HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE (HRCSL)

STRATEGIC PLAN (2009-2011)

OCTOBER 2008
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FOREWORD

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) is committed to the establishment of a society that is governed by rule of law, respects human rights, its Constitution, and members are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

The Commission is committed to promoting and protecting human rights, and continue to search for ways to bring its services closer to the people: by establishing four regional offices and by building partnerships with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), international and local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), professional organizations, the business community, U.N Agencies, government and other national institutions.

As part of its efforts, the HRCSL developed this Strategic Plan for the period 2009-2011 after several consultations with stakeholders and experts which started in January 2008. Representatives of CSOs, UNDP, UNIOSIL, the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, the Justice Sector Coordinating Office, Commissioners and staff participated in the consultative meetings held in Freetown and Bo respectively. In addition to EDRA Consultancy Services, the Commission was privileged to have Commissioner Lawrence Mute and James Mwangera of the Kenya National Human Rights Commission who participated in the consultations in Bo and made invaluable contributions towards the development of this Plan.

This Strategic Plan includes the results of the participatory reflections in Freetown and over the four days period in Bo. Commissioners and staff of HRCSL subsequently reviewed and made changes in the draft prepared. Commissioner Aliro Omara of the Uganda Human Rights Commission facilitated this final review and the changes introduced put emphasis on the strategic functions of the Commission, the need to bring the services of the Commission to the communities and took account of HRCSL responsibilities to monitor the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s recommendations.
I wish to sincerely thank all Commissioners, members of staff and our partners who contributed in various ways, as well as all the others that have rendered various forms of assistance and cooperation to the HRCSL in preparing and putting together this Strategic Plan. I wish to acknowledge the fact that the various processes relating to the development and finalization of this Plan could not have been possible without the support of the UN Peace Building Fund Project (UNPBF) for HRCSL managed by UNDP. The Commission is equally very grateful to UNIPSIL for funding the printing and publication of the Strategic Plan.

HRCSL is greatly indebted to the Irish Aid and Grainne O’Neil in particular for initiating the funding process for the implementation of this Strategic Plan. The Commission is hopeful that the government and other development partners will increase their support to HRCSL as we work in partnership to actualize the goals of this Strategic Plan. HRCSL is committed to strive to adopt best practices to ensure that the financial, material and human resource it receives support programmes to ensure effective implementation of our mandate to promote and protect human rights in Sierra Leone.

Jamesina King (Mrs)

Chairperson

HRCSL
1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) was established by an Act of Parliament in 2004 (Act No. 9 of 2004) to protect and promote human rights in Sierra Leone. Since its establishment, it has undertaken a number of activities to strengthen its capacity and promote and protect human rights. HRCSL sought to chart a three year strategic plan effective 2009. The several consultations leading to the finalization of the Strategic Plan examined the socio-political and human rights context of Sierra Leone from 1961 to 2008 as well as the institutional capacity of the Commission.

The Commission has now set itself clear goals aimed at effectively addressing future challenges. Until 2011 HRCSL’s priority goals will be:

1. **Mandate of the Commission:** To carry out the core statutory functions of the Commission;
2. **Civil and Political Rights:** To promote the realization and protection of civil and political rights in Sierra Leone;
3. **Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:** To engage government to progressively implement its obligations on economic, social and cultural rights;
4. **Equality and Non-Discrimination:** To promote the right to equality and non-discrimination;
5. **Participation in national affairs:** To promote awareness of the right to participate in national affairs; and,
6. **Institutional Capacity:** To strengthen and support HRCSL’s institutional capacity.
7. **Regionalization:** To bring HRCSL services to the communities.
8. **TRC Recommendations:** To promote the implementation of the TRC Recommendations and other Transitional Justice Mechanisms.

In order to achieve these goals, a number of outcomes are envisaged in the next three years (2009 – 2011), details of which are reflected in the Monitoring and Evaluation matrix in **Annexure 4**.

The Strategic Plan makes projections on expenditures. These are in **Annexure 2**. The projections are based on certain assumptions namely, that the government and donors will provide financial support to the Strategic Plan. The other assumption is that the Commission will be at its optimal capacity as reflected in its organizational structure.

The Commission expects to deal with a number of challenges. Operationally, the challenges include inadequate resources, resistance to the introduction of a human rights culture and the inadequate experience in human rights work.
A number of human rights challenges will be the concern of the Commission and these are specifically highlighted to be addressed by the Commission. These human rights challenges include the rampant violations of the rights of women and children, poverty, unemployment and the lack of enjoyment of an adequate standard of living by a large section of the population, challenges in the administration of justice and poor prison conditions, the rights of the vulnerable populations and the weaknesses in the realization of key civil and political rights. These challenges are tabulated on pages 26 and 27 of this Strategic Plan.
2. **History of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone**

The HRCSL became truly operational in 2007, although Commissioners took office in December, 2006. The five Commissioners were appointed through a transparent and participatory process that commenced in 2005 with a call for applications for the post of Commissioner. Short listed applicants were interviewed by a selection panel comprising six representatives of civil society interest groups and one representative of the government.

The Selection Panel submitted a list of seven candidates to the President who selected five nominees whose names were gazetted for public scrutiny and review. In October 2006 the five nominees were approved by Parliament, and thereafter took the Oath of Office before the President on 11th December 2006.

