

**Half-Day General Discussion on girls'/women's right to education
Palais des Nations, Room XVI**

**Statement by Ambassador Yvette Stevens
Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone
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Sierra Leone would like to thank CEDAW for this initiative.

The subject of the right to education for girls and women is not new in the international agenda. However, actually guaranteeing this right has remained persuasive. One thing that is clear from the intervention of the distinguished panelists is that many obstacles still remain. Challenges vary from country to country and efforts to address these would thus need to be country-specific. This calls for specific action plans to address challenges within member states to be drawn up, and would form the basis for action and monitoring of progress. CEDAW should encourage States to do this.

For Sierra Leone, we would need to address questions such as the role of families and communities. Role models have also worked well in addressing gender stereotyping.

In Sierra Leone, specific measures which have been taken include free basic education including providing exam fees, scholarships for all girls studying science at the tertiary level, and addressing the problem of teenage pregnancy, placing educational institutions within close radius of communities, and offering free tuition for girls at the senior level as part of its Agenda for Prosperity.