Frequently Asked Questions
about
FEMALE PARTICIPATION

Do women have the same right to participate in politics as men?

Yes. The Constitution of Sierra Leone guarantees the right of all citizens – regardless of their gender – to participate in national governance. This includes the right to vote and to be elected.

Is a woman's vote equal to a man's vote?

According to the Constitution of Sierra Leone, women and men are regarded as equal citizens. Every ballot paper cast by an eligible voter is equal to one vote, regardless of the voter's gender.

Why is it important for women to vote?

Participation is fundamental to the principle of democracy, which reflects the will of the majority, as expressed on ballot papers.

In Sierra Leone, women account for more than half of the population. By exercising their right to vote, women can ensure that their interests are a priority to elected and aspiring leaders.

Can a woman's father, husband, brother or other family member vote on her behalf?

No. Every voter is required to cast their own ballot, in person; and no voter may cast more than one ballot in each election contest. This protects the sovereign right of citizens to vote, regardless of their gender. It also ensures that ballots reflect the choice of the voter and not the choice of someone else.

Can a woman vote differently than her husband or family?

Yes. Every voter is entitled to select the candidate of his/her choice. In fact, a very important aspect of democratic election is the secrecy of voting. In Sierra Leone, every voter must mark their ballot paper(s) independently and behind a privacy screen. He/she must then fold the ballot paper before placing it into the ballot box. At no stage of the polling process is any voter obliged to reveal his/her choice of candidate; and interference in voter privacy is strictly prohibited.

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