



**PEACEBUILDING FUND (PBF) ANNUAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2012**

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Title: Promoting Human Rights Culture through support to the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone • Programme Number <i>PBF/SLE/C-3 (extension/phase II)</i> • MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ 00077295 	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p><i>Sierra Leone</i></p> <p><i>PBF Priority area 2: Promote coexistence and peaceful conflict resolution</i></p> <p><i>PBF Outcome 7: Exercising of HR by general public, e.g. through support to institutional HR mechanisms, safeguard and oversight arrangements for HR promotion.</i></p>
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OHCHR 	<p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
<p align="center">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>MPTF/JP Contribution: 800,000</p> <p>Government Contribution:</p> <p>Other Contributions (donors)</p> <p>TOTAL: 800,000</p>	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration (<i>months</i>)</p> <p>Start Date⁴ 03.02.2012</p> <p>Original End Date⁵ 28.02.2013</p> <p>Current End date⁶ 31.05.2013</p>
<p>Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</p> <p>Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date:</p> <p>Mid-Term Evaluation Report –</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date:</p>	<p align="center">Report Submitted By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name: Francess Alghali ○ Title: HRCSL Executive Secretary ○ Participating Organization (Lead): OHCHR ○ Email address: piagielaverley@yahoo.com

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Performance Management Plan (PMP) for the PBF, Priority Plan or project document;

³ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to “Project ID” on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁴ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁵ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

⁶ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

NARRATIVE REPORT

I. Purpose

The Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone in 2009 finalized its three years strategic plan (2009 - 2011) which serves as a road map for the promotion and protection of human rights in Sierra Leone. Underlying the plan was the need to address the Commission's capacity needs which included capacity building and programme implementation, enhancement of human rights Education and monitoring. Considering the fact that the Commission was established immediately after the 11 year old civil war which started as a result of bad governance, endemic corruption and the denial of human rights, series of gross violations of human rights, disregard for the rule of law and resistance to democratic and good governance principles disrupted the political system. Thus, Human Rights Commission was established to build the culture of human rights in the country as provided for in the Lome Peace Agreement in 1999 signed by the government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Subsequently, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) set up in 2004 also recommended the establishment of the Commission to address cases of human rights violations and abuse. The Commission was tasked to serve as a follow-up committee to monitor the implementation of the recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2004, which included consolidating peace and nurturing of the culture of human rights. The commission received a catalytic fund under the UN PBF amounting to US\$ 1,500,000 in 2008 which was used to establish it and open its regional offices.

After the execution of the first phase of the PBF project, for which the Commission was credited for successful implementation, it was essential that a successor project be developed to assist the Commission in implementing the remaining activities of its strategic plan 2009 – 2011. The Commission therefore sought further support from the UNPBF, which provided U\$ 186,916 as its contribution to HRCSL's strategic plan 2009 – 2011 and subsequently its 2012 – 2014 strategic plan to implement this project titled ***“Promoting human rights culture through support to the human rights Commission of Sierra Leone”***.

Within this context, the project strategy was designed to align funding needs for the following four of the eight goals outlined in the HRCSL's strategic plan:

Goal 4: To promote the right to equality and non discrimination

Goal 6: To strengthen and support HRCSL's institutional capacity

Goal 7: Regionalization of HRCSL's services to communities

Goal 8: Promote the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) recommendation and other transitional justice mechanisms.

As a follow up, specific activities to achieve each goal were developed. Since the project had a nationwide scope, it targeted District Human Rights Committees (DHRC), civil society organizations (CSO's), Public Officials and HRCSL's Commissioners and staff.

