



## PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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7<sup>th</sup> June, 2024

### PRESS RELEASE



### PARLIAMENT JOINS HRCSL ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS FOR SIERRA LEONE

The Parliamentary Oversight Committee on Human Rights Chaired by the Opposition Whip Hon. Abdul Karim Kamara from Kambia District on Friday 07/06/2024 joined the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice to discuss the Draft National Policy on Business and Human Rights for Sierra Leone. The two-day workshop which attracted several important personalities was held at the Bombali District Council Hall, Makeni City.

The program was supported by UNDP and Irish Embassy.

In his welcome address His Worship the Mayor of Makeni City, Abu Bakarr L.Kamara commended the policy initiative of the HRCSL and prayed for fruitful deliberations on the draft policy.

Appreciating the program, the Chairman Bombali District Council, Dr.Mohamed Barbar Sesay said human rights issues affect all and went on to recognize the draft policy for the nation. "Better laws today, and better laws tomorrow is good for the development of the State" he concluded.

The Chairperson of HRCSL, Commissioner Patricia Narsu Ndanema expressed gratitude to MPs for gracing the occasion on the draft policy and went on to underscore the work of the HRCSL for their achievements and challenges. The Chairperson said the Commission had been working with Parliament and other partners in reshaping and upholding laws relating to Human Rights.

On the draft policy, the Chairperson said the Commission had commenced the implementation of the UN Guiding principles on Business and Human Rights in fulfilment of the Guiding principles. She called on lawmakers to make their inputs to the draft policy.

Making his submission on the draft policy, the Parliamentary Chairperson on Legislative. Hon. Sulaiman Marry-Conteh commended the HRCSL for creating the platform to discuss the subject matter. He said society should be centered around Human Rights. "We lawmakers are mindful of enacting laws for the State", he said and went on to highlight the nature and work of Parliament in terms of oversight and laws enacted by the House that contained Human Rights related laws. He called for constant engagement with Parliament in terms of educating the people on issues related to human rights.

In his statement, Hon. Emerson Saa Lamina Deputy Majority Leader 2 said his presence in the meeting, was deliberate, because he is a human rights champion and went on to reference the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone that touched on the fundamental Human Rights of Peron's. On the culture on Human Rights in Business. He said the mining sector would be a case study of human rights abuse and went on to make reference on a business man seeking justice in the ECOWAS Court against the State. He informed that participants should make their inputs into the policy, in order to protect individual's rights and business.

The Leader also highlighted laws that had been reviewed and enacted by Parliament that are connected to the protections and promotion of Human Rights; citing the Gender Act and the removal of the seditious and criminal libel laws in the law books of the country, the Customary Land Rights Act, the Mines and Mineral Development Act and other related laws. "The Government of Sierra Law had enacted progressive laws for the State", he affirmed.

The Opposition Leader of Parliament Hon. Abdul Kargbo appreciated the work of the HRCSL and also commended the Parliamentary Oversight Committee Chairman of Human Right Hon. Abdul Karim Kamara for inviting MPs to discuss the subject matter.

The Leader said Sierra Leone had enacted several laws and treaties but however questioned their implementations and monitoring process.

The Opposition Leader highlighted the challenges of Sierra Leoneans working with foreign companies base on negative treatments meted on these compatriots.

"When we want to tackle issues of human rights, we should not only limit it to policies, but it should be enacted into law by Parliament so it will have the force of law". he said, and went to spoke on matters that are affecting society by foreign industries operating in the country.

The Opposition Leader said citizen's of Sierra Leonean have to be taken care of and went on to call on the HRCSL to establish Human Rights offices at all mining sites in the country. "This Parliament is very coperative in making laws for the good governance of the State and we will continue as

opposition to support any laws that geared towards improving and protecting the nation".he concluded.

The Parliamentary Chairperson On Human Rights, who also doubles as the Opposition Whip, Hon.Abdul Karim Kamara commended MPs for gracing the session on issue connected to Human rights.He said Human Rights is now connected to businesses and noted that it is very important for lawmakers to dwell into it. He said since the subject matter is new in society it is relevance for MPs to be capacitated on the new trend .

"Human Rights is a liberty for the protection of Sierra Leoneans" , he affirmed ,and went on to assure Parliament on the collaboration with HRCSL to project and champion the rights of Sierra Leoneans in businesses.

Power point presentation on the background to the United Nation guiding principles was done by the Director of Business and Human Rights and Labour Relations Mr. Abdulai Yollah Bangura in HRCSL. During his presentation, he highlighted the activities of companies across the country ,and also the negative impacts of the business industries indirectly affecting the Human rights of people.

Presentation on categories of rights affected by business operations, was done by Commissioner Hassan Samba Yarjah,

On the continuation of presentations. The Chairperson of HRCSL presented the Belgrade Principle Relationship Between Parliament and HRCSL and also a

Also presentation was done by Joseph Kamara ,Executive Secretary HRCSL On Business Case for Human Right and the Human Right Case for Business.

Concluding the presentation, Saio Marrah Esq. Highlighted the importance on the National Policy on Business and Human Rights in Sierra Leone.

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