

# RAIC News

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Statistics SL's Data Scientist Ms Clementina Akram & Dr Osman Sankoh receive Gold for PDI

## Statistics SL Receives Gold for PDI on Human Rights Day

Having seen considerable progress in the implementation of the RAI law in Sierra Leone especially during the stewardship of the reconstituted Commission led by Dr. Shaw, the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) deemed it necessary to recognize individuals and institutions that contributed immensely to making the remarkable progress. The RAIC decided to use the occasion of a symposium it organized on Human Rights Day on December 10 2019 at the Atlantic Lumley Hotel to present awards to various institutions and individuals for their performance on compliance with proactive disclosure of information and Access to Information as well as advocacy for the work of the commission.

Statistics Sierra Leone won the Gold trophy, the biggest prize of the night in the Proactive Disclosure of Information Publication Compliance Award-2019 for full and timely compliance (submitting within the first deadline of March 1 2019 and providing all the 22 classes of information requested in the PDI publication scheme), The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) took the Silver in this PDI Awards category for timely and near full compliance with the PDI (submitting within the first deadline of March 1 2019 and meeting all but one of the 22 classes of information requested in the PDI scheme). The National Youth Commission and Government printing Department took Bronze Awards for timely submitting their PDI schemes within the second deadline of May 30 2019 and providing most of the 22 classes of information in the PDI publication scheme.

In the Access to Information Compliance Award 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took the Gold, the biggest prize of the night in that category for quickly responding to the FOI request without the intervention of the RAIC while the Sierra Leone Police took the Silver for timely and near full compliance. The Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority took Bronze for ATI compliance following RAIC intervention.

The Access to Information Advocates Awards 2019 were given to two local civil society activists: Emanuel Saffa Abdulai and Charles Keff Kobai, and two international advocates: Maxwell Kidiri and Dr. Ololade Shyllon. Dr Emmanuel Gaima, Governance Advisor in the Office of the President and Sonia Umu Karim, Director of Performance Evaluation in the Chief Minister's office and Cabinet Secretariat were among recipients of awards for supporting the work of the commission

This awards ceremony climaxed RAIC's Human Rights Day commemoration joining the international community and the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone.. In commemorating this year's Human Right Day, the RAIC, with support from the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) brought human rights organizations, MDAs, CSOs, media practitioners, local and development partners together in a Symposium and awards ceremony in the evening of Tuesday 10th December 2019/The objective of the event was to discuss issues of human rights and access to information and create an opportunity for

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... Statistics SL Receives Gold for PDI --

participants to shed light on where Sierra Leoneans have been on human rights and where they are as a nation. Also, to reward individuals and institutions that have played immense role in promoting Access to Information. The localized theme of the event was: "Access to Information as a Vehicle to Enjoy Other Human Rights"

Delivering the keynote address on behalf of the Minister of Information and Communications, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Augustine Sheku described Human Rights as indelible rights and innate potentials to every human being. He noted that, human rights issues are not a new phenomenon, rather, a consequence of the suppressions of humanity over a period of time. He reemphasized the revolting tendency inherent in human beings especially when they are subjected to repression. He acknowledged the advent of good governance which rekindles the dignity of mankind and creates the space for open society and equality. The era of good governance he said creates the environment for freedom of expression whereby the marginalized facets of society such as women, children, disable have their voices heard and plights addressed. One way a society can thrive he said is when the citizens of that society open their minds to new ideas. The Permanent Secretary thanked the RAIC for creating the nexus between human rights and access to information. The Theme he said was informative and interactive given that the gate way to the understanding of many human rights is when people are given the wider opportunity to access information which in turn, broadens their horizon on issues affecting humanity.

In his welcome remarks, Chairman and Information Commissioner of RAIC, Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, who moderated the symposium set the context for which the event was held. He started by giving a brief overview of Human Rights Day and evoked memories of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly which created the basis for the commemoration of Human Rights Day on the 10th December of every year. He spelt out the key reasons why the human rights day is celebrated every year. He referred to the instrumental role of access to information as not only an end in itself in the context of political right but also as a means to enjoying other rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, as the main reason behind the recognition of the human rights day by the commission.

Dr. Shaw pointed out that the enactment of the 2013

Right to Access Information (RAI) Act broadens the scope for citizens to understand their rights. He touched on the critical importance of access to information (ATI) in people's lives and its imperative contributions to make societies open. The RAIC Chairman laid emphasis on the increasing acceptance of ATI at both national and international levels. He cited Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that, "everyone has the right to hold opinions and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers." He added that universal access to quality and reliable information plays a pivotal role in empowering citizens, facilitating fair debate and giving equal opportunities to all. He furthered that human rights are at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As he put it, in the absence of human dignity, sustainable development cannot be driven. Domestically, he cited section 25 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone which guarantees freedom of expression.

Executive Director of Campaign for Good Governance (CGG), Mercella Samba Sesay centered her message on ATI as a Conduit to Democratic Rights, Transformation and Responsibilities. She said there was struggle to the enactment of the RAI Law in Sierra Leone but there were attendant successes after the Act became a law. She said that the success of human rights in Sierra Leone depends largely on the promotion of ATI, adding, if ATI is to be perceived as a fundamental human right, the legal instruments that guarantee that right should be created. She expressed concern in respect of the existence of the 1965 Public Order Act which she said limits citizens' freedom of expression and prevents the civil society and journalists from doing their work with liberty, hold leaders accountable and put democratic systems on track. Madam Samba Sesay drew an analogy between democracy and freedom of speech, expression and choice and stressed their inextricable relationship. "We cannot like democracy and hate freedom of expression," she noted, maintaining that any system that silence democracy is impinging on human rights. She called on all and sundry to support the legal framework that promotes free speech. Democracy without right to information, she said, is meaningless.

By her estimation, rights should go with responsibilities and that the rights of individuals need to be protected. She called for more public education regarding the RAI law; the building of the capacity of those requesting information and that of the Public Information Officer whose role is distinct from a Public Relations Officer, and the need for public institutions to have the tenacity to proactively disclose information.



