



## THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE

# PRESS STATEMENT ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

**Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2024**

21st October of every year is commemorated as “The African Human Rights Day (AHRD)” by member states of the African Union (AU). The day is to celebrate the coming into force in 1986 of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR). Sierra Leone became a party to the Charter on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 1983.

The theme for this year’s celebration is ***“Educate an African fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa”***. This theme resonates with Sierra Leone’s national education agenda (Free Quality School Education) since 2018 to date which seeks to promote quality education for all.

The Charter gives credence to the right to education as provided for in Article 17 which states *“Every person has the right to education, which shall be directed to full development of his personality and, sense of dignity”*.

The overall goal for the commemoration of African Human Rights Day is to give human rights bodies and other institutions the opportunity to raise human rights awareness and to get their leaders to reflect and recommit themselves to their solemn undertaken to protect, promote, respect, and fulfil human rights on the continent.

Goal 4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires increased investment and accessibility of quality education as critical in alleviating poverty and developing human capital.

HRCSL recognizes the effort of government to allocate 22% of its national budget to supporting the education sector to address the increasing needs of same. The Commission notes with appreciation the development of progressive policies such as the Radical Inclusion and the Sierra Leone Medium Term National Development Plan 2024 – 2030, with specific reference to Pillar 2 of the Big Five Game Changers – Human Capital Development.



Over the years, the government has taken great strides to mitigate discrimination against pregnant girls from accessing education. The introduction of the Radical Inclusion policy has created an opportunity for increased enrollment in schools and bringing along on the school system all categories of persons including Persons With Disabilities (PwDs). HRCSL appreciates Government's efforts in ensuring that PwDs access free tertiary education in compliance with Section 14 of the *Persons with Disability Act of 2011*.

While recognizing the success achieved by the introduction of the Free Quality School Education Programme, there remains existing challenges in its implementation, ranging from inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials to delay in the provision of subsidies to schools.

Today, as we celebrate 38years of the coming into force of this Charter, HRCSL calls on the Government of Sierra Leone to continue to take the necessary legislative, policy and regulatory measures in order to ensure the progressive realisation of the right to education for all, irrespective of gender, ethnic, religious or political affiliation.

Additionally, while we note the significant steps taken by Government to increase the salaries of teachers, HRCSL calls on government to look into the general conditions of service of teachers and upscale their remuneration in a bid to give further effect to the Free Quality Education Program.

HRCSL also calls on citizens to embrace and support the full implementation of laws, polices and regulations that protect and promote the enjoyment of quality education in Sierra Leone.

HRCSL continues to assure the general public of its unwavering commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights of all in the country.

Let me on behalf of Human Right Commission of Sierra Leone wish everyone a happy African Human Right Day

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Victor Idrissa Lansana Esq.', is positioned above the typed name.

Victor Idrissa Lansana Esq.  
*Vice Chairperson*

**END**