



THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION REACHING OUT INTO REMOTE COMMUNITIES AND CHIEFDOMS TO SERVE THE UNDERSERVED THROUGH MOTORBIKES

As part of the project, 'Support to capacity strengthening of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL)', which is jointly financed by UNDP and Irish Aid, the Commission received 6 Honda



XL125 Motorbikes which are meant to enhance the outreach capacity of the HRCSL regional offices and process servers in Freetown. The role of the HRCSL in deepening human rights culture for enhanced protection of human rights in Sierra Leone, cannot be overemphasized. In 2019, the Commission has as its key

priority to reach out and engage with communities in remote areas of the country where issues of human rights are prevalent. However, the Commission's capacity was seriously challenged due to the lack of adequate transportation facilities. The delivery of the motorbikes was very timely and provided an opportunity for the Commission to respond to the calls of many communities which have been deprived and lack knowledge about human rights, the mandate of the Commission and basic laws of the land.

Upon receipt of the keys of the motorbikes from the Team Lead of UNDP's Inclusive Democratic Governance Cluster (IDGC), during the handing over event at the premises of the Commission, the



Chairperson of the HRCSL commended the efforts of UNDP and Irish Aid. She stated, "***the mobility of our field staff recently came as a priority request to UNDP in order to support the Commission's field activities and reach the many right holders out there that need the Commission's support. The Commission is grateful to UNDP and Irish Aid for such a timely support.***"

(Photos from right to left: Patricia Narsu Ndanema - Chairperson of the Commission, Kadie Jumu Peters - Team Lead for UNDP Governance Cluster and Alie B. Sesay - Senior Rule of Law and Human Rights Officer.



The 6 motorbikes were happily received by the Deputy Directors who are stationed at the regional headquarter towns of Waterloo (Western Area), Bo (South), Kenema (East), Makeni (North) and Port Loko (Northwest). Within three months of full operation of the motorbikes, the Commission's regional offices engaged a total of 2,500 (M1,236, F1,264) people in local communities in six districts with messages on their social and economic rights focusing on the nature and effects of GBV including sexual violence, 'forced marriages, 'forced FGM', the new Sexual Offences Act 2019 and inheritance. Beneficiaries were also encouraged not to compromise but report cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence; no doubt cases of rape are being reported frequently nowadays. The motorbikes are proving to be so much useful for the work of the Commission that, Commissioner Gassan Abess noted thus, ***"The bikes have added value to the work of the Commission, at least, they have increased our response time to urgent issues. An urgent information required from the regional offices was swiftly collected from communities and relayed to the headquarter because of the availability of the motorbikes."***