The overall objective of this project is to support the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone in accomplishing the goals outlined in its strategic plan. Furthermore, this project also aims to;

- a. Promote the culture of human rights by enhancing HRCSL's services to the communities as mandated by its Act.
- b. Contribute to the implementation of the recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

This project has four main outcomes that are aligned to HRCSL's strategic plan: to raise public awareness on human rights issues concerning "equality and non-discrimination; to regionalize HRCSL's services such that people have access to its services; to strengthen the institutional capacity of HRCSL's Commissioners and staff for greater effectiveness; and to promote the implementation of the TRC recommendations. To this end, the project intends to achieve the following outputs:

1. Strengthened capacity of Commissioners and staff including its enhanced outreach activities.
2. Improved capacity of civil society organizations and government officials on human rights issues.
3. Enhanced human rights education and the TRC through community awareness raising programmes.
4. Nationwide human rights situation monitored and reported.
5. The rights to equality and non discrimination promoted

Achievements

- Sustaining the Regional Outreach of the Commission of the Commission through the maintenance of the presence of the Commission in all the district headquarter towns
- Development of a successor strategic plan for the Commission from 2012 – 2014
- Production of the Annual State of Human Rights Report which contains monitoring reports of the state of human rights in Sierra Leone
- Raising awareness of the rights of women and persons with disability to participate in elections through a national consultative conference with all the relevant stakeholders

II. Results

Output I: Strengthened capacity of the Commission including its enhanced outreach.

The Commission was able to pay rent for its three regional offices in Makeni (Bombali), Bo, Kenema districts. The full payment of the rent for three regional offices for 2 years has helped HRCSL sustain its regional presence and thus continue its outreach activities in the country. Similarly, the Commission effectively relocated to its new offices built by Government and communication equipments at the former Headquarters of the Commission was effectively transferred and installed at the new HRCSL's Headquarters in Freetown. Funds were also utilized for the provision of internet connectivity for the Headquarters and Regional offices of the Commission for a period of 6 months.

The Commission contracted consultancy services of an Institutional Capacity Advisor (ICA) for a period of three months i.e. July – September 2011 attached. The Consultant who was attached to the Directorate of Complaints, Investigations and Legal Services (DCILS) was contracted to; (i) review existing investigation processes, (ii) deepen staff knowledge on the importance of quasi judicial functions (iii) facilitate public hearings and (iv) strengthen the complaints handling processes of the directorate stalled due to the absence of a substantive Director. Since recruitment in July 2011, the ICD technical expertise has addressed 50% of the 120 backlog cases in the directorate with the aim of improving on the services provided by the directorate.

The ICD technically supported the mediation of a matter between Adimele Decker and 3 others against the Metropolitan Police (MP) of the Freetown City Council on a case of inhuman and degrading treatment meted out by the MP on the complainant contrary to section 20 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991. The consultant also finalized the directorate's long awaited complaints compendium, developed a concept note on public hearing based on complaints lodged against extractive industries and also developed a project proposal on strengthening the Commission's capacity to effectively execute its Quasi-Judicial functions. In order to enhance the capacity of staff in the directorate and the commission as a whole to address human rights complaints more efficiently, the Consultant developed a Complaints Handling Manual in order to standardize complaints handling procedures both at headquarters and in the regions. The manual will be used by staff as well as other stakeholders who are interested in understanding and using the complaints handling system of the Commission. The Consultant also laid the groundwork that facilitated the conduct of the first public inquiry by the Commission

A Strategic Planning consultant was also recruited in November 2011 to develop a successor strategic plan for the Commission since implementation of activities in the three years strategic plan 2009 – 2011 has to a large extent been completed. The new strategic plan 2012 - 2014 was developed and validated at a workshop held on 14th April, 2012. This strategic plan is currently being implemented and will serve as a roadmap to guide the operations of the Commission up to December 2014.

Three staff of the Commission were able to benefit from international exposure which enhanced their knowledge on human rights and its protection mechanisms through training programmes and attendance at international meetings. The Executive Secretary, Mrs Frances Alghali was able to attend the ICC Annual Meeting in March 2102 in Geneva, Switzerland where she witnessed the deliberations and interacted with other members of the National Human Rights Institutions. The Assistant Human Rights Officer, Southern Region, Mr Tom Sandi attended the Global Citizen Certificate Leadership training programme in USA from July 19 – July 29, 2012 and the Deputy Executive Secretary attended a training course 11th – 15th June, 2012 on Human rights at the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom.