Since the appointment of Commissioners, significant progress has been made in operationalising the Commission. The Commissioners were walked through a two-week comprehensive training facilitated by Commissioner Aliro Omara of the Uganda Human Rights Commission. This was followed by a three-week international study tour of the Ghanaian, Ugandan, and South African Human Rights Commissions. This was with the view to further build the capacity of the Commissioners to embark on their statutory responsibilities.

Since then, the Commission has undertaken a number of activities intended to promote human rights. These include setting up the structure for the work of the Commission, formulation and adoption of the Human Resource Manual (HRM) and the Financial Policies, promulgating of the Complaints Investigation and Inquiries Rules of Procedure.

HRCSL embarked on a strategic planning process, and held consultations with various stakeholders. Through the participatory approach, HRCSL gathered information on the external and internal environments affecting human rights in the country, drafted its Mission and Vision Statements, and determined its strategic priorities and goals and this Strategic Plan with the full contribution of all relevant stakeholders and partners.

2.1 **Accomplishments**

The HRCSL has, since it became operational in 2007 achieved the following:

- Conducted a national sensitization tour to introduce the Commission to the public in Freetown and eight other districts of the country.
- Investigated and made recommendations regarding the unfair computation of sentences on some convicts and release of prisoners;
- Investigated and reported on delayed justice due to the non-sittings of the High Courts in Moyamba and Bo, and made recommendations for action by the appropriate bodies;
• Investigated and made recommendations on a controversial case relating to the deprivation of the right to life of a young girl who died in mysterious circumstances;

• Addressed issues relating to child abuse;

• Participated in activities to promote peaceful Presidential and Parliamentary Elections that took place in 2007;

• Set up office and procured office equipment and furniture, and paid rent for an office space with support from UNDP and the UNPBF;

• Embarked on sensitization activities to promote public awareness on human rights issues;

• Engaged with the judiciary, parliament, executive, the police, prisons and the army on a number of human rights concerns.

• Organised workshops on gender-based violence, disability rights and, child rights and responsibilities, with a focus on teenage pregnancy;

• In collaboration with UNIOSIL organized a national stakeholders conference on the status of implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations and compiled the necessary recommendations for the way forward which was presented to the President;

• In collaboration with civil society organizations and various stakeholders organized activities to celebrate International Human Rights Day and to mark other international human rights days;

• Provided technical advice, recommendations and support to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs (MSWGCA), Parliament and civil society during the process leading to the passage of the “Gender Justice laws” and its implementation plan;

• Received complaints and made recommendations to relevant national institutions for action;

• Conducted visits to prisons and police cells in seven districts including Freetown, and secured the release of prisoners who had completed their sentences but continued to remain in detention;

• Procured and disseminated copies of the Child Rights and Gender Justice Acts and conducted advocacy programmes on them;

• Prepared and submitted recommendations to the Constitutional Review Committee for the consideration of key human rights issues including the TRC recommendations;

• In collaboration with UNIOSIL conducted a training seminar for senior government officials on human rights and reporting obligations under regional and international treaties;

• Organized training on prisons monitoring and served as facilitators in the training of police prosecutors and investigators in collaboration with stakeholders;
- Engaged in several collaborative programs with various civil society organizations on key human rights issues;
- Produced its maiden report on the State of Human Rights in Sierra Leone and
- Recruited and inducted 35 members of staff.

The Commission managed to make these achievements in spite of the difficulties it faced as a new institution, including the problem of inadequate funds which was partly addressed by the timely assistance from the UN PBF.
3. THE LEGAL MANDATE AND POWERS OF THE COMMISSION

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act 2004 (Act No.9) gives the Commission the mandate to:

- Investigate or enquire into any allegation of human rights violations;
- Promote respect for human rights through public education and awareness-raising programmes;
- Publish guidelines, manuals, and other materials explaining the human rights obligations of public officials and others;
- Cooperate with institutions including public interest bodies, NGOs, and international organisations, working in the field of human rights;
- Review existing legislation and advise government concerning its compliance with international obligations;
- Monitor draft legislations, policies, programmes and administrative practices to ensure they comply with human rights principles, standards and obligation;
- Advise and support government in the preparation of reports required under international human rights instruments or treaties;
- Visit prisons and other places of detention to inspect and report on conditions;
- Monitor and document violations of human rights in Sierra Leone; and,
- Publish and present to the President and Parliament an Annual Report on the State of Human Rights in Sierra Leone.

3.1 Powers of the HRCSL.

Under its constitutive Act, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone has powers:

- To make Rules of Procedure for the conduct of investigations or inquiries;
- For the purposes of any investigation, the Commission has such powers, rights and privileges as are vested in the High Court of Justice or a Judge of the High Court;
- To enforce the attendance of witnesses;
- Examine witnesses on oath, affirmation or otherwise;
- Compelling the production of any relevant documents, materials or any other things;
- Issuing commissions or requests to examine witnesses abroad;
- To issue or make orders to enforce its decisions, including measures to protect life and safety of an individual;
- To cite and refer a person to the High Court for contempt if the person without justifiable cause, refuses to comply with a decision, direction or order of the Commission;
- To recommend payment of compensation to victims of human rights violations or to their families or legal representatives as the case may be;
• To recommend provision of financial assistance including legal aid to indigent citizens who are victims of human rights violations; and,
• To order the release of any person unlawfully detained or restricted.

