



HRCSL CELEBRATES 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, UN Family, and donor partners on 11th December, 2023 climaxed the commemoration of International Human Rights Day, marking the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) with a formal event at the Freetown City Council auditorium on the localised theme ‘Stand Up and Fight Against the Impact of Climate Change’.



With the support from UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, and UN Women, the Commission successfully implemented several activities including a national quiz competition for secondary schools, a seminar for MDAs on their role in fulfilling the state human rights obligations, a Human Rights Walk and a friendly football gala in commemoration of this year’s IHRD.

The Chairperson of HRCSL, Mrs. Patricia Narsu Ndanema, said climate change threatens the effective enjoyment of a range of human rights



including the right to life, water, sanitation, food, health, housing, self-determination, culture, and development, highlighting an example the abnormal rainfall, flooding, mudslides, excessive seaweeds, and water shortage due to deforestation.



As Sierra Leone celebrates the 75th anniversary of the UDHR, Mrs. Ndanema drew the attention of the government to its human rights state obligations of protecting, respecting, and fulfilling human rights in line with established human rights standards.

She added that in protecting human rights, the government should put laws in place to ensure that people enjoy their rights within the required legal human rights frameworks.

The Chairperson acknowledged the contributions of partners in the protection and promotion of human rights in the country.

“I particularly recognize the Government of Sierra Leone, the Embassies of Ireland and China, UNDP, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) through its Senior Human Rights Advisor in the country, the Human Rights



Working Group, and District Human Rights Committee members, and the entire UN Family in the country among others for their moral and financial support to the Commission’s operations,” she said.

Representatives from the government, UN Family, and donor partners renewed their commitment to continue supporting the Commission’s work in the protection and promotion of the human rights of all in Sierra Leone.

Irish Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Mr. Aidan Fitzpatrick congratulated Sierra Leone for taking up an important role at the UN Security Council, as one of the non-permanent members and also recognized the significant progress that has been made on the gender front with the enactment of the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Act of 2022.



He pledged the continued funding from Ireland to the work of the Commission, especially in the area of business and human rights.



“We see the need to rally behind the invaluable work that is being done globally and we want to support the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone better in that direction,” he said.

Speaking on behalf of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, UNFPA Country Representative, Ms. Nadia Rasheed, pledged the support of the UN Country Team to the government and to key partners and stakeholders, including the HRCSL in developing Sierra Leone’s human rights commitments and ensuring to continue focusing in leaving no one behind in everything that they do.



In his keynote address, Deputy Minister of Justice, Alpha Sesay reaffirmed the government's commitment to upholding freedom, justice, and peace in the spirit of the UDHR and also protecting and promoting the rights of all.



He noted that progressive measures in the form of legislation, policies, and institutional reforms are being implemented to uphold fundamental human rights in the country.



He assured of government commitment to ensure that the rule of law serves as a shield for the vulnerable and a beacon of hope for all.

While welcoming the initiative by the Commission to develop an agenda for environment protection and climate change as a human rights issue, Mr. Sesay assured that the new revised Sierra Leone Constitution will have a new chapter on environment protection in the country.

The Vice-Chairman, Victor Idrissa Lansana Esq. formally presented trophies to the Team Manager for the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone Mr. Albert Massaquoi, and the two conveners of the football gala in HRSCSL Mr. Moses Massaquoi and Kalidu Sall. @followers UNDP in Sierra Leone Human Right Defenders Network UNFPA Sierra Leone UNICEF Sierra Leone UN Women Sierra Leone

