



THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE

HRCSL Convenes Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on Human Rights and Fisheries Governance

The Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone (HRCSL), with support from the Danish Institute for Human Rights, has concluded a two-day multi-stakeholder workshop aimed at promoting a human rights-based approach to fisheries governance, coastal conservation, and the protection of livelihoods in fishing communities across Sierra Leone.



The workshop, held from 24th-25th June 2026, at Saphyre Court Multi-Purpose Hall, Kingharman Road in Freetown, brought together about 65 participants drawn from government MDAs, civil society organisations, fishing community stakeholders, environmental groups, local councils, women and youth groups, and development partners.

The engagement, which enhances the understanding of human rights obligations relating to fisheries management and fosters coordinated action among government agencies and non-state actors responsible for fisheries and environmental protection, reflects the Commission's continued commitment to promoting sustainable development, environmental justice, and the protection of human rights for vulnerable communities whose lives and livelihoods depend on the country's coastal and marine resources.



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HRCSL's Chairperson, Madam Patricia Narsu Ndanema, reaffirmed the Commission's mandate to protect and promote human rights in Sierra Leone, noting that the workshop on fisheries governance and coastal conservation aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 14, reflecting the Commission's growing focus on human rights issues affecting coastal communities and small-scale fishers.



"Approximately 25% of Sierra Leone's population depends on coastal resources for their livelihoods, but increasing pressure on marine ecosystems has contributed to resource exploitation and challenges related to the rights to food, health, education, and a clean environment, as well as concerns over child labour in the fisheries sector", she said.

Chief Advisor of the Danish Institute for Human Rights, Maria Ploug Petersen, expressed appreciation to HRCSL and reaffirmed the strong partnership between the two-sister human rights institutions.

She highlighted that the ongoing global "triple planetary crisis" of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss has significant implications for human rights and the ecosystems that communities depend on, particularly oceans and coastal resources.

Emphasising the importance of a human rights-based approach to fisheries and ocean governance, Madam Petersen noted that small-scale fishers rely heavily on marine resources



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for their livelihoods and commended the Commission's efforts in documenting human rights issues in coastal communities through field visits and engagements across the country.

The Public Relations Officer for Sierra Leone Artisanal Fishermen's Union, Wudie Bakie Koroma, expressed appreciation to the Commission for its intervention in addressing long-standing challenges in the fisheries sector, noting that their partnership has helped highlight the difficulties faced by fishing communities across coastal communities.

He acknowledged that HRCSL's engagement with communities has increased awareness of the human rights issues affecting small-scale fishers and brought greater visibility to their challenges, including environmental pressures and governance gaps.

The workshop generated practical solutions to improve livelihoods and promote more peaceful and dignified conditions for coastal fishing communities including government collaborating with the unions and fish mongers to discourage bad fishing methods, government to take progressive steps to allocate at least 5% of its GDP for effective management of the marine resources, encouraging the unions to form a united body that advocate for the welfare of fishers and fishing communities, ensuring that alternative livelihoods are made available to fishers.

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