3.2 Jurisdiction of the Commission

The Commission has powers to only admit and resolve complaints:
• Alleging violations of human rights that occurred after 26, August, 2004;
• Filed by individuals or organizations including NGOs;
• Making allegations about the acts or omissions of public officials or acts committed at their instigation or carried out with their acquiescence;
• That alleges violations of human rights “relating to life, equality and dignity of the individual protected or guaranteed by the constitution or embodied in international conventions, treaties and other agreements Sierra Leone is a party”.

According to the Act establishing the Commission, the Commission cannot entertain complaints on matters already decided by a court or are before courts, consider allegations based on events before the 26th August 2004 when the Act creating the Commission came into force. It clearly has jurisdiction to deal with violations of provisions of human rights instruments ratified by Sierra Leone.

3.3 The HRCSL and International Standards on National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)

The Commission was established in total compliance with the Paris Principles on NHRIs. It has the mandate and powers to protect and promote human rights, which powers are broad enough to enable it undertake its responsibilities.

The appointment procedures for the members of the Commission was very transparent going through a process that included: public advertisement calling for applications; short-listing and interviews by panels largely controlled and chaired by the civil society; choice by the President of the names of five Commissioners out of seven names submitted by the independent selection panel, and finally debate and approval of the names by Parliament. The Commissioners by law chose their own chairperson without interference by the executive.

Since its establishment, the Commission has set up an effective structure to carry out its statutory functions. It is in the process of submitting its application to the International Coordinating Committee of NHRIs for accreditation.
4. THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE COMMISSION

The organizational structure of the Commission is based on its functions as given under its Act. (See the Organogram in Annexure 1). It is structured in the following manner:

4.1 The Chairperson and Members of the Commission

The Commission is made up of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and three other members. All work full time as required by the Act. They are responsible for promulgation of policies that guide the implementation of the mandate of the Commission. They meet as a team to make decisions on complaints. They represent the Commission at national and international meetings on human rights. They are responsible for the overall direction of the affairs of the Commission.

4.2 The Secretariat

The Secretariat is made up of the Executive Secretary, the Deputy Executive Secretary and other technical and support staff. The Executive Secretary is the head of the Secretariat and the Accounting Officer (Vote Controller). The Secretariat is divided into five Directorates namely the Directorate of Finance and Budget; the Directorate of Complaints Investigation and Legal Services; the Directorate of Education, Communication and Training; the Directorate of Monitoring and Research; and the Directorate of Regional Services. The heads of these departments and sections form the Management Committee that meet regularly.

4.3 The Executive Secretary (ES) to the Commission

This is a statutory position and the Executive Secretary is responsible for the implementation of the policy decisions of the Commission as well as its service delivery functions. In addition to being in charge of the Commission’s finances, the Executive Secretary is also responsible for the day to day administration and the link between the staff and the Commission. The Executive Secretary is assisted by the Deputy Executive Secretary.

4.4 The Management Committee

The Management Committee coordinates the day to day work of the staff in implementing the mandate of the Commission in accordance with the Commission’s policies and approved work plans. It is chaired by the Executive Secretary and it consists of the Deputy Executive Secretary and heads of all Directorates and heads of sections. It coordinates the production of progress reports which are regularly presented to the Commission.
4.5 Directorates

4.5.1 The Directorate of Finance and Budget (F&B)

This manages and supervises the finances of the Commission and provides the logistical support required for the work of the Commission. It ensures that financial reports to government and donors are submitted in a timely manner. It further provides support for the development and implementation of projects and fundraising activities of the Commission.

4.5.2 The Directorate of Complaints, Investigations and Legal Services (CILS)

The Directorate develops all strategies on complaints and investigations. It is responsible for the management of complaints and supervises investigations, receives, processes and facilitates the resolution of all complaints that come before the Commission. It also organizes and makes arrangements for inquiries into systemic human rights violations and renders legal advice to the Commission.

4.5.3 The Directorate of Education, Communication and Training (ECT)

This Directorate is in charge of the education, communication and training function of the Commission. It develops and carries out programmes for the promotion of human rights awareness. It designs training manuals, produces publications on human rights especially human rights materials for government officials, security forces, educational institutions and the general public.

It is also responsible for and supervises the establishment and management of the Commission’s Documentation Centres, TRC Archives and the Commission’s official website.

4.5.4 Directorate of Monitoring and Research (MR)

The Directorate monitors government’s compliance with regional and international human rights instruments, to which Sierra Leone is a party. It also visits and monitors conditions in all detention places. Its role also includes monitoring on a daily basis, the situation of human rights in Sierra Leone. It monitors policies, draft legislations and prepares the Commission’s position on such policies and drafts legislation for discussion with Parliament.

It is also responsible for and coordinates the preparation of the Annual Report on the situation of human rights as well as the Commission’s support to the government concerning the preparation of periodic reports to treaty bodies.
4.5.5  The Directorate of Regional Services (RS)

Under the Commissioner in charge of Regional Services, the Directorate coordinates the Commission’s regional services and links them with the headquarters. The Directorate also ensures that the Commission’s policies and programs are implemented at regional, district and chiefdom level. Currently, the Commission has four Regional Offices which are responsible for the delivery of the Commission’s services to the communities. Field activities such as complaints handling, visiting prisons and places of detention, education and training would be managed in the regions and by the regions under the supervision of the Commissioner responsible for the Regions and technical support from headquarters.

