



HRCSL ENGAGES GERMAN AND CHINESE EMBASSIES

A delegation from the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) on Tuesday 28 February held a Strategic Engagement with the German and Chinese Embassies in Freetown. The team headed by Commission Hassan Samba Yarjah and Commission Simitie Lavalay met with the Ambassadors to discuss the Commission's work and establish a relationship for partnership.



Making a presentation on the Commission's work, Executive Secretary Joseph Benmanking Kamara said, HRCSL has three times in a row maintained a Grade A Status which gives the Commission opportunity to sit in the Human Rights Council and other decision-making bodies as a National Human Rights Institution. He also spoke about the

directorates of Climate Change and Information Services, Business and Human Rights and Labour Relations, and Migration and Human Trafficking which he said could be areas of partnership with the German Embassy as he reviewed their work on those issues.

Commissioner Hassan Samba Yarjah spoke about the Elections Strategy for the 2023 June elections in Sierra Leone. He said the Strategy has five pillars which include; complaints handling, monitoring, capacity building of staff, members of the District Human Rights Committees, Election Management Bodies and other stakeholders, awareness raising, and a special elections report. He also shared some success stories from the Commission's daily work – the Bumbuna Public Hearings in 2012, the Military Officers dismissed and the recent Public Inquiry into the Conduct of Law Enforcement Officials, and many more interventions.

In her brief statement, Commissioner Simitie Lavalay highlighted various ways the HRCSL has been building synergy with other institutions. She mentioned the Human Rights Working Committee funded by UNDP, a consortium of government institutions, Nongovernmental Organisations, Developmental Partners, and Civil Society Organisations working in the field of Human Rights.



She said the Strategic Engagement was geared toward expanding the Commission's work and any other opportunity.

The German Ambassador Jens Kraus-Masse congratulated HRCSL for its Grade A Status in honor of its work as a National Human Rights Institution. He said one of their pillars is 'promoting human rights and supporting human rights institutions through cooperation programs.' He said the Embassy would consider collaboration after reviewing the Commission's Strategic Plan for areas that align with the goals.



The new Chinese Ambassador Ge Yao said he was delighted to meet with the Commission as they have been a strong partner to HRCSL over the years. He said they were impressed with the work of the Commission and committed to continue supporting its work.