Members of the panel discussion

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... Statistics SL Receives Gold for PDI --

In his delivery, Journalist and lecturer at FBC,, Dr. Isaac Massaquoi said that democracy thrives on free media. Human rights issues he said, are best addressed when the democratic institutions are functional. He noted that the media is one critical platform on which issues, affecting the rights of the common man are addressed citing cases of illegal detentions and justice delay. He



RAIC Staff at the awards

was however concerned about the continuous erosion of the media by journalists as a result of financial dependency. The current phenomenon in the field of practice the media expert said, is attack collect and defend collect instead of addressing the very issues than govern the profession. This he went on creates a vacuum in the media. In Sierra Leone he said, a media driven by specialization is hard to come by. In his view, there is no clearly specialized reporting; this he said is one of the reasons why local newspapers in Sierra Leone are hardly taken abroad for consumption. Dr. Massaquoi furthered that the fundamental role of journalists is to protect the rights of the people but believed even the few journalists that know about the RAI Act know little about some critical provisions therein especially the exemption provisions. He called for more effort in the popularization of the RAI law as people can only understand and stand for their rights if they know the relevant laws.



Augustine Sheku presenting trophy to the SL Police



Ransford Kabia and Dr. Emmanuel Gaima

Chief Executive Officer of Campaign for Human Rights and Development International (CHRD), Abdul Fatoma built his message around the functionality of state institutions in Sierra Leone. He said the institutions the country relies on to promote issues of human rights are under resourced. He was concerned that since the enactment of the RAI law a lot of institutions are struggling to create websites, libraries and other infrastructures that will create the enabling environment for research. He called for the setting up of proper safeguards for public institutions and the building of the capacities of these institutions on ATI and protected data. As he put it, there should be data protection on internal security, foreign trade and diplomacy. He maintained that in the interest of national security, not all information is freely accessible. Turning his discourse on human rights he said human rights should not be seen as a privilege but certain laws of the country such as the 1965 Public Order limit the rights of individuals. His standpoint was that if state institutions are properly resourced and allowed to function in line with the acts that created them, an information society is possible and the bulk of the population will definitely understand their human rights.

The Master of Ceremony of the Awards Night was David Patrick Kamara, PIO of RAIC. The Vote of Thanks was delivered by Hon. Mustapha Brima, Executive Secretary of RAIC.



Promoting Open Governance  
for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development  
Through Transparency and Accountability



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# RAIC BOSS SPEAKS ON DATA PROTECTION

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE RAIC CHAIRMAN INFORMATION COMMISSIONER, DR. IBRAHIM SEAGA SHAW ON THE DATA PROTECTION POLICY / LAW AT STAKEHOLDERS MEETING HELD AT THE NATIONAL CIVIL REGISTRATION AUTHORITY ON 8TH OCTOBER, 2019

Mr. Director General of the National Civil Registration Authority, representatives of relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and development partners, all protocols observed, let me use this occasion to thank all those that came up with the brilliant idea to put together a dedicated instrument that will guide the protection of data in the country. Let me also extend my profound appreciation to the Law Officers Department in this regard.

The importance of any data protection law is to control how sensitive information is used by organizations, businesses or the government. Everyone responsible for sensitive data has to follow strict rules called 'data protection principles. Data should be used lawfully, transparently and fairly for specified purposes. It should be handled in a way that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unlawful processing, access, loss, damage. If there is no stronger legal protection for more sensitive information such as national security and defense, economic interest, investigations and law enforcement, biometrics, health, etc, the data will surely fall in the hands of the wrong people, and there is recipe for havoc.

This meeting today is very crucial for the future of Sierra Leone insofar as access to information and data protection is concerned because if the right consultations and engagements are not made we would end up enacting a law that would seriously conflict with an existing law. At the end of the day we would go back to the drawing board and begin things all over again. While access to information thrives on democracy and open government, data protection is predicated on protecting individual personal information, privacy, information that would threaten, or undermine national security and national commercial interest, among others. Access to information is primarily a means of increasing transparency in official decision-making and procedures, and enabling citizens to hold government to account. Although the underlying aim of the Act is greater transparency in government, there is clearly a range of information which should not be released because of the adverse consequences of doing so.

The 2013 Right to Access Information Act legally empowers citizens to demand information from any public or private authority if that information is required for the protection, or enforcement, of any right. The same Access to Information law makes provision for data protection. In section 12, the Act exempts information to be requested in the interest of national security and defense, economic interest, investigation, law enforcement, audit, etc. The Act in section 12 again provides that information shall not be exempt where the public interest in accessing the information outweighs the harm which the exemption seeks to protect. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights makes provision for promotion of access to information and protection of data. These two regulatory functions cannot be efficiently handled by two separate bodies without a room for endless conflicts hence they are implemented by a single body in many international jurisdictions. It is because of the provisions of the older act we should look critically and understand exactly the path we should tread as a nation. The



Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw

RAIC law is struggling to come to terms today with older laws because of the mistakes of the past. A repetition of the same mistakes would bring us aback and question our credibility in the global realm.

In the UK and South Africa, both access to information and data protection laws are implemented under one body to prevent conflict of interest. In Mexico, there is a body responsible for Transparency, Access to Information and the Protection of Personal Data. In my capacity as Chairman/ Information Commissioner of RAIC, I met with representatives of such bodies at the recent International Conference of Information Commissioners in Johannesburg and the UN's High Level Political Forum (HLPF) meeting on SDG 16.10 organized by UNESCO. Data Protection falls within the remit of RAIC according to best practice.

The Commission has adopted a multi-sectoral approach in establishing an Open Data Council in a bid to strengthen national institutional coordination around open data. It has also gone ahead to establish three committees namely: the Ministerial Committee, National Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee. Five Key ministers sit at the Ministerial Committee level with the Minister of Information and Communications sitting as Chairman while the RAIC chairs the Open Data Council. Also in trying to create an enabling environment in the implementation of the RAI law, the Commission in its Strategic Plan prioritized Access to Information and Data protection. I would like to close by suggesting an adoption of a similar multi-sectoral approach in establishing a Data Protection Council in a bid to strengthen national institutional coordination around data protection

I thank you all and look forward to an effective and sustainable collaboration.

# RAIC and Stakeholders Validate Regulations.



Emmanuel Saffa Abdulai- Lead Facilitator

Stakeholders in the Information, Communications and records Management sector on Tuesday 29 October converged at the Bintumani Hotel, Aberdeen in Freetown to validate regulations of the Right to Access Information Act of 2013. The bill which was passed into law after sustained advocacy from the civil Society organizations, the Media and other interest groups, has never had a regulation to give force to the implementation of the Act.