Guiding principles for the regionalization of the services of the Commission are as follows:

- To develop a common culture of service delivery and similar standards in strict adherence to the Commission’s core values and in the way the Commission operates
- To ensure that the services offered by the Commission are harmonized
- As the regional office develops and are fully operational the Commission will work towards a degree of flexibility and relative autonomy in the relationship between head office and the regional offices
5. THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2009 – 2011

5.1 Vision

A Sierra Leone where a culture of human rights prevails, the people respect the rule of law and live in peace and dignity.

5.2 Mission

To take the lead role in building a culture of human rights (including respect for individual responsibilities) which maintains human dignity for all in Sierra Leone in full compliance with the Constitution, laws and other regional and international instruments through effective partnership.

5.3 Core Values

As an independent human rights institution, the HRCSL is committed to uphold:

**Professionalism:** Encompassing discipline, competence, dependability integrity, expertise, team spirit orientation and tact.

**Service:** With humility.

**Independence:** Including fairness, objectivity, and impartiality.

**Inclusiveness:** Ensuring diversity.

**Accessibility:** With tolerance and understanding.

**Accountability:** Embracing honesty.

**Collaboration:** Working in partnership to avoid duplication of efforts.

**Truthfulness:** Open and reliable with team spirit.

5.4 Partnership Principles

In addition to the above core values HRCSL will pursue a policy of partnership guided by the following principles:

- Good faith.
- Spirit of partnership.
- Transparency on areas of mutual interest.
- Mutual respect and trust.
- Acknowledgement of the mutual benefits of working co-operatively as far as possible to protect and promote human rights.
- Commitment to resolving differences through an agreed process.
6. **THE STRATEGIC GOALS AND OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVITIES.**

For the life of this Strategic Plan, the Commission has prioritized eight strategic goals namely:

1. **Mandate of the Commission:** To carry out the core statutory functions of the Commission;

2. **Civil and Political Rights:** To promote the realization and protection of civil and political rights;

3. **Economic Social and Cultural Rights:** To engage the Government to progressively implement its obligation on economic social and cultural rights of the people;

4. **Equality and Non discrimination:** To promote the right to equality and non discrimination in Sierra Leone;

5. **Right to participate in national affairs:** to promote awareness of the right to participate in national affairs

6. **Institutional Capacity:** To strengthen and support HRCSL institutional capacity; and,

7. **Regionalization:** To bring HRCSL services to the communities.

8. **TRC Recommendations:** To promote the implementation of the TRC recommendations and other transitional justice mechanisms.

6.1 **Operational Plan Objectives of the Strategic Goals.**

**Goal 1: To carry out the Commission’s Core Statutory Functions/Mandate**

The statutory core mandate/functions of the HRCSL are to:

1. Investigate or inquire into allegations of human rights violations;
2. Promote respect for human rights through public education and awareness-raising programmes;
3. Monitor and document violations of human rights and prepare annual reports to Parliament on the state of human rights in Sierra Leone;
4. Visit prisons and other detention places to inspect and report on conditions;
5. Monitor draft legislations, policies and programmes to ensure their compliance with human rights obligations, principles and standards;
6. Review existing legislations and advise government on their compliance with its human rights obligations; and
7. Publish Guidelines, manuals, and other materials explaining the human rights obligations of public officials

For the purposes of the Strategic Plan these core functions will be carried out through activities allocated under three Directorates namely the Directorate of Complaints, Investigations and Legal Services; the Directorate of Education, Communication and Training; and the Directorate of Monitoring and Research.

Operational Plan Objectives for the Core Functions.

1. Function: Investigate/inquire into allegations of human right violations

The following operational plan objectives are intended for this core function:

1. Conduct investigations and enquiries into human rights violations;
2. Develop and implement a coherent complaints management system;
3. Develop a complaints management manual and admissibility criteria for complaints;
4. Provide legal service to the Commission including preparation of amicus curiae briefs and enforcement of its decisions, orders or directives;
5. Review the Complaints management system two years after its use; and,
6. Compile and publish decisions of the Commission on complaints;

2. Function: Promote respect for human rights through public education, dissemination of information and awareness raising programmes.

The following operational plan objectives are intended for this core function:

1. Carry out activities for the promotion of public awareness and education aimed at creating a culture of human rights.
2. Produce and disseminate Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on human rights.
3. Develop and publish Guidelines, Manuals, and other materials explaining the obligation of public officials to protect and respect human rights
4. Develop and implement strategies for effective cooperation with civil society organizations, NGOs and other public interest bodies for the purpose of promoting human rights.
5. In consultation with other stakeholders develop a harmonized curriculum for human rights and civic education.
3. **Function: Monitor legislation, bills of parliament, policies, and violations of human rights and compile reports on government compliance with national, regional and international human rights obligations and standards.**

The following operational plan objectives are intended for this core function:

1. Monitor on a regular basis the situation of human rights in the country;
2. Monitor legislations, bills of parliament, government policies for compliance with international, regional human rights obligations and standards;
3. Develop and implement a regular schedule for inspection of all detention places in the country and make reports with appropriate recommendations;
4. Support government on Treaty body reporting;
5. Coordinate the preparation and publication of an Annual Report on the state of human rights in Sierra Leone; and,
6. Monitor the implementation of HRCSL recommendations.
7. Develop and implement strategies for effective cooperation with civil society organizations, NGOs and other public interest bodies for the purpose of monitoring human rights.

