



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY

AT THE 79TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AT THE SIXTH COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM 152:

“ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE”

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**Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

1. The delegation of Sierra Leone aligns this statement with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative **of Uganda** on behalf of the African Group.
2. We thank the Secretary-General for his reports on the agenda item "*Administration of Justice at the United Nations*" contained in document **A/79/127** - on administration of justice at the United Nations; **A/79/156** - on the activities of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services; and **A/79/121** - Report of the Internal Justice Council on administration of justice at the United Nations.
3. Sierra Leone continues to underline the importance of an independent, impartial, transparent, and professional system of administration of justice at the United Nations operating in accordance with relevant rules of international law and due process, which is viewed as a reflection on the organisation's wider commitment to

international rule of law, and to its implications for international peace and security.

Chairperson,

4. An appreciation of this nexus is important in the understanding of the importance of an effective and robust international justice system in the United Nations. This is especially so in the context of the United Nations, where United Nations personnel do not have recourse to national judicial systems for perceived wrong caused by the organisation. To that end, my delegation supports a system that provides effective avenues for recourse for all personnel of the United Nations.

5. Sierra Leone notes the trends in and observations on the operation of the formal system of administration of justice. We note that a total of 401 Management Evaluation requests were received by the Secretariat in 2023, representing one of the lowest number of cases received in any year since the introduction of the new system of administration of justice system in 2009. We also note that withdrawal of cases following informal resolution have

shown a decrease in recent years. We commend the Office of Staff Legal Assistance for the key role it has played as a filtering mechanism for the early resolution of cases at the management evaluation stage and before the Dispute Tribunal. We note that *'the Office of Staff Legal Assistance achieves a significant number of informal settlements before and at all stages of litigation, both with and without the assistance of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services'* (para. 100).

6. In further reference to the formal system of justice, we note that in 2023 the Dispute Tribunal did not make any referrals for accountability.
7. Mr Chair, referrals for accountability by the Tribunals are a key tool for holding UN officials accountable. This mechanism is critical when viewed alongside the fact that by and large, UN officials do not assume any form of personal culpability for wrongful administrative decisions. Rather, it is the organisation that, as defendant in proceedings before the Tribunal, is held responsible and financially liable for administrative wrongdoing, ultimately

assessed to member states. Requests from the Dispute Tribunal and the Appeals Tribunal to enforce accountability and the appropriate implementation of such requests by Management is an important mechanism for advancing personal responsibility and organisational accountability.

8. Sierra Leone commends the efforts made to advance multilingualism in the system of administration of justice including through greater geographical and linguistic diversity among the judges of the Tribunal. We further welcome the in-depth, integrated analysis of trends observed in the system of administration of justice for the period 2009-2023.

9. Sierra Leone recognises the important role of the International Justice Council to ensure independence, professionalism and accountability in the system of administration of justice and takes notes of the proposal to restrict the use of compensation in lieu of reinstatement as the default administrative practice when implementing the judgments of the Tribunals. Sierra Leone is of the view that there should be no inputted or restrictive interpretation

to the use of any of the remedies under Article 10 (5) of the statute of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal, which was not envisaged by the General Assembly. Further, insisting on separation of the staff member regardless of the positive outcome of their application at the Tribunal is a form of reaffirming the wrongful administrative decision and as such denies the opportunity for true accountability.

10. My delegation takes this opportunity to thank the current Council which concludes its mandate in November 2024.

Mr. Chair,

11. Sierra Leone welcomes the informal resolution of applications and recognises that a key goal of any informal justice system is to avert recourse to formal litigation and recalls that in establishing the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Service, the General Assembly had this primary purpose in mind.

12. Sierra Leone therefore further welcomes the view reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 78/248, that "*the informal resolution of conflict is a crucial element*

of the system of administration of justice, [emphasizing] that all possible use should be made of the informal system in order to avoid unnecessary litigation, without prejudice to the basic right of staff to access the formal system and encouraged recourse to the informal resolution of disputes".

13. Sierra Leone welcomes the efforts of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services to harmonize informal resolution practices and drive standards across the network of ombudsmen and mediators serving organizations that are part of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. We further note that to increase access to its services, the Office uses virtual platforms for outreach activities and remote conflict resolution services, as well as ensure that its materials are accessible to personnel with disabilities.

14. The placement of focus on mental health and well-being by the Office represents an appropriate contextualization of the present workplace. We also note the efforts made by the Office to reinforce the capacity of

the heads of entities and senior leaders to foster a harmonious workplace and commend the Office for its advancements in these areas.

15. Let me conclude, **Chairperson**, by stressing Sierra Leone's continuing support for a robust and effective system of administration built on integrity, fairness, humane work ethics, and that advances organisational accountability.

16. I thank you.