Welcoming participants, the chairman of the Right to Access Information Commission RAIC, Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw described the validation exercise as an opportunity for the public to look at vague and ambiguous expressions and even excesses in the regulation to make it a proper and universally accepted document that will be later laid before parliament by the Minister of Information and Communications for enactment. Dr. Shaw said the commission is faced with a challenge of implementing the RAI Act for the simple reason that there is no regulation which is why this is a major step in making the Commission more robust. He concluded that the validation will be followed by the training of Access to Information (ATI) officers in the coming weeks.



Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw (centre) Mrs Mary Ksarimu & Hon Mustapha Braima

Representing the Minister of Information and Communications, the National Cyber Security Advisor in the Ministry of Information and Communications, Ing. Gabriel N'doinje, said there could be no better time for the validation of the RAI Act than now, when the President, Retired Brigadier Jullius Maada Bio has laid emphasis on the digital transformation which will not be possible without access to information. Ing. N'doinje encouraged the RAIC to remain steadfast in its strides, assuring them that the Ministry of Information and Communications is backing the commission in its quest to experience a new era in the access to information transformation in Sierra Leone; leaving the participants with the question, 'What Do We Do?' as a watchword as they all validate the RAI Regulation.

Lead facilitator, Lawyer Emmanuel Saffa Abdulai, who doubles as the Executive Director of the Society for Democratic Initiative (SDI) reflected on how civil society fought for the passing into law of the Freedom of Information (FOI) bill which subsequently saw the formation of the Right to Access Information Commission. As a pioneer of the FOI law, Lawyer Saffa Abdulai said he feels elated that a regulation is been validated despite the challenges the commission has faced in the past, urging the commission that the road is still long but it is in the right path.

RAIC eastern region Commissioner with special responsibility on Records Management, Mary Wuyatta Karimu said Records Management is an important factor in the promotion of information Rights as the lack of proper records management and infrastructure hinders the full implementation of the RAI Act, a reason why the validation should be taken seriously moving forward.

Executive Secretary of RAIC Hon. Mustapha Braima who chaired the ceremony urged all to make meaningful contributions for a law that will be used by all and sundry and that is key to the promotion of the transparency, accountability and good governance.

Participants raised concerns on sections that speak to the eligibility that who should make a request should not be limited to only Sierra Leone but also non-sierra Leoneans. They also suggested that addresses of the RAIC headquarters and regional offices should not be included in the regulation but rather the website address since the commission is living in a rented property, in matters of life, death and liberty of an individual, no fees should be charged are among key areas that were looked at during the validation process.

The interactive validation exercise was co-facilitated by the Lawyer Emmanuel Saffa Abdulai, Executive director of the Society for Democratic Initiative SDI, Yeama Thompson, Commissioner West-RAIC and Lawyer Alan Benjamin, Legal Counsel-RAIC.

RAIC MEDIA TEAM



# RAIC Western Region Opens Data Center to the Public



Dr Shaw & Western Area commissioner Ms Thompson(Centre) and some participants at the open data launch event

The Right to Access Information Commission RAIC, western region, on Thursday 12th December 2019 unveiled its new data resource center at the Commission's headquarters on 46 Kroo Town road, Freetown.

Declaring the center open on behalf of the Minister of Information and Communications, Acting Director of Information in the Ministry of Information and Communications, Emmanuel Turay, stressed the need for the data resource center. Mr. Turay said data enhances performance and improve efficiency in public service, help to improve social welfare and enhance economic growth in the private sector which is why he urged the public to make use of the facility as a justification for the funds that have been invested in it. He pledges the ministry of information's unflinching support to the work of the RAIC.

Making a statement at the launch of the facility, the Chairman and Information Commissioner Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw described the ceremony a dream come true as the commission has been working very hard to ensure that it has the western area data center up and running but had challenges with logistics and space. He said the commission's new bigger and more centrally located office at Krootown road has enough room to provide a whole flat for the Western Region office which houses the open data centre. He explained that the purpose for creating a data resource center is to help members of the public access information that has been proactively disclosed by public authorities, as the center promotes the supply of data and eventually facilitate access to information. He said this is one way of promoting transparency and accountability. "The People should be given access to the information they need to be able to ask the necessary questions and hold public officials accountable" he said. He noted that "if we have information and the people do not have access to it, then that information is useless." The chairman and information commissioner informed all that a replica

of this center is also available in the other regional offices across the country.

Western Area commissioner Yeama Sarah Thompson, who also chaired the launching, said the data center is open to every individual who wishes to have access to information. She said visitors will be allowed to use the computers for an hour, to ensure that others have access to the facility. Commissioner yeama lauded the World Bank that has always supported the work of the commission and hopes that the facility will be thoughtfully used to prompt interventions in other areas of need.

Data Scientist, Statistics Sierra Leone, Clementina Akan, stated that the global open data is a sign of maturity in the field of information sharing, and Sierra Leone cannot be left out. She explained that where data is made available, organizations and individuals could spend time to collaborate with each other, and make progress. Data, she added, will help to support evidence-based decision and planning in the country. Clementina promised that Statistic Sierra Leone, which won the gold trophy at the RAIC Compliance Awards two days ago, promised they will continue to provide the public with all the credible data available to meet their demand.

Amos Lansana, Head of Open Data, PFMICP, said data is now the new gold everybody can mine. Mr. Lansana said the data center will reduce cost on individuals because they would not have to pay now to access data at the RAIC center like before when people have to go to internet cafés to access essential data. He disclosed that they have developed an electronic procurement for the National Public Procurement Authority (NPPA), so that everyone can access data everywhere. Mr. Lansana did not rule out the possibility for expansion of the facility in the near future.

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# Sierra Leone Co-sponsors UN Resolution on IDUAI

Sierra Leone was among six main co-sponsors of UN Resolution proclaiming 28 September as the International Day for the Universal Access to Information (IDUAI). The resolution (published in full below) was swiftly adopted by consensus on Tuesday October 15 2019 following introductory remarks delivered by the Ambassador of Liberia to the UN, who led the proposal and negotiations for the resolution.

The other five main co-sponsors that presented the resolution to the UN General Assembly for adoption were Liberia, Argentina, Canada, Costa Rica, and Ukraine. The 23 other countries that joined the co-sponsorship of the resolution were Armenia, Benin, Central African Republic, Colombia, Comoros, Cote D'Ivoire, Cuba, Eswatini, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Ireland, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Paraguay, Philippines, Senegal, Serbia, Tunisia, Uganda, and Uruguay

This is what Professor Guy Berger, Director of Freedom of Expression and Media Development at UNESCO had to say in an email to the RAIC Chairman and Information Commissioner, Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw immediately following the adoption of the resolution: 'So, congratulations to you and Sierra Leone for your super roles here. I hope it helps with local awareness-raising and advocacy in your country'.