**Goal 2: To promote the realization and protection of civil and political rights in Sierra Leone**

The following operational plan objectives are intended to realize this goal:

1. Develop, and implement a strategy for engagement with government, judiciary, prisons, police, and military, National Commission for Democracy (NCD) National Electoral Commission (NEC), Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) and other stakeholders on Civil and Political Rights (CPRs);
2. Conduct research on government policies, legislations and practices that impact on CPRs to carry out activities to promote the enjoyment of CPRs; and,
3. Carry out sensitization, public campaigns, training and other activities to promote and protect CPRs.

**Goal 3: To engage government to progressively implement its obligations on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCRs).**

The following operational plan objectives are intended to realize this goal:

1. Develop and implement a strategy to engage government on its ESCRs obligations.
2. Carry out sensitization, public campaigns, training and other activities to promote and protect ESCRs.

3. Conduct research into policies, legislation and practices affecting the enjoyment of ESCRs.

4. Train public officials on Right-Based Approach (RBA) to programming.

**Goal 4: To promote the Right to Equality and Non-discrimination**

The following operational plan objectives are intended for this Strategic Goal:

1. Develop and implement a strategy for engaging government, civil society organizations and other stakeholders on disability and non-discrimination issues;

2. Conduct sensitization, training and other activities to promote an environment of equality and non-discrimination;

3. Give support to the enactment and implementation of the disability law;

4. Research and engage government to formulate policies on non-discrimination issues;

5. Develop policies and train Commissioners and staff on the rights of vulnerable groups; and,

6. Monitor the implementation of the Gender Justice Laws, Child Rights Act and support enactment and implementation of other laws promoting non-discrimination.

**Goal 5: To promote awareness of the Right to Participate in National Affairs**

The following operational plan objectives are planned to realize this objective:

1. Develop and implement a strategy on promoting participation in public affairs, tolerance and national cohesion in collaboration with other national institutions, CSOs and other stakeholders;

2. Carry out sensitization, training and other activities to promote the citizens’ participation in public affairs; and,

3. Advocate and lobby for a law on access to information.
Goal 6: To strengthen and support HRCSL’s Institutional Capacity.

The following operational plan objectives are intended to achieve this goal:

   a. Training of commissioners and Staff (internal and external) on human rights, quasi-judicial functions, management and any other required skills.
   b. Staff Welfare.
      i. Provide funds to augment salaries of commissioners and staff
      ii. Provide medical insurance
      iii. Staff Welfare activities
   c. Recruitment of additional staff

2. Setting up a Communication system and policy for the Commission (internal and external, LAN, website, databases, publicity, phones, fax, public relations)

3. Establish and equip library and documentation centre at headquarters (books, periodicals, computers, furniture, etc.)

4. Planning and evaluation of programmes within the Commission.
   a. Organize an annual commission planning retreat
   b. Review of HRCSL strategic plan, policies, manuals and rules in 3rd year of strategic plan
   c. Impact assessment of HRCSL’s programs and structure in 3rd year.

5. Procurement
   a. Equipment, vehicles, furniture etc.
   b. Office supplies, fuel for vehicles and generator
   c. Rent for current headquarters and relocation of headquarters to Tower Hill in June 2009
   d. Equipment and furniture for investigations, inquiries and public hearings

6. Consultancy services
   a. To procure consultancy services of an Institutional Development Adviser for a period of 12 months and as required.
   b. Short term consultancies as required.

7. Maintenance and repairs of assets
8. Participation in international and regional organizations
   b. Air tickets and DSA.

9. Develop and implement a strategy for resource mobilization.

10. Payment of rent and other utilities.

11. Protocol meetings at Commissioners and Executive Secretary’s office.

Goal 7: To bring HRCSL services and closer to the Communities

The following operational plan objectives are intended to realize this goal:

1. Develop and implement a policy on regionalization and decentralization of the Commission’s service delivery;
2. Evaluate Regionalization Policy;
3. Procure vehicles, stationery, furniture, communication linkages (Headquarters and worldwide);
4. Establish and equip one Library and Documentation Centre for each of the 4 regional offices;
5. Establish linkages and support District Human Rights Committees and Chiefdom focal points; and,
6. Provide payments for rent and office utilities.

Goal 8: To Promote the implementation of the TRC Recommendations and other Transitional Justice Mechanisms.

The following operational plan objectives are intended to realize this goal:

1. Advocate for the establishment of the TRC Follow-up Committee.
2. Monitor and support the implementation of the TRC recommendations.
3. Procure one 4-wheel drive vehicle to monitor implementation of TRC recommendations.
4. Digitize, preserve and archive TRC materials, documents and make them accessible to the public.
5. Procure computers and equipment to operationalize the TRC Archives.
6. Engage two consultants to re-house the TRC Archives.
7. To promote the ideals of the TRC National Vision.
7. **BUDGETS AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.**

The Commission is expecting two sources of funding for the Strategic Plan. It expects funds from the Government of Sierra Leone and hopes development partners will render the necessary support for capacity building and programmes. In the short life of the Commission, it has gratefully received and satisfactorily utilized funds from the UN PBF without which the Commission would have found it difficult to start operations.