Output II: Enhancement of capacity of Civil Society and Government on Human Rights

The Commission conducted 14 training workshops and engagements in the 12 districts and the Western Area. The training workshops which were conducted during the dissemination of the 2010 State of Human Rights Report were on the issues of “Human rights approach to disability issues, media relations and the exercise of democratic rights, women's political participation and the Child Rights Act 2007 (with specific focus on female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriage. Engagements were also held with civil society and MDAs on the new HRCSL's strategic plan 2012 – 2014.

In a bid to promote the Commission's outreach activities, all training workshops were undertaken in the local communities (i.e. Blama, Fadugu, Binkolo, Daru, Zimmi, Imperi etc...) in every district to target the wider audience. The training workshops which targeted Civil Society Organizations (CSO's), District Human Rights Committees (DHRC's), Local Unit Commanders (LUC's) and Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA's) were undertaken between October – November 2011. The training aimed at equipping participants with the relevant knowledge on human rights issues for further dissemination at the various community levels. Each district received a three day programme that consisted of (a) a one day engagement, and presentation on

the findings and recommendations of the state of human rights report, a two days training on the human rights issues earlier mentioned.

A total of about 650 participants with 50 per district were targeted at the various community levels.



Public Lectures at the Binkolo Catholic Secondary School – Bombali District

The presentation of the on the findings and recommendation of the SOHR report 2010 engendered series of discussions on pressing human rights issues affecting communities and the appropriate steps to be taken in implementing the recommendations in the report were also noted by the participants.



in Fadugu



Presentation SOHR report

of the Discussion on the SOHR in Binkolo, Koinadugu

Furthermore, series of consultations and engagement with stake holders and public officials on the Commission's three year successor strategic plan 2012-2014 engendered discussions amongst participants, during which Civil society organizations intervening in the field of human rights expressed concern in

ensuring that programmes to promote and protect human rights would be designed at organizational level in line with the Commission's strategic goals.

To bolster awareness on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and its recommendations, the Commission undertook sensitization activities on the recently concluded Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process in November 2010. Participants were informed about the objectives of the review which aimed at reviewing the human rights situations in all 192 countries every four years, share best practices on human rights issues amongst member states, and the potential benefits for participating countries. Participants were further informed about the facilitative role played by the HRCSL in going through the report preparation processes, which included series of regional consultations with CSO's and government stakeholders in order to ensure nation wide participation and credibility before the final presentation of the reports to the HRC in Geneva. Participants were informed that during Sierra Leone's review session in May 2011, 129 recommendations were made out of which Sierra Leone only accepted 29 as 57 had already been implemented. It was made clear to participants that the recommendations made at the UPR session are closely linked to the recommendations made by the TRC in 2004. Participants at the various district levels informed HRCSL staff that the information provided by the Commission on the UPR gave them the opportunity to be sensitized about the UPR for the first time. Participants were also grouped into three and guided to develop strategies and contributions among others on how the recommendations of the TRC and UPR on women, children, and security could be effectively implemented. Proposals made will feed in to the overall advocacy engagements on implementation of the UPR recommendations that are already on course.

Output III: Enhanced human rights education through community awareness raising programmes.

The Commission produced a total of 2,000 copies of the SOHR report 2010. As a requirement of the Commission's Act 2004, a copy of the report was tabled before Parliament for debate. This process was critical to ensure that ministers and Members of Parliament are made aware of the recommendations of the report. Parliament has now committed to discuss the State of Human Rights Report in 2012. Copies of the SOHR report were extensively distributed to stakeholders, civil society organization, and traditional leaders in all the 12 districts during the dissemination of the report and discussions on human rights issues affecting different communities were elicited. The United Nations Country Team, schools and colleges also received copies of the report. Participants noted that the contents of the report would serve as a justifiable platform and a credible reference point for human rights advocacy.