The RAIC Chairman and Information Commissioner presented a very strong case why Sierra Leone should be one of the main co-sponsors of this resolution at a UNESCO-sponsored side event of the High Level Political Forum meeting of the UN organized by the Ugandan-based Africa Freedom of Information Network held at the Uganda UN House in New York on July 16 2019 to mobilize support for the resolution. In an email to the Deputy Ambassador for political Affairs at the Sierra Leone UN mission, HE Victoria Sulimani, the RAIC Chairman and Information Commissioner, Dr Shaw outlined the following reasons why Sierra Leone should be one of the main co-sponsors of the IDUAI UN resolution:

1. Sierra Leone was among the first five countries in the whole of Africa to adopt the Right to Access Information law following its adoption in 2013.
2. The RAI law in Sierra Leone has been rated world wide as the most robust Act in Africa and the fourth most robust in the world.



Dr. Shaw shaking hands with the Deputy Ambassador to the UN

3. Sierra Leone was in 2018 one of the 12 countries in Africa to have set up an oversight body (The Right to Access Information Commission was set up in Sierra Leone in 2014) to promote, facilitate, and enforce compliance of all public authorities with the right to access information.
4. Sierra Leone is among very few countries in Africa and the world to be leading the way in both the popularisation of the RAI law and promoting the Proactive Disclosure of Information
5. Sierra Leone is among the very few African Countries in the World that is leading the way in setting up the technical and cultural infrastructures of open data for example the Open Data Portal, a Multi-Stakeholder Open Data Council, the data dashboards, and the Open Data Collaboratives.
6. The Information Commissioner in Sierra Leone is the only Information Commissioner in West Africa who sits on the Executive Committee of the International Conference of Information Commissioners.

Deputy Ambassador Sulimani and other staff of the Sierra Leone UN mission used these justifications to push for Sierra Leone to be one of the main six co-sponsors of the IDUAI UN resolution.

## ... RAIC Western Region Opens Data Center to the Public

Acting head of Non State Actors Sallieu .... welcomed the idea of having a data center that is open to the public from Mondays through Fridays stressing the need for thorough research needs to be done by NSAs before they can challenge the government on policies they wished to introduce or implement. He said NSAs have sometimes failed to take on government not because they are afraid, but because they lack the research tools. He therefore called on his colleagues present to use the facility and contribute to national development.

The RAIC Western region Open Data center located at 46 Krootown Road is open to the public Monday to Friday for 9 :00 am to 5:00pm.

The launch of the Western region open data centre coincided with public sensitization activities involving NSAs carried out by the other regional Open Data Centres in the Eastern, Northern, and Southern provincial headquarter cities of Kenema, Makeni and Bo, respectively. Funding for the operations of these regional Open Data Centres is provided by the World Bank.

# Osiwa Commends RAIC for being on Track



RAIC National staff and Consultant facilitators

The country Director of The Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) has pledged his institution's continued support to the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC). Joe Pemagbi was speaking at the closing ceremony of a three-day national residential retreat between 14-16 November 2019 for staff of the RAIC at Dohas Hotel, Bo city, Southern Sierra Leone.

The retreat, which was funded by OSIWA, provided an opportunity for the commission to look at itself; successes, challenges, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and discuss a way forward as the year comes to an end, and to review its scope of work to ensure alignment between the aspirations of the commissioners and professional/administrative staff and the ini institutional mandate of the commission in implementing the RAI 2013 Law .

Mr. Pemagbi said OSIWA is pleased the commission is getting stronger and proper, and that things are moving on track. He said he appreciates the energy of the participants and urged the commission to try hard and earn the trust of people, who will only come to them when they have confidence in what they do.

Speaking on the components and critical issues around the operations of RAIC, The chairman and Information Commissioner, RAIC, Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, said the clear mandate of the commission is to facilitate access to information noting that information is power and the commission has therefore made significant efforts to ensure that realization. Dr. Shaw cited the relocation of the National Secretariat from Hill Station to Kroo Town Road in the central Business District in Freetown which is much bigger and cheaper thus saving government an extra \$10,000 (Ten Thousand Dollars) every year as among the gains the commission has made. He added the first ever internal audit and management and functional review of the has been conducted and the recommendations are captured in the draft strategic plan which he presented at the retreat.

The chairman recounted the lack of a website for the commission before he took up office, which his administration made a priority to fix and he's now happy to report that the commission website is up and running.(www.raic.gov.sl). Dr Shaw cited limited staff capacity in both scope and depth among the most pressing challenges that need to be urgently addressed to enable the commission to fully and efficiently implement its mandate.

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## ... Osiwa Commends RAIC for being on Track

The Commissioner for the Southern region, Idriss Yormah Biah, who played host to the retreat, welcomed all participants and encouraged them to take it seriously so that they would have a lot to take back and put into good use in their work. Executive Secretary of RAIC, Hon. Mustapha Braima said it is an opportunity for a self-reflection and thorough scrutiny of its activities and proffer lasting solutions moving forward. He urged the commission staff to make good use of the opportunity the retreat offers to ensure the full mandate of the commission is implemented afterwards.

Regional commissioners of the North, South and East also gave reports of activities in their areas of jurisdiction with all of them citing understaffing as a very serious challenge that needs to be addressed urgently.

Lead Consultant Facilitator, Dr. Emmanuel Gaima, who is Governance Adviser in the Office of the President, and his team comprising of Sonia Umu Karim, Director of Performance Management Unit in the Office of the Chief Minister and official of the Cabinet Secretariat in the Office of the Vice President, took the commission's staff through sensitive topics such as the importance of a strategic plan, strategic pillars, operationalising the strategic plan, Measurement and Evaluation, Resource Mobilization Strategy to name a few, which they said are key to the running of a successful commission.

Dr. Gaima encouraged the leadership of the commission to have a strategic plan that is tied to their mandate and ensure that the mandate, vision and mission of the commission are reviewed. Several exercises on internal

operations and external support needed for effective service delivery, as well as SWOT(strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the commission were done.

