



HRCSL OBSERVES INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD BY HOLDING NATIONWIDE SCHOOLS EDUCATION

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) commemorated the International Day of the Girl Child on October 11th, 2019 by undertaking a nationwide public education in schools with the message on the child rights act, the amended sexual offences act, child marriage and the work of the HRCSL.

In 2017, HRCSL hosted school children from St. Joseph Convent, Gateway Preparatory School, Government Model Secondary School, Akibo-Betts School, Girls High School and Vine Memorial School. Issues discussed were sexual and gender based violence on children and its implications on their personal, social and psychological development.

In the Sierra Leone context, while we have seen an improvement in the enrollment of girls in schools and tertiary educational institutions, there still remain huge challenges facing them in the country. Teenage pregnancy, and sexual and gender based violence in Sierra Leone remain a serious challenge in promoting girls rights.

This affects their educational and social development, thereby limiting their empowerment to engage actively in what will enhance their positive contribution to society and their future wellbeing.

It is important to note that educating girls on the laws that protect women and girls and their corresponding rights and responsibilities is a vital part of building a peaceful community.

Moreover, human rights education is a critical means of instilling the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enhance a greater culture of human rights. Therefore, the HRCSL is embarking on public education particularly in girls' schools as that will serve as platforms to identify, discuss and documents some of the human rights challenges faced by girls in their schools and community.

Some of the Secondary Schools that were visited are: The Freetown Secondary School for Girls (FSSG), the St. Joseph, Government Model, UMC, Richard Allen, Government Municipal, Vine Memorial, Methodist Girls High, UMC School-Goderich Patricia Kabba Memorial School, Peninsular Secondary School and Lorenzo Gorvie Secondary School in the rural area. For the Eastern Region Kenema, the Islamic Secondary School and Holy Rosary will be visited and in the North of Makeni, the Sylvanus Secondary School and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Secondary School will be reached while in Bo, in the South, the Methodist Girls High School and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Secondary School will also be engaged.

The International Day of the Girl Child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 66/170 on 19th December 2011. This initiative aimed at increasing awareness of inequality faced by girls based on their gender in society. In the midst of this, every year across the world, the International Day of the Girl Child is celebrated on October 11 to recognize the rights of girls in order to break the cycle of discrimination and violence against



them.

The theme for this year is **Girl Force: Unscripted** and Unstoppable which aims to highlight and address the needs and challenges faced by girls while promoting girls' empowerment and the fulfillment of their human rights.