The Commission has received funds from and technical support from the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) through UNIOSIL, all of which contributed enormously to the setting up of the Commission and facilitating its work.

The Government of Sierra Leone, particularly Parliament bears the primary responsibility of giving all the financial resources the Commission needs for its work. However, on account of understandable budgetary constraints, government allocation of funds to the Commission has been inadequate to meet the requirements of the Commission and the break-down of the government budget for the Commission for the Financial Years 2007-2009 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Le</th>
<th>US$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>155,000,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>133,000,000</td>
<td>43,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>231,000,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>519,000,000</td>
<td>163,333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to budget constraints the government was unable to release to the Commission the full amounts allocated to the Commission for the years 2007 and 2008. Government pays the salaries of Commissioners and the Executive Secretary and has undertaken to assume payment of the salaries of staff after the UN PBF project which has been paying the staff salaries expires. The staff salaries are however unattractive to retain and maintain high quality and professional personnel and this remains a challenge to the Commission.

The allocation from Government is also limited by the Government Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), which restricts the amount of funds it can make available to the Commission. The inadequate budgetary allocation from government
leaves the Commission with no choice but to look for support from development partners to finance its programmes and to a limited extent augment remuneration of its personnel.

The Commission in 2008 submitted a three-year budgetary plan following the government’s calls to institutions for submission of their budgets. This amounted to Le. 7,399,249,822 (US$2,466,417) broken down as follows:

Table 2: HRCSL’s Three Year budget Plan (2009-2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Le</th>
<th>US$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2,161,454,886</td>
<td>720,485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2,494,203,226</td>
<td>831,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2,743,591,710</td>
<td>914,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>7,399,249,822</td>
<td>2,466,417</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several months later, this Strategic Plan as in Annexure 2 was finalized with new projections of funds as in Annexure 2 required to implement it. The projections based on this Strategic Plan are US Dollars 6,831,000 divided into an annual budget of US$ 2,502,000 (first year), USD 2,046,000 (second year) and USD2,283,000 (third year).

Table 3: Projection of HRCSL’s Budget (2009-2011)

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6,831,000</td>
<td>2,502,000</td>
<td>2,046,000</td>
<td>2,283,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The projections are based on the assumptions that:

- The government will fully fund the wage and the non-wage costs of running the Commission;
- Development partners will support the implementation of the programmes in the Strategic Plan;
- Government will revise the MTEF ceilings upwards for the Commission to access more funds; and,
- The Commission will operate at optimal capacity in accordance with its approved structure.

**Management of Funds.**

The management of funds for the implementation of the Strategic Plan will be in the following manner:

- Funds from the government will be managed in accordance with the Government of Sierra Leone Accounting System as elaborated in the Government Financial Policies Regulations;
- Donor funds will be managed in accordance with an agreed system, preferably as reflected in a Memorandum of Understanding between the donor(s) and the Commission;
- The Commission would prefer donor assistance to be in the nature of budget support to the Commission and not as earmarked project support. This will allow the Commission the leverage to set its priorities in accordance with the Strategic Plan and also use available resources across the board for programmes.
- The Commission is setting up a strong finance and accounting section within the Directorate of Finance and Budget to ensure effective budgetary and financial controls. A transparent procurement system as described in the Government Financial Manual or as agreed with donors (in case of donor funds for procurement) will be strictly adhered to.
- An internal auditor will oversee the internal financial control systems to ensure the Commission gets value for money, minimises financial risks, and that financial, regulations, procedures, policies, and agreements are complied with.
- As a matter of practice, funds for programmes will be expended in accordance with approved work plans and budgets. Any variation will be subject to approval by the Commission or donor as the case may be. Internal and external audits as well as compliance reviews will continuously and regularly be carried out. A management cycle for the Commission activities is as reflected in Annexure 3.
7.1 Situational, Swot Analysis and Challenges

The work of the Human Rights Commission will be shaped by the international environment, the environment within the country, and by factors within the Human Rights Commission. Some of these factors are discussed as follows:

7.1.2 Political Situation

Six years after the decade-long war was declared over, the political situation of the country is calm. The 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections were reported to be free and fair, although there were cancellations of votes leading to the disenfranchisement of certain groups of voters. Local Council elections also took place, with no major incidents occurring.

Government has manifested political will towards promoting human rights by taking a number of steps, including legislative reforms, acknowledging its international human rights reporting obligations, and adopting the justice sector strategy to improve the administration of justice.

Government is committed to supporting democratic and human rights institutions. It has also initiated a constitutional review process which is yet to be completed. Women are still under-represented in politics despite the president’s repeated declarations of government’s commitment to have 30% of women participating in active politics as recommended by the TRC.

7.1.3 Economic Situation

The country is rich with natural resources including diamonds, iron ore, bauxite, and rutile. The economy depends heavily on mining without the establishment of industries to add value to the minerals. However the economy of Sierra Leone is weak as reflected in the low per capita income level, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and human development index. Education rate is very low with illiteracy rate very high. Sierra Leone is rated as one of the poorest countries in the world. These provide challenges for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However the government is implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), intended to alleviate poverty, consolidate peace, promote human rights and good governance. The provision of electricity has improved in the Western Area and the availability of mobile telecommunication systems has improved communication nationwide.