Other facilitators include Patrick Kawa of Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) who took the staff through the clarity of Roles and Reporting lines, Distinctions between Political Appointees and the technical staff, stressing the need for a clear understanding of the task and responsibilities and processes at work. Mr. Kawa said the absence of roles leads to confusion and the limited accountability and commitments, lack of confidence and the procrastination of assignments. He admonished the leadership of the commission to ensure all staff roles are clearly stated in their TORs, a concern that was also captured by the management and Functional review done by the Public Sector Review Unit PSRU, of which M. Sillah from PSRU emphasised during his presentation.

Lawyer Emmanuel Saffa Abdulai, took the staff of the commission on the provisions of the Act and how the commission can ensure its full implementation. The interactive session covered areas as who should access information, the exemptions and penalties for defaulters.

Staff of the commission thanked the commission and OSIWA for such a laudable venture which they believe yield dividend. They also recommend that we have such gatherings more frequently to aid proper understanding of the commission's mandate and staff roles, and promote staff bonding.

RAIC MEDIA TEAM, Credit: RAIC media team



RAIC Commissioners, ES, Facilitators and OSIWA SL Boss

# Presentation of Draft Resolution on “Proclamation of September 28 as International Day for Universal Access to Information”

By H.E Ambassador Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sr. Permanent Representative of the Republic Of Liberia to the United Nations - Tuesday, October 15, 2019



H.E Ambassador Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah

## Mr. President,

We reiterate our congratulations to you for your election as President of the United Nations General Assembly.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

It is my great privilege to introduce to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), on behalf of the main sponsors and co-sponsors, the draft resolution; A/74/L.1: “Proclamation of September 28 as International Day for Universal Access to Information”.

Access to information is very essential for the democratic functioning of a society--shaping our political, social and economic perspectives; and vital for the sustainable development of countries.

Recognized by the new United Nations development framework-- the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

under Goal 16.10.2; access to information serves as an enabler of all other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); whether it is ending poverty in all of its forms; everywhere; ensuring healthy lives and well-being; ensuring equitable education, gender equality and women empowerment; youth empowerment; promoting peaceful and inclusive societies; or reducing inequalities; within and among countries. None of these Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be achieved without access to information. The progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cannot be measured without access to information.

Liberia, as a country that has experienced conflict and major public health crisis such as the Ebola pandemic, appreciates the value of access to information; in combating problems of this scale, and knows firsthand what the lack of information can mean for a society-- the difference between life and death.

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## ... Presentation of Draft Resolution

The draft resolution we are submitting today, draws on Resolution 38 C/70, adopted unanimously by the Member States of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its General Conference in Paris, France in 2015, proclaiming September 28 as International Day for Universal Access to Information. Since the adoption of the UNESCO Resolution, several countries and civil society organizations celebrate the day annually, raising awareness on the importance of access to information.

The adoption today of this resolution A/74/L.1: “Proclamation of September 28 as International Day for Universal Access to Information” by the United Nations General Assembly will create the biggest global platform for Governments, civil society organizations, citizens and development partners to reflect on the importance of access to information; identify challenges and design new and innovative ways to promote the advancement of access to information; as a tangible tool for development and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### Mr. President,

The resolution we humbly present today, is the result of the dedicated work of many Member States-- small and large, from different regions of the world. Such broad and diverse ownership demonstrates the truly global nature of this resolution on access to information.

The adoption by consensus of this draft resolution A/74/L.1: “Proclamation of September 28 as International Day for Universal Access to Information” by the United Nations General Assembly Today, Tuesday, October 15, 2019; will send a clear and important message globally that we are committed to enhancing access to information; and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

We reaffirm the unflinching practical commitment of His Excellency Dr. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, and the Government of Liberia to promoting access to information, advancing press freedom, freedom of expression; and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We commend the delegations of Sierra Leone and Costa Rica, and the many co-sponsors; for their unwavering support to our Leadership on this note worthy endeavor; and more importantly, for joining us for this initiative; and appeal to those Member States of the United Nations who have not yet, to kindly do so; and support this resolution.

We also thank the many countries from different regions, and international partners and civil society organizations; including, but not limited to UNESCO, and the African Platform for Access to Information (APAI), the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) and all other media institutions around the world who have championed initiatives promoting access to information over the years.

The action we take today will reaffirm our collective resolve as the World Body--the United Nations, to work together to enhance access to information; and promote democracy and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Together; we must prioritize enhancing access to information; as a pivotal and tangible tool to ensuring the achievement; and assessing progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

I thank you.

**RAIC: Promoting Open Governance for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development through Transparency and Accountability. We work with local, national, and international Partners to achieve this Goal.**



# RAIC Accredited as Member of ICIC

The Right to Access Information Commission in Sierra Leone has received full accreditation as a member of the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC), a global network of Information Commissioners. This was confirmed in a letter from the ICIC Secretariat dated 19th November 2019 addressed to the RAIC Chairman and Information Commissioner, Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw.

The letter said: 'We are pleased to inform you that the ICIC Governance Working Group has concluded that the Right to Access Information Commission, Sierra Leone, meets all the eligibility criteria under the ICIC Charter and as such is successfully accredited as a new ICIC member.'

Accreditation with Observation was initially given to the RAIC in a letter from the ICIC secretariat dated 24th September 2019 and addressed to the RAIC Chairman and Information Commissioner and was asked to provide response to the observation by the 8th October 2019 before full accreditation would be granted. The Observation was that the RAIC should provide clarification on: - 'the circumstances and specific conditions under which the Heads of the authority can be dismissed. With this question, the GWG would like to ensure that the grounds for removal are transparent and subject to strictly defined conditions (to prevent the arbitrary removal of the heads).'

In its response to this Observation in a letter addressed to the ICIC Secretariat and dated 4th October, the RAIC wrote:

'Sections 31 (2) and (4) of The Right to Access Information Act 2013 which state that Members of the Commission shall be appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Minister and approved by Parliament and further that the Chairman and information Commissioner and the other members of the Commission shall hold office for a term of five years and shall be eligible for re-appointment to a further term of five years only.

The Act does not have provisions for the removal of a Commissioner thus the Head and regional members of the Commission shall have a minimum of 5 years in office and a maximum of 10 years if re-appointed.



Notwithstanding the above, as per labour law a Commissioner shall be removed from office if found guilty of a criminal offence by a competent court or it is proved that at the time of appointment the person was ineligible pursuant to Section 31 (3) (a) & (b) of The Right to Access Information Act 2013 which states that No person shall be appointed as a member of the Commission if that person is an employee of a political party or holds an elected or appointed position in central or local government; or has been convicted of an offence involving fraud or dishonesty.'

