

HRCSL CONDUCTS TRAINING ON THE DISABILITY ACT, CRPD

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) with support from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on January 31 conducted training for Commissioners and staff of HRCSL and the Disability Commission on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) and Persons with Disability Act-2011.

The training which took place at the Buxon Hall, Charles Street was facilitated by Lawyer Hon. Julius Nye-Cuffie. It was for better understanding of its provisions to enhance effective monitoring of the implementation of the CRPD and Persons with Disability Act) -2011.

The rationale for the training is based on the fact that the current approach on issues of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) is human rights based approach in which PwDs are rights holders as they are equal in dignity and respect as other people. According to Section 7(2) (f) of the Human Rights Commission Act of Sierra Leone Act monitors and document human rights violations. To effectively carryout this monitoring function, HRCSL Commissioners and Staffs, should be knowledgeable on the provision in the CRPD and Persons with Disability Act. Furthermore, this training would provide an opportunity to Commissioners and staffs of NCPD to better understand the Disability Act 2011 which will serve as a tool for advocacy and ensure the thorough implementation of the provisions therein.

In 2006 the United Nation General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and it immediately entered into force. In 2008, the optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights Persons with Disabilities was also opened for signature which marked the beginning of a new era in the purpose of the CRPD as stated in Article 1of the CRPD which states “the purpose of present Convention is to promote, protect and ensure full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and promote respect for their inherent dignity”. Although Persons with Disabilities are entitled to the same rights as everyone else, adoption of these documents set out comprehensively for the first time, a binding international instrument protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

Sierra Leone has signed and ratified the CRPD. In March 2011 it was domesticated in the form of ‘The Persons with Disabilities Act-2011, as the legal frame work that established the focal points and implementation mechanism within the administrative system of government as prescribed by Article 33(1) of the CRPD. Section 2 of The Persons with Disability Act-2011 calls for the establishment of a National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) to implement the provision of the Act and serve as a focal point within the confines of the administrative system of government. Article 33 *states that monitoring of the implementation of the CRPD shall take into account the principles relating to the status and functioning of national institutions for protection and promotion of human rights.*

According to the United Nation World Report on Disabilities (2010), 650 million people in the world live with disability of some kind and face extreme poverty, discrimination, exclusion, isolation, abuses and or violations.