



THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE

EMPOWERING HRCSL: A PATHWAY TO THE PROTECTION & PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL), in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat's Human Rights Unit, successfully concluded a capacity-building training for HRCSL Commissioners, senior staff and District Human Rights Committee representatives. The training, which took place from March 24 - 26, 2025, at The Hub Hotel in Freetown, focused on strengthening the Commission's ability to address critical and emerging human rights issues in the country. This training covered five critical human rights areas: Climate Change, Migration and Human Trafficking, Business and Human Rights, Gender and Children's Affairs, and Treaty Body Reporting.



With the guidance of facilitators, Phulamini Dlamini, Alithia Barampataz and Musu Kaikai from the Commonwealth Secretariat, participants were able to gain insights into the nuances of



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contemporary human rights issues and developed strategies to incorporate best practices into their work.

For Mrs. Doris Fillie-Faboe, Director of Complaints, Investigations, and Legal Services at HRCSL, the training proved to be an invaluable learning experience. With her years of experience in human rights work, she found the sessions on climate change, migration, and the rights of vulnerable groups, especially persons with disabilities, particularly enlightening.

“This training has been very insightful for me. Though I have a background in human rights, I have learned new aspects, particularly about how climate change and migration linked with human rights. This knowledge will help me serve the public more effectively,” Mrs. Fillie-Faboe shared.

Similarly, Patrick Kamara, a representative from the Bonthe District Human Rights Committee, found the discussions on business and human rights especially relevant to his work. “The sessions on business operations and human rights were eye-opening. This knowledge will empower me to address issues involving companies, workers, and local communities in my district.”

One of the most impactful parts of the training was the in-depth focus on disability rights. Brima Kelson Sesay, Director of Treaty Bodies Reporting and International Mechanisms at HRCSL, expressed how the training reshaped his understanding of disability models. He said: “The new knowledge I gained about the Charity Model, Human Rights Model, and Social Model of disability has been an eye-opener. I now have a broader perspective on how to apply human rights principles in relation to people with disabilities. This will inform my future work on human rights issues related to disability.”

The training came at a pivotal time for the HRCSL, as the Commission grapples with an increasingly complex human rights landscape. Mrs. Patricia Narsu Ndanema, Chairperson of HRCSL, commended the Commonwealth Secretariat for responding to the Commission’s request for such training, which was first made during the 2023 Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Annual General Meeting in Geneva. The training was seen as a timely and



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necessary step as HRCSL works to enhance its capacity to address emerging human rights challenges effectively.

“This training came at the perfect time as we work to navigate the complexities of human rights issues in Sierra Leone. We are incredibly grateful to the Commonwealth Secretariat for empowering us with the knowledge and skills to tackle these challenges head-on,” Mrs. Ndanema stated.



Phumlani Dlamini, Adviser at the Human Rights Unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat, mentioned the Secretariat’s role in promoting cooperation among its member states and providing technical assistance to strengthen human rights institutions. “One of the Commonwealth’s greatest strengths is its ability to bring together



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expertise and resources to support the protection and promotion of human rights. This training will enable HRC SL to better fulfill its mandate, ensuring that the people of Sierra Leone benefit from a more robust human rights framework,” Dlamini said.

Dlamini stressed the importance of the training in preparing HRC SL to tackle the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead, ensuring the sustainable promotion of human rights in the country.

This collaboration between the Commonwealth Secretariat and HRC SL serves as a testament to the power of international partnerships in promoting positive change.

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