Following this response, the ICIC Governance Working Group, acting as the Executive Committee, met on November 1 and decided to give the RAIC full accreditation as member of the ICIC.

For more information about ICIC please visit its web site: <https://www.informationcommissioners.org/>



The UK Information Commissioner, Elizabeth Denham, and the Working Group

# RAIC Engages Non-State Actors on Regional Data Centers



The Regional Offices of the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) concurrently engaged Non-State Actors (NSAs) and other public bodies in Mid-December 2019 to brief them about the tremendous effort made by the Commission in creating the enabling environment for public access to information in the regions. This development was in connection with the establishment of data resource centers by the Commission in the four regional offices with support from the World Bank through the Public Financial Management Improvement Consolidation Project (PFMICP). The regional data resource centers were furnished with reading materials, computers and internet facilities.

The main objective of the Regional Data Resource Centers, according to the Chairman and Information Commissioner of the RAIC, Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, is to broaden public awareness of the mandate of the Commission and to help members of the public in those parts of the country access information that has been proactively disclosed by public authorities.

In one of such engagements held at the, the Eastern Regional Office of RAIC at 22 Turay street in Kenema City on Thursday December 5 2019, Eastern Regional Commissioner Mary Wuyatta Karimu briefed NSAs about the creation of the data resource center, its availability to the public at no cost and its importance in increasing public knowledge about the operations of state institutions. The message hammered by the Regional Commissioner East was transparency and accountability in public management as the main reason for the creation of the regional data center. The public engagement event, which was chaired by the Eastern Regional Coordinator of the Non State Actors, Mr. Lansana Koroma, attracted forty five NSAs representing a diverse range of civil society organizations in the eastern region.

To ensure the full realization of the Northern Regional Data Resource Centre located in the RAIC Northern Regional Office on Magbanta Road in Makeni City, Regional Commissioner North, Abubakarr Kargbo led the development of a plan that targeted a host of organizations including the Anti-Corruption Commission, NaCSA, SLAJ, Bombali District Council and Civil society organisations.

These groups were primarily sensitized about the data centre at a special public engagement with NSAs event held on December 11 2019 at the Northern Regional office in Makeni City to inturn complement the effort of the Commission in increasing public knowledge about the center in the other parts of the North and North West Region. The mandate of the Commission and the objective of the resource center were fundamental to this public engagement with NSAs organized by the RAIC Northern Regional Office.

The RAIC Southern Regional Office headed by Commissioner Yormah Biah Idriss also received in audience different government bodies and NSAs at a special public engagement event on December 11 2019 held at the Southern Regional Office in Bo City and brought out to them the reason for the creation of this Regional Data Resource Center. The key message delivered by the Southern Regional Commissioner in the regional office's engagements with these organizations was the need for people to have unfettered access to information so as to broaden their horizon on the operations of their leaders and elected representatives. To him, the regional data center is a source of human empowerment which is a critical hallmark of good governance.

The Western Regional Data Resource Centre on the other hand was inaugurated in the final quarter of 2019. Its inaugural ceremony attracted state institutions, civil society organizations, the media, representative from the World Bank, local and development partners. Dr. Ibrahim Seaga

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## ... RAIC Engages Non-State Actors

Shaw described the ceremony a dream come true as the Commission has been working very hard to ensure that it has the western area data center up and running but had challenges with logistics and space. Western Regional Commissioner, Yeama Sarah Thompson threw insights on the importance of the center, its cardinal objective and available resources. What came out clearly was the role of the data center to enhance performance and improve efficiency in public service and making governments more open, accountable and responsive to citizens.



Cross section of participants in the NSA public engagement event

In his general summation, the RAIC Chairman and Information Commissioner informed that given the current size of the Western Resources center, the Commission is considering in future the relocation of the center to a more spacious place to meet the growing demand

in respect of its utilization; adding, more efforts will be made to expand and sophisticate the other data centers in the provinces for broader public utilization.



Heads of NSAs who attended the public engagement event in Kenema with RAIC

### RAIC National and Regional Offices & Data Centres Locations:

**National Secretariat:**

46 Kroo Town Road, Freetown,  
Tel: +23279-101314 / 030359669 / 030-319948  
Email: [accessinfo@raic.gov.sl](mailto:accessinfo@raic.gov.sl);  
[ibrahim.shaw@raic.gov.sl](mailto:ibrahim.shaw@raic.gov.sl);  
[mustapha.braima@raic.gov.sl](mailto:mustapha.braima@raic.gov.sl)

**Eastern Region:**

22 Turay Street,  
Kenema City,  
Kenema District  
Tel: +232-77680662 / 099-673360  
Email: [marywuyatta.karimu@raic.gov.sl](mailto:marywuyatta.karimu@raic.gov.sl)

**Northern Region:**

31, Mabanta Road,  
Makeni City,  
Bombali District  
Tel: +232-76787903  
Email: [abubakarr.kargbo@raic.gov.sl](mailto:abubakarr.kargbo@raic.gov.sl)

**Southern Region:**

188 New Gerihun Road,  
Bo City,  
Bo District  
Mobile Tel: +  
Email: [idriss.biah@raic.gov.sl](mailto:idriss.biah@raic.gov.sl)

**Western Region:**

46 Kroo Town Road,  
Freetown,  
Western Area Urban  
Tel: +232379107752  
Email: [yeama.thompson@raic.gov.sl](mailto:yeama.thompson@raic.gov.sl)

Web Site:

