



## HRCSL ENGAGES STAKEHOLDERS ON UPCOMING PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO MATERNAL MORTALITY

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) through its Directorate of Gender and Children's Affairs on Tuesday 12th December engaged key stakeholders working on sexual reproductive health issues on the upcoming Public Inquiry into Maternal Mortality in the country.



The thrust of the engagement at Sierra Palms Hotel, Lumley Beach Road in Freetown were to inform stakeholders on the scope, objectives and methodology of the inquiry and to also enhance their knowledge on human rights and how it relates to maternal health.

The Commission will be conducting this Public Inquiry with technical and financial support from UNFPA, specifically on maternal mortality in order to infuse a greater sense of responsibility and accountability into key health agencies, healthcare professionals and other key stakeholders. It also aims at investigating the reasons behind maternal



health concerns and why Sierra Leone continues to have one of the worst maternal health records globally.

Director of Gender and Children’s Affairs, Madam Gloria Bayoh explained that the decision to conduct a public inquiry emanated from a conference the Directorate attended in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2022, organized by UNFPA for National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). At the conference, the Commission was encouraged to look into issues affecting reproductive health rights of women and girls in Sierra Leone.



“On our return, we examined reproductive health issues affecting women and girls, and we decided to focus on maternal mortality. After carefully looking into sexual reproductive health rights issues, we concluded that maternal deaths have been prevalent for many years,” she said.

She emphasized that the Commission cannot conduct an inquiry into maternal mortality without first engaging those who regularly work on



these issues, especially the Ministry of Health which supervises health issues in the country.

Madam Bayoh added that the engagement is to have the buy-in of institutions and organizations working on health issues including CSOs and NGOs so that when the inquiry commences, they cannot only submit vital information but will also be a part of the process.

Meanwhile, a total of twenty (20) statement takers from the Commission were trained on Wednesday 13th and Thursday 14th December, 2023 on the key element involved in the statement taking during the inquiry.