

DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL - SIERRA LEONE

PRESS RELEASE

9th February 2007

Defense for Children International Sierra Leone (DCI-SL) and the Children's Forum Network (CFN) wish to convey their dismay over the unjustifiable postponement of the 2nd reading of the "The Child Rights Act" bill of 2006 that was scheduled to place on Thursday 8th February 2007 in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Such a cancellation by the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) and Parliament shows a total disregard for the rights of children - some of whom missed an entire day of school hoping to march from Victoria Park to Parliament to meet with their legislators in support of the bill.

The lack of a substantive reason to justify the postponement is unacceptable. DCI-SL and CFN therefore urge parliamentarians to show a strong commitment towards enacting the bill before the dissolution of the House for the forth-coming National Presidential and Parliamentary elections due in July 2007.

Although Sierra Leone ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990, it has thus far failed to support the full implementation of this instrument at the National level. The lengthy delay in the drafting and reading of the bill for example, indicates a lack of concern for, and commitment to, its enactment.

As organizations working to promote and protect the best interests of children in Sierra Leone, DCI-SL and CFN call on civil society, children, youths and community leaders to join with us in campaigning for the enactment of the "Child Rights Act".

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