<http://www.Raic.gov.sl>

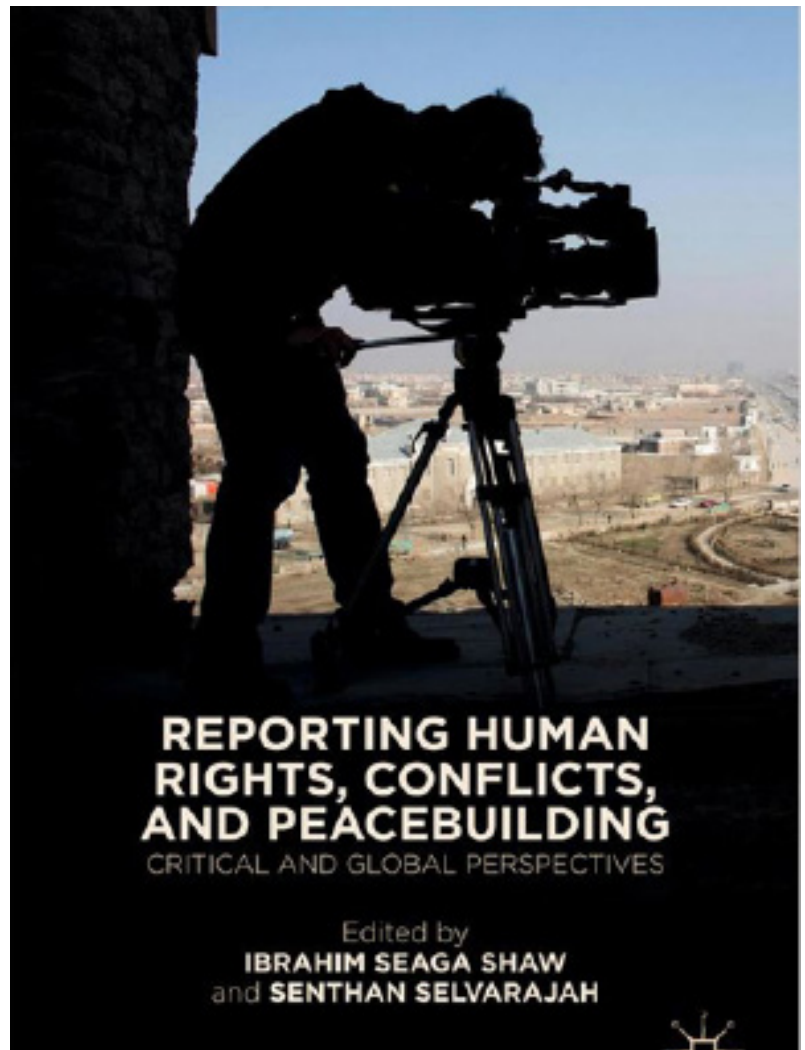
# RAIC Boss to launch new book on human rights & peacebuilding

A book launch of “Reporting Human Rights, Conflicts, and Peacebuilding: Critical and Global Perspectives” published by Palgrave Macmillan and co-authored by the chairman and Information Commissioner of the Right to Access Information, Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw and Dr Senthana Selvarajah, co-director of the UK-based Centre for Media, Human Rights and Peacebuilding will be held on Friday January 17th 2020 at 9:30 am at the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists Headquarters, Campbell street, in Freetown

Co-author Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw and Hon Justice Dr Abou Binneh Kamara, will speak at the launch to be followed by Q and A s from participants. Presentations of copies of the book to SLAJ, national and FBC libraries will also take place

This book focuses on the reporting of human rights in broadly defined times of conflict. It brings together scholarly and professional perspectives on the role of the media in constructing human rights and peacebuilding options in conflict and post-conflict environments, drawing on case studies from Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia. It also provides critical reflections on the challenges faced by journalists and explores the implications of constructing human rights and peacebuilding options in their day-to-day professional activities. The chapters embrace a variety of theoretical, empirical and methodological approaches and will benefit students, scholars, information officers and media professionals. In his foreword to the book Professor Steven Youngblood wrote “For those who study and teach media and peacebuilding, “Reporting Human Rights, Conflicts, and Peacebuilding: Critical and Global Perspectives” is like a package under the tree at Christmas. And it’s not a package with underwear and socks, but is instead the shiny toy that you’ve been impatiently seeking for many years”.

The contributors to this volume are among the leading voices in the field of media, conflicts and human rights. Some of them, including the editors themselves, also have media



industry experience. This book consists of four parts, each with four chapters, except Part 3:

1. Media, Conflicts, and Humanitarian Interventions
2. Mediating Human Rights, Democracy and Terrorism
3. Human Rights Reporting: Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding
4. Breaking the Challenges and Reporting Human Rights during Conflicts in the Digital Age.

For more info visit the book’s web link:

<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030107185>

For more RAIC NEWS visit:  
[www.Raic.gov.sl](http://www.Raic.gov.sl)



# General Assembly

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Agenda item 14

**Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields**

**Argentina, Canada, Costa Rica, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ukraine:  
draft resolution**

## **Proclamation of 28 September as the International Day for Universal Access to Information**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* that the right to seek, receive and impart information is an integral part of the right to freedom of expression, as defined in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>1</sup> and article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,<sup>2</sup>

*Reaffirming* the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

*Recalling* resolution 57 adopted on 17 November 2015 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its thirty-eighth session,<sup>3</sup>

*Stressing* that freedom of information is also central in the context of the World Summit on the Information Society, which reaffirmed freedom of expression and universal access to information as cornerstones of inclusive knowledge societies,

*Stressing* also the importance of full respect for the freedom of opinion and expression, including the right to seek, receive and impart information, and the fundamental importance of access to information and ideas through any media, and democratic participation,

Noting that in the declaration by the African Platform on Access to Information, adopted at the Pan-African Conference on Access to Information, organized by the Windhoek+20 Campaign on Access to Information in Africa in partnership with the

<sup>1</sup> Resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>2</sup> See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

<sup>3</sup> See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-eighth Session, Paris, 3–18 November 2015, vol. 1, Resolutions, sect. IV.*



A/74/L.1
 

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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the African Union Commission and the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa of the African Commission on Human Peoples' Rights in Cape Town, South Africa, from 17 to 19 September 2011, the right to information was recognized as a human right and also as fundamental to development,

*Recalling* article 6 of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution [53/144](#) of 9 December 1998,

*Bearing in mind* the efforts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to highlight the relevance and importance of the right to information in the Brisbane Declaration, adopted at the International Conference on Freedom of Information: the Right to Know, held in May 2010,

*Reaffirming* the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, and the commitments made therein to, inter alia, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, including by ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements,

*Considering* that several civil society organizations and government bodies in the world have adopted and currently celebrate 28 September as the International Day for Universal Access to Information,

*Taking note* of the principles established in the declaration by the African Platform on Access to Information, and recognizing that these principles can play a crucial role in development, democracy, equality and the delivery of public services,

1. *Proclaims* 28 September as the International Day for Universal Access to Information;
  2. *Invites* all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, including non-governmental organizations and individuals, to celebrate the International Day in a manner that each considers most appropriate, with the cost to be met exclusively from voluntary contributions.
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## RAIC Chairman's Foreword to Training Manual

### FOREWORD

Freedom of information is now a global phenomenon. It is a prerequisite for ensuring the voice and participation necessary for a democratic society. Right to access information held by public authorities is a fundamental right consistent with Target 16.10 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which calls for ensuring public access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements including Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Over 100 countries the world over have made tremendous efforts to turn the right to access information into law for their citizens.