In furtherance of the Commission's awareness raising drive, 24 radio programmes were aired in all community radio stations between the months of October – November 2011. Out of these, 24 programmes, 12 were interactive ones which gave rise to listeners to send in text messages, clarify issues on human rights and also make contributions on how the human rights situation could be improved. These included 98.1 in Freetown, Kiss 104 in Bo, 101.9 Eastern Radio in Kenema and Radio Mankeh in Makeni between May – July 2010. These programmes, mainly undertaken by the Commission's staff presented the findings on the SOHR report 2010 and its recommendations, and also presented relevant topics on basic human rights of women and children's rights, the UPR, and disability issues. The radio sensitization programmes also aimed at raising the public's awareness on how the services of the Commission could be accessed and utilized. Public lectures were also held in Fadugu Agricultural Secondary School in which emphasis was placed on the contents of the Child Rights Act and the responsibilities of children.

Series of sensitization and awareness raising programmes on women's rights, women's participation in politics, and the 30% quota was also undertaken in all villages targeted in the various districts. Issues discussed included women's understanding of political participation, the thrive for 30% quota in strategic political positions and steps towards its achievement, barriers to women's participation in politics, overcoming barriers to women's political participation and the gender justice laws. The various topics discussed engendered active discussions amongst participants who informed HRCSL that despite the fact that women are still lagging behind; some improvements have been made on the situation of women given a comparative study from the 1970's were women were not given the required space to participate in politics or occupy important positions. Barriers to women's participation in politics which included; educational gap, the pulling down syndrome, political violence perpetrated by men, intimidation, poverty and favoritism were noted by participants. Furthermore, steps to overcome the listed barriers which included amongst several others; education, empowerment of women to know their rights and affirmative actions were highlighted by participants.

Output IV: Human rights situation throughout the country monitored and reported.

In fulfillment of Section 9 (1) of the Commission's Act a nationwide visit of places of detention in all districts visited was undertaken using the standardized prison /police cell monitoring tool developed by the Commission with support from UNIPSIL. Police cells in all communities were visited. These monitoring visits aimed at assessing conditions of places of detention, access to courts for prisoners in remand awaiting trial among others. The commission found that the delay in trial for persons held in custody remains a major contributing factor for potential overcrowding in prisons. The Commission also established that the conditions in places of detention visited especially sanitation were appalling. Onsite discussions were also held with inmates and staff of various cells to discuss findings and make recommendations on how living condition of the cells and inmates could be improved. Findings and recommendations from these visits will be addressed in detail in the 2011 SOHR report.

The Commission during the dissemination of the SOHR report 2010 also conducted monitoring visits in 14 health centers which included; clinics and peripheral health units in the targeted communities with the aim of ascertaining the enjoyment of the right to health of patients. These monitoring visits were jointly undertaken with CSO representatives in the various communities. Furthermore, in an effort to build the capacity of CSOs/DHRCs and other relevant stakeholders in effectively monitoring and reporting on the Free Health Care (FHC), a training module dedicated to FHC monitoring formed part of the standardized training curriculum delivered in all the 14 districts.



Output V: Promotion of the rights to equality and non-discrimination

An Engagement with Political Parties was organized 23rd – 24th May, to enhance awareness of, and cooperation of political parties for the participation of PWDs in political and other decision making processes.



The key outcomes of the Engagement were:

- Increased knowledge by political parties on local and international instruments and standards for non-discrimination-based approaches, with particular focus on PWDs
- Political parties representatives made open commitment to this Forum in ensuring their various parties include disability rights issues in their manifestoes and to increase inclusion of PWDs in their political party hierarchy;
- Collaboration and networking with EMBs, CSOs, DPOs and HRCSL on fostering equality and non-discrimination in pre, during and post elections processes as prescribed by domestic and international human rights instrument was achieved.

