

Update on Activities - UNIPSIL Human Rights Section

UNIPSIL Human Rights conducted a workshop in Freetown on human rights, gender and rule of law running from 23-24 June 2010 for members of Western Area Human Rights Committee. The training has been one of UNIPSIL strategies aimed at capacitating local institutions working in the area of human rights and access to justice. The training was conducted by UNIPSIL in Collaboration with the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone with funding provided by OHCHR. 35 participants benefited from this training workshop.



Kedar Poudyal of UNIPSIL and Rev. Moses Khanu of Human Rights Commission during the opening programme.



Participants displaying their certificates after the training.

Sixty- three (63) local court officials in Kailahun district were trained on the administration of justice at local courts' level by UNIPSIL Human Rights on 17 and 18th June 2010. The participants were drawn from the 22 Local courts in the district. Amongst the topics delivered were the roles and responsibilities of local courts officials, an overview of Local Courts Act, understanding and protecting human rights, general overview of basic principles of human rights, gender and women's rights and the role of local courts in protecting and promoting human rights.



Participant demonstrating a point



Group photo of participants after certification

On June 17th 2010, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in collaboration with UNIPSIL Human Rights facilitated the validation of the Common Core Document in Freetown. Participants were drawn from government ministries, civil society organizations, NGOs, media, UN agencies, Faith Based Organizations and other professions. It is worthy to note that Sierra Leone, which is a signatory to many international Human Rights Conventions, Treaties and Protocols, has been doing poorly in terms of its reporting obligations (29 reports are overdue). This event therefore was important as it demonstrated the readiness and willingness of Sierra Leone as a member state of the United Nations to comply with its obligations under different International Treaties, Conventions and Protocols ratified.



Left to Right-Edward Sam Chairman-Human Rights Commission; Beatriz Balbin-Chief Human Rights Section UNIPSIL and OHCHR Rep in Sierra Leone; George Coleridge-Taylor-Chairman National Commission for Democracy; Director General-Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Observations and comments were factored into the document



The UN Family in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) and various women's groups, on the 8th June 2010 organized a joint programme in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR)

1325. During the programme, the President of Sierra Leone launched the Sierra Leone National Action Plan (SiLNAP) on UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820. The National Action Plan includes a budget and concrete indicators to monitor implementation. Later on, sessions were dedicated to the UN Global Open day and participants had the opportunity to interact with Executive Representative of the Secretary General (ERSG) to express their views on women's rights promotion.



President Koroma and ERSG Michael von der Schulenberg during the launching of SiLNAP



women cheering in hope for more protection



Women of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces were part of the activities.



On 25th June 2010, UNIPSIL Human Rights joined the Centre for victims of Torture (CVT) and other development partners to commemorate the United Nations International Day in support of Victims of Torture. The commemoration sought to remind the country of its obligation to combat torture following

the atrocities committed during the country's decade-long civil conflict. Various events were lined up to commemorate this day including a march-pass in Freetown, radio discussion programs and delivery of speeches.



The Republic of Sierra Leone Police band led the march-pass in Freetown.



Selwyn Nicol of UNIPSL Human Rights reading the speech of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.



Participants displaying placards while listening to speeches

On 10th and 11th May 2010, UNIPSL Human Rights trained 58 local court officials in Bombali District with a view to letting them understand and observe human rights standards in the course of their work. The training was also to increase participants' understanding of women's rights and the national laws

protecting those rights; develop a collaborative strategy for applying human rights standards in local courts operations and contribute to increase access to justice for vulnerable people particularly women.



Local court officials displaying certificates after training

On 21st and 22nd April, UNIPSIL Human Rights organized a workshop on Human Rights Based Approach on prison management for Kailahun District. Targeted participants included prison officers and native administrative police (who are in charge of running the detention facility operated by local courts) in the district. Overall, twenty five participants were trained on the International human rights norms applicable to prison and detention centers.



Detention officers making a commitment to upholding human rights in their work and posing for group photo