This trend has opened up thousands of public bodies to considerable scrutiny and prompted further moves to transparency and accountability. The enactment of the right to access information Act (RAI ACT) in Sierra Leone in 2013 which in fact created the Right to Access Information Commission was a very important step towards democratic governance, transparency, accountability and the rule of law.

However, wherever right to access information is introduced, its success depends on the way it is implemented. In organizations worldwide, right of access to information only works because of the commitment of those who oversee its operation on a day-to-day basis. In spite of the fact that Sierra Leone has one of the most robust RAI laws in the world, the drafters of the law were aware of the challenges at the implementation stage. This explains why the RAI Act calls for the appointment and training of public information officers for better understanding and implementation of its diverse provisions.

This manual is intended as a reference tool to foster the competency, creativity and effectiveness of Public Information Officers in records management and information request handling; managing confidential and sensitive information; and the basic tenet of information right access. It is a comprehensive document designed to help public authorities interpret and administer the RAI Act and RAI regulation to meet the requirements of related policy instruments. It also supports the commitment of the RAIC to improve the administration and implementation of the act. It is an essential reading material for public officials, Civil Society, journalists, as well as local and development partners.

The creation of the manual is a significant milestone to the existence of the FOI law in Sierra Leone as it does not only establish the basis for better implementation and performance at the highest level of government but also a practical guide which takes the reader on a journey through the intricacies of dealing with Freedom of information law and other access to information regimes.

Let me take the opportunity to thank the consultant and all those who contributed in putting together this document for the benefit of all.

Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw  
 Chairman/Information Commissioner  
 Right to Access Information Commission, SL



# Model Proactive Publication Scheme Sierra Leone

## Right to Access Information Act 2013

A model publication scheme should be drafted and prepared for submission for approval by the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) (The Commission), which came into existence via the Right to Access Information Act (RAIA), 2013 (The Act).

Being an Act, which provides for in Part 1 section 2:

- (1) *Every person has the right to access information held by or is under the control of a public authority.*
- (2) *Every person has the right to access information held by or is under the control of a private body where that information is necessary for the enforcement or protection of any right.*
- (3) *Nothing in this Act limits or otherwise restricts the disclosure of or the right to access, information pursuant to any other enactment, policy or practice.*

And the proactive disclosure clause in the RAIA 2013 can be defined as shown below:

**“Being an Act to provide for the disclosure of information held by public authorities or by persons providing services for them and to provide for other related matters.”**

It is expected that all public authorities will adopt the model without modification unless further approval is given by The Commission. The Act specifically defines who or what is a public authority.

- (a) *Established by or under the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991;*
- (b) *Established by statute;*
- (c) *Which forms part of any level or branch of Government;*
- (d) *Owned, controlled or substantially financed by funds provided by Government;*
- (e) *Carrying out a statutory or public function; or*
- (f) *A body or organisation that receives monies on behalf of the people of Sierra Leone.*

With regard to proactive publication, The Act identifies certain types or classes of information that form the core obligations for every public authority. This model publication scheme attempts to bind an authority to make certain information available to the public as a norm, and on a routine basis before it is even requested.

Below, you will find the information covered as part of the mandated classes of information, where this information is held by a given public authority. Additional assistance will be provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Commission in due time.

### **This model publication scheme commits an authority:**

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.
- To publish any dataset held by the authority that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless

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the authority is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practical, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the public authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use via licensing.

**Classes of information that set the minimum standards for publication by all public authorities:**

- (a) the particulars of its organization, functions and duties;
- (b) the powers and duties of its officers and employees;
- (c) the procedure followed in the decision-making process, including channels of supervision and accountability;
- (d) the norms set by it for the discharge of its functions;
- (e) any guidance used by the authority in relation to its dealings with the public or with corporate bodies, including the rules, instructions, manuals and records, held by it, or under its control or used by its employees for discharging its functions;
- (f) a guide sufficient to enable any person wishing to apply for information under this Act to identify the classes of information held by it, the subjects to which they relate or the location of any indexes to be consulted by any person;
- (g) the particulars of any arrangement that exists for consultation with or representation by, the members of the public in relation to the formulation of its policy or implementation thereof;
- (h) a statement of the boards, councils, committees and other bodies consisting of two or more persons constituted as its part or for the purpose of advising it with information as to whether meetings of those boards, councils, committees and other bodies are open to the public, or the minutes of the meetings are accessible to the public;
- (i) a directory of its officers and employees;
- (j) the monthly remuneration received by each of its officers and employees, including the system of compensation;
- (k) the budget allocated to each of its agencies, including the particulars of all plans, proposed expenditures and reports on disbursements made;
- (l) the manner of execution of subsidy programs, including the amounts allocated and the details of beneficiaries of such programs;
- (m) particulars of concessions, permits or authorizations granted by it;
- (n) details in respect of the information available to or held by it, in an electronic form;
- (o) the particulars of facilities available to citizens for obtaining information, including the working hours of a library or reading room, if maintained for public use;
- (p) the names, designation, contact details of its public information officers, appellate authorities and the particulars and contact details of the Commission;
- (q) a list of all applications under this Act received by the public authority, including an indexed register containing copies of records released in response to requests made under this Act other than records relating to the personal affairs of the applicant.

**In addition to section 1 (a – q), sections 2 through 7 of The Act delineates the following:**

2. Every public authority shall adopt and disseminate widely, including on its website, a publication scheme which has been approved by the Commission, within six months of the coming into operation of this Act or its approval, whichever comes later
3. In adopting a publication scheme, a public authority shall have regard to the public interest–
  - (a) in allowing access to the information it holds; and
  - (b) in making information available proactively so as to minimise the need for individuals to make requests for information. Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme
4. The publication scheme shall set out– (a) the classes of records that the authority will publish on a proactive basis; and (b) the manner in which it will publish these records.
5. Every public authority shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme.
6. Every publication scheme shall, within seven years of the adoption of the first publication scheme by a public authority, cover all of the core proactive publication obligations set out in subsection (8).
7. Any person may institute proceedings in a court to compel the head of a public authority, to comply with this section.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Right to Access Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure (see Part III of The Act).
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

**The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available**

The public authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

**Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme**

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Right to Access Information Regulations for all public authorities.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

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