



HRCSL COMMEMORATES INT'L HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) on Friday, December 10th 2021 joined other national human rights institutions around the world to commemorate this year's International Human Rights Day. This year's commemoration was hosted at the District Council Hall in Port Loko on the theme- 'Equality: Reducing Inequalities, Advancing Human Rights.'



The day marks the commemoration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10th December 1948. This was the turning point following the horrors of the Second World War.

HRCSL ran a series of pre-activities to climax the main commemoration. These included the Freetown Inter-secondary school debate competition with technical support from the Sierra Leone Debating Council and a Quiz Competition for secondary schools in Port Loko.

Thirteen (13) schools participated in the preliminary rounds- from the east, central and west parts of Freetown. Six schools qualified to participate in the grand final hosted at the Sierra Leone Library Board on 9th December 2021.

The qualifying schools included; Darul Salam Islamic Secondary School, Ahmadiyya Muslim Secondary School, Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood Secondary School, Government Model Secondary School, Prince of Wales and International School.



The young brilliant minds debated the topic; 'Safe seats should be reserved for women in politics.' Aruna Imran Kamara of Darul Salam Islamic Secondary School at Monkey Bush in Waterloo emerged as the best debater scoring 94%, Salieu Kamara from the Prince of Wales School came second scoring 93% and Zainiel Mary Kargbo from International Secondary School Limited with 91%.



Certificates, medals and cash prizes were given to the participants and the trophy went to Darul Salam Islamic Secondary School as the best participating school.

Also, the quiz competition was between five schools in the Port Loko District, North-Western Region of Sierra Leone. Five schools including Maforki Agricultural Islamic Secondary School, Port Loko Catholic Senior Secondary School, Movement of Faith Senior Secondary School, Schlenker Senior Secondary School and Educaid Senior Secondary School participated in the Quiz competition.





After a total of four rounds with each round having 20 questions on human rights issues, specifically on inequality and the need for non-discrimination, Schlenker Senior Secondary School emerged as the winner with 57 points and Movement of Faith Senior Secondary School came second with 55 points.

The Best quizzzer was Mariatu Kamara from the Movement of Faith Senior Secondary School with a score of 18 points. Certificates of participation were issued to pupils and respective prizes were also given.

At the official event at the District Council Hall in Port Loko, Chairperson of HRCSL, Patricia Narsu Ndanema, stated that the IHRD was set aside for states to reflect on the conscious steps taken so far in meeting human rights obligations of respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of citizens in the country.



She said, "this year's theme brings to mind the principles of equality and non-discrimination and also focuses on the enjoyment of rights by all." Adding that Several other human rights



Instruments have been developed to protect the rights of all and other specific groups of people.

Madam Ndanema noted that the Commission continues to pride itself as an equal opportunity institution, promoting equality and non-discrimination in the delivery of services.

She notes government efforts on steps taken so far in the number of reforms aimed at reducing inequalities and discrimination, citing the radical inclusion policy introduced by the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education and the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Bill 2021 recently tabled in Parliament.

The Chairperson expressed thanks and appreciation to President Bio for his support to the work of the Commission, following his positive response to the issues of finances, recruitment and mobility recently raised by the Commission. She, however, urged the government to remain committed to the implementation of the recommendations accepted and adopted by Sierra Leone at the recently concluded Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process in Geneva, which calls for adequately financial support to the work of the commission.

The representative of the Chief Justice of Sierra Leone, Court of Appeal Judge, Justice Tonia Barnett, reiterated the Judiciary firm commitment to promoting and ensuring equality, reducing inequalities and advancing human rights in the administration of justice as enshrined in the country's 1991 Constitution.

She said the principle of equality is the fundamental fabric of a democratic society and has occupied centre stage in human rights discussions.

"We are pleased to join the rest of the world to commemorate the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human rights. As a judiciary we wish to reaffirm our commitment in upholding the sacred value of the rule of law, guided by the constitution," she stated.

Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP, Sayed Sahibzada, said gender inequality remains a major barrier to human development, adding that the disadvantages faced by women and girls are a major source of inequalities. He said too often women and girls are discriminated



against in health, education, political representation, labour market and legal and access to resources with negative consequences for development.

According to him, fostering equality by reducing inequalities and advancing human rights requires collective efforts, strong partnership and commitment in the country's development aspiration.

The Irish Embassy's Deputy Ambassador Ms Emma McLoughlin said the protection and promotion of human rights is a key foreign policy for Ireland and expressed delight that the country accepted all the UPR recommendations on strengthening the human rights framework. She assured that they will continue to stand in solidarity with the government of Sierra Leone in the implementation of the 216 UPR recommendations and encouraged deep reflection on the 58 noted.



Human Rights Commission of
Sierra Leone (HRCSL)



Presents

HRCSL INTER-SECONDARY SCHOOLS' DEBATE GRAND FINAL

Facilitated by: Sierra Leone Debating Council (SLDC)



DATE: 9th December 2021

VENUE: Sierra Leone Library Board, Rokel street F/t

TIME: 9:30 am prompt

ENTRANCE: Free! Free!