The majority of the population depends on subsistence farming. The percentage of low income earners is high and many people are extremely poor. With the high rate of unemployment and poverty, commercial sex is on the increase, attracting children as young as ten. Legislation in place to protect workers is inadequate and not fully implemented. The formal sector is overshadowed by the informal sector which is expanding and employing a large number of youths. This denies the government much needed revenue. Government has recently (March 2008) enacted legislation intended to make setting up small businesses much easier.
Corruption is a challenge and this greatly impacts on the enjoyment of human rights. The government has set up an Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to address this problem.

7.1.4 Social Situation

There has been a growing interest in social, economic and political issues across the country. Civil society organizations have increased and are more active throughout the country, enhancing more interaction between the government and the people. The President has launched a drive towards promoting attitudinal change and individual responsibilities to the State.

Societal problems such as crime, drugs and threats to national stability, are attributable to the high rate of unemployment. The control of the content of video films, cinemas and programs on satellite television is ineffective, allowing children access to harmful materials. Uncontrolled and unguided access by children and youth to some of these harmful films has promoted violence, crimes and immoral and other anti-social behaviours even among school going youths.

Social services such as housing, education, health and sanitation are generally poor for the majority of the population. The road networks are poor and deforestation is extensive. There has been an increase in the use of computers and other electronic technologies. Such technology is not accessible in the rural areas and among vulnerable populations. There is wide spread use of generators to produce the needed electrical power on small scale rather than public mass production resulting into noise and production of harmful gases. Sierra Leone is being flooded with second hand or used goods including vehicles, generators, computers, plastic materials. There are environmental consequences associated with the dumping of old goods, and plastics.

The situation of women and children is still problematic, with high levels of domestic violence, teenage pregnancies, and child marriages still evident. Government has taken steps in this regard by passing legislations in 2007 designed to tackle these problems. Sierra Leone has one of the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in the world. There are a high number of children engaged in child labour. Programs and facilities to assist victims of child labour, orphans and other vulnerable children are lacking.
7.2 SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE

7.2.1 Strengths

- The Commission was established by an Act of Parliament (Act 9 of 2004) and has broad powers to carry out its work. These powers are sufficient for the Commission to carry out its functions effectively.

- Members of the Commission are well versed in the socio-political situation of the country.

- Good priorities have been identified by the Commission

- The Commissioners and staff are easily approachable.

- The Commissioners and staff have passion for and dedication to human rights work.

- The Commission has an effective network of contacts nationally and internationally.

- The Commissioners and staff are willing to learn and be advised.

- Induction trainings have provided a good foundation for the Commissioners and Staff.

7.2.2 Weaknesses

- Insufficient experience in human rights work

- Weak institutional capacity

- Inadequate finances for the work of the Commission.

- Limited presence/visibility country wide

- Lack of common position on some issues of human rights and management.

- Poor remuneration of staff threatens staff retention.

- Limited engagement with the government, institutions, CSOs and other stakeholders.

- Commission headquarters not easily accessed by the aged and persons who are physically challenged.
7.2.3 Opportunities

In spite of these threats to human rights, several factors do favour the promotion of human rights and work of the Commission.

- Improved environment for peace, security, democracy, good governance in the country since the war ended.
- The Commission has the goodwill and support of Parliament and the international community, who are willing to support the Commission’s work.
- Signing by Government of human rights instruments, obliging it to fulfil regional and international human rights obligations.
- Government PRSP specifically targeting human rights.
- Government’s open commitment to respect its human rights obligations.
- Government’s declared commitment to implement the TRC recommendations.
- Public support of the existence of the Commission.
- On-going justice sector reforms.
- Existence of human rights groups in various communities in the country.
- National spread of community radios.
- Increasing collaboration, networking and partnership between national institutions.
- Greater national acceptance of democratic values and the rule of law
- Widespread public support and interest in the Commission’s work from NGO’s, CSOs and government ministries and departments.
- Availability of support from experienced national human rights institutions.

7.2.4 Threats

Many issues and circumstances external to the Commission, threaten the work of the Commission and respect for human rights:

- The socio-economic and political environment in the country is still fragile.
- Prevalence of poverty in the country.
- Inadequate resources from government to support the work of the Commission.
- Lack of appreciation by sections of the public, institutions, and public officials of the values, principles and importance of human rights.
- The high rate of illiteracy in the country.
• Harmful traditional beliefs and cultural/traditional practices.

• Weak justice system.

• Resistance to a human rights culture by sections of society, some religious groups, public officials and some politicians.

• Sections of civil society perceiving the Commission as a competitor in human rights work.

• Competition with other institutions for limited donor funds

• Possible bad relations with government and other institutions arising out of misunderstanding and lack of appreciation of the oversight role of the Commission may lead to loss of political and institutional support for the work of the Commission.

• Loss of skilled staff due to poor remuneration.

7.2.5 Challenges.

From the situational and SWOT analysis, it is obvious that the Commission is bound to face a number of challenges in its work. There are a number of issues expected to create challenges to the work of promoting and protecting human rights.

