



HRCSL CONCLUDES TRAINING FOR MDAS, COUNCILORS AND TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES ON UN GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) through the Directorate of Business and Human Rights and Labor Relations (DBHR&LR) has concluded training for Councilors, Traditional Authorities, Managers of Companies and other Umbrella Organizations working with Companies and ministries, departments and agencies on the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The trainings in Makeni, Bo and Kenema brought together key stakeholders, who made meaningful inputs into the discussion, especially those bordering on business and human rights and labour relations.



The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights outlines concrete and actionable steps for corporate entities to meet their respective duties and responsibilities so that human rights abuses will be prevented

The Head of DBHR&LR, Mr. Abdulai Yollah Bangura lectured participants on the document which speaks on protecting, respecting, and remedying human rights concerns in government and corporate entities.

Business and Human Rights Expert of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Africa, Victoria De Mello commended the Commission for progress made in the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles in Sierra Leone. She stated that her interactions with different MDAs indicate that Sierra Leone is one of the leading countries in Africa in the implementation of the UNGPs on Business and Human Rights and added; “The country made



such progress because of the efforts of HRCSL in creating the awareness and platform to take the discussion further.” Ms. De Mello urged the participants to make good use of the training by ensuring they practically implement the pillars of the document in their dealings with corporate institutions.



HRCSL Executive Secretary, Joseph Kamara, informed participants that the Commission started working on Business and Human Rights when they instituted an inquiry into the Bumbuna riots and made several recommendations between 2012 and 2013. The Chairperson, Madam Patricia Narsu Ndanema spoke about sexual harassment as one of the major offenses that women suffer in both government and corporate institutions and urged participants to develop policies that are against such practices so that the working environment of institutions including companies will be more gender-friendly.

Vice-Chairperson of HRCSL Victor I. Lansana Esq. called on corporate entities to embrace human rights principles in their operations, adding that employees would do their work in a peaceful atmosphere, increase productivity, prevent strike actions and destruction of company properties, and maintain mutual relationships with stakeholders in their operational communities if they practice basic human rights principles in their day to day operations.

Participants described the training as an eye-opener, stating that they did not only benefit from the use of human rights principles to maintain peace and get maximum yield but also changed their perception of seeing human rights as a western imported culture; and now appreciate human rights principles as entitlements for all.