The Commission organized a 2-day national consultative conference on human rights and elections from 30 – 31 May, 2012 in order to create a platform to facilitate dialogue among key stakeholders including political actors to collectively take responsibility to work toward free, peaceful and fair elections that will guarantee the enjoyment of human rights and increase the participation of women.



Participants at the National Conference

The objectives of the conference were :-

- To ensure that the elections are conducted in an atmosphere that is free from fear, intimidation and discrimination
- To ensure that the electorates exercise their rights without interference by the security forces and other actors
- To ensure that all qualified persons especially women and persons with disability fully exercise their rights to participation without hindrance.
- To ensure that all political actors are guaranteed fair access to the media and that in imparting information, journalists exhibit impartiality, truthfulness and professionalism
- To ensure that effective monitoring mechanisms are in place for assuring fair and responsible broadcast and publications during the elections
- To ensure that key political actors are able to express their concerns that may impact on a peaceful, free and fair election which outcomes would be acceptable to all
- To increase awareness on redress mechanisms for elections grievances before, during and after the November elections
- To deepen democracy, good governance and human rights in Sierra Leone

A communiqué which included recommendations achieving the objectives of the conference was signed by all the political parties and stakeholders and issued at the end of the Conference. An increased number of female candidates at the local government level was indicated at the National Elections held in November, 2012.

III. Beneficiaries

The targeted beneficiaries of this project are DHRCs, CSOs and MDAs/Public Officials, and HRCSL Commissioners and staff. The dissemination of the SOHR 2010 report which included training packages on various human rights topics were passed on to an about 650 beneficiaries from various organizations in all

targeted communities. To a large extent participants appreciated the basic human rights issues and other new human rights phenomenon such as the UPR, as manifested by their effective participation and training evaluations during UPR consultations on the recommendations and the outcome of the UPR National Conference on implementation strategies that took place in November 2011.

HRCSL Commissioners and staff also had the opportunity during the dissemination programme to collect information from participants during the training programmes on current human rights issues affecting their communities which included; women and child rights issues, unlawful and illegal detentions, conditions in cells, prisons, and hospitals. The information collected would be factored into the 2012 SOHR report after verification of the information collected.

The payment of the rent for the three regional offices warranted the continued occupancy of the premises, which continues to serve as a channel for addressing violations or abuse of human rights brought to the attention of the Commission.

IV. Constraints

This project was implemented during the period of transition where the tenure of Commissioners came to an end and only two Commissioners were renewed. The Commission operated for over six (6) months with only two Commissioners until the new 3 Commissioners were appointed and took office

V. Lessons Learned

1. Holding periodic oversight steering committee meeting provided guidance on the smooth implementation of planned activities.
2. Pre – testing the knowledge of participants informed the facilitators that participants’ idea on basic human right instruments were very limited. For instance in Blama, Small Bo in Kenema district, only eight out of 50 participants had seen copies of the gender justice laws. This makes it very crucial in facilitating the enjoyment of one’s rights especially for DHRC members intervening in the field of human rights, when the legal instruments promoting the enjoyment of such rights are not known by human right defenders.
3. Since HRCSL intended to extend its outreach services to isolated communities and also to raise the awareness of community people, it was observed that some participants had limited knowledge on human rights issues which to some extent limited their effective participation and contribution at the start of the training sessions.
4. Assigning earlier roles to Commissioners and staff for the SOHR dissemination, helped in the smooth implementation of activities as staff members were already prepared to effectively engage themselves in roles specifically assigned to them.
5. Assigning specific topics to staff members for facilitation purposes, gave the opportunity to staff to capacitate themselves with the new knowledge acquired.

VI. Recommendations

1. Early disbursement of funds could help toward timely and effective planning of activities to be undertaken.
2. Extensive community sensitization is recommended in targeted communities to raise community awareness on human issues.