Sierra Leone emerged from a brutal civil war recently and is accordingly still a fragile state nurturing its newly restored peace, political stability and democracy. Its economic, social and organizational/institutional situation is still equally fragile, requiring a lot of support as they pose great challenges for the stable future of the state.

On account of these situations, government is not in a position to adequately support national institutions including the Commission, the courts, the police, and prisons. That inability provides obstacles to the enjoyment of human rights. There is for example, overcrowding and poor conditions in prisons, prevalent violation and abuse of the rights of women and children in the form of wife beating, child labour, harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Cutting (FGC), forced and/or early marriages. These are, but a few of the human rights challenges to be kept in focus by regular and continuous monitoring and actions.

The country faces grave challenges in the socio-economic field with attendant human rights problems: there has been a serious deterioration in the basic social services for many sections of the population such as lack of clean drinking water, health services, education and electricity. Poverty is prevalent leading to low standard of living for the majority of the population.

Other challenges may arise from possible lack of political will to support human rights work and deal with some of the difficult socio-economic challenges.
## 7.2.6 Matrix of the Human Rights Challenges in Sierra Leone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| i)  | Cultural   | • Early and forced marriage  
• Female genital cutting  
• Child labour, child-trafficking and child abuse  
• Conscription of children for initiation into secret societies  
• Unequal rights for women in our traditional setting; e.g. political culture impedes the participation of women in domestic politics in the north and part of the east. |
| ii) | Political  | • Unequal distribution of political appointments  
• Political intimidation and marginalization of women in politics.  
• Constitutional provisions prohibiting effective representation by Members of Parliament  
• Political interference by government into media operations  
• Political intolerance due to ethnic/tribal alliance  
• Threat to right to vote and be voted for.  
• No political will to eradicate FGC  
• Poor respect for the rule of law  
• Poor access to justice  
• Corruption  
• Abuse of power  
• Ad hoc implementation of TRC Recommendations.  
• Delayed implementation of constitutional review recommendations. |
| iii) | Economic   | • Poverty  
• Unemployment  
• Economic exploitation by mining companies  
• Inadequate standard of living  
• Lack of and low access to basic services: water, housing, health, sanitation, education, transportation and good roads.  
• Poor salaries and wages for public and some private service workers |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| iv) | Social                      | • Increase in crime rate  
• Violations of women and children’s rights  
• Exploitation of women  
• Lack of patriotism  
• Security concerns  
• Deterioration in the basic social services such as water, electricity, health care, increased in food prices etc  
• Discrimination  
• High maternal and infant mortality rates  |
| v)  | Education and technology    | • Poor quality education at all levels  
• Mass illiteracy especially among women  
• Educational marginalization of rural communities.  
• Discrimination against girl child education  
• Poor educational opportunities for People with Disability (PWD).  
• Lack of access to information and modern technology.  
• Poor educational infrastructure that impedes quality education e.g. lack of good laboratory and library services in schools and colleges.  
• Unauthorized school charges.  
• Poor records management system in both public and private sectors  |
| Vi  | Organizational and Institutional | • Government’s financial inability to adequately support national institutions (courts, prisons, and police) undermines civil and political rights.  
• Poor detention facilities (overcrowding in prisons)  
• Poor institutional structure  
• The unfair local court system  
• National brain-drain  
• Inadequate financial support to HRCSL  |
| Vii | Environmental               | • Mining exploitation  
• Land degradation  
• Health hazard  
• Damage to the environment.  
• Unfair land tenure system  |
8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation will form a central feature in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The Commission will have in place an M&E system designed to:

1. Measure progress towards the attainment of the Strategic Goals
2. Determine the results of the organization’s intervention, and
3. Measure the overall impact of the Commission’s activities.

The overall monitoring and evaluation responsibility will be undertaken by the Secretariat with the supervision of the Commission members. Each Directorate will be required to monitor its activities and appraise the Commissioners of the progress of its annual planned activities/programmes. These activities will be based on approved work plans which will all have a monitoring and evaluation tool. At every quarter, all Directorates will be required to produce a performance report for that quarter for evaluation by the Commission.

At the end of every reporting period and at the end of every financial year, the M&E reports from all Directorates will be analyzed and evaluated. The results will be used to eliminate any weaknesses, improve the execution of programmes, service delivery by the Commission and generally to strengthen the work of the Commission in the promotion and protection of human rights, based on its strategic goals. At an appropriate time during the implementation of the Strategic Plan, a survey will be commissioned to assess the overall impact of the Commission’s programmes/activities related to the goals of the Strategic Plan.
CONCLUSION

This Strategic Plan has been developed with the objective of delivering the mandate of the Commission by the efficient and effective use of its human and financial resources to achieve maximum impact. The various consultative processes adopted in the preparation of this Plan ensured that the goals developed seek to respond to the various human rights issues identified by all stakeholders.

Commissioners and staff in the final review carefully examined the draft and finalized this Plan reflecting the views and aspirations of both the Commission and the people, whose rights it has committed to take the leadership in promoting and protecting. The challenges of performing human rights work as well as consolidating peace in a post conflict country are enormous, and have been taken into account in developing this Strategic Plan.

The Commission however, is confident that the goals and activities outlined in this Plan can be achieved with the goodwill and support of the government, civil society, development partners and the entire populace. The Commission is grateful for the continued goodwill and support it has received and its commissioners and staff remain committed to work towards achieving the mission and vision of the Commission.