity, insight and substantive contribution to the document.

The roadmap focuses on strategies for prevention, institutional renewal, inclusion and empowerment. In particular, some of the catalytic actions espoused in the document such as increasing justice and legal empowerment and Legal identity and birth registration for all, are very essential to sustain peace and also to achieve the principle of “leaving no one behind”. The Roadmap will thus serve as a practical guide to policymakers as they attempt to make measurable progress against the SDG16+ targets.

The importance of the SDG16+ targets for peaceful, just and inclusive societies to Sierra Leone, within its national development program, cannot be overemphasized. Sierra Leone singles out the issue of addressing exclusion from decision-making & socioeconomic participation as central to the achievement of the “leave no one behind principle”. In addition, as a lesson learnt from the war, priority is now given to disability, marginalization and stigmatization issues; Also, addressing the welfare of the incarcerated & ensuring the effectiveness of our justice system is critical to the achievement of SDG 16. To this end, for instance, the Government has already established a Legal Aid Board that has already ensured the release from prison of 100s

of persons that were remanded without charge and trial. We have started preparation of a Comprehensive National SDGs Investment Plan, with 7 policy papers already prepared and 7 more in the pipeline. We have Identified certain policy objectives on SDG16 for Sierra Leone which include: i) to increase proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority; ii) to reduce the proportion of indigents including those on remand without legal aid in the country to 1 percent; and iii) to attain a 100 percent deployment of paralegals to all local courts in country. In essence the areas covered by the roadmap such as democracy, good governance, justice, and peacebuilding have been and are still critical to Sierra Leone's future as a resilient, inclusive and prosperous country.

Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen

Sierra Leone's commitment to the pathfinder process as a co-convener with Brazil and Switzerland is demonstrated by active involvement of Minister of Justice in the launching of the Pathfinders Group and his contributions during the retreat in New York last year to shape the roadmap. In addition, our Minister of Finance also gave his insights during the Pathfinders side event during the recently concluded High Level Political Forum. It is in this regard that I would like to encourage existing pathfinders to increase their commitments to implementation, and other countries to join the pathfinders group, given our wish to be as inclusive and representative as possible.

Finally, I would like to reiterate Sierra Leone's commitment to access to justice and its willingness to support a Task Force on Justice that will explore the strategies, innovation, and finance needed to provide access to justice for all.

I thank you for your kind attention