

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day
of Sanitation World Water Day 2008



Action For Social Rights

Action pour les droits sociaux

An organization that advocates for the protection and promotion of social rights

Organization de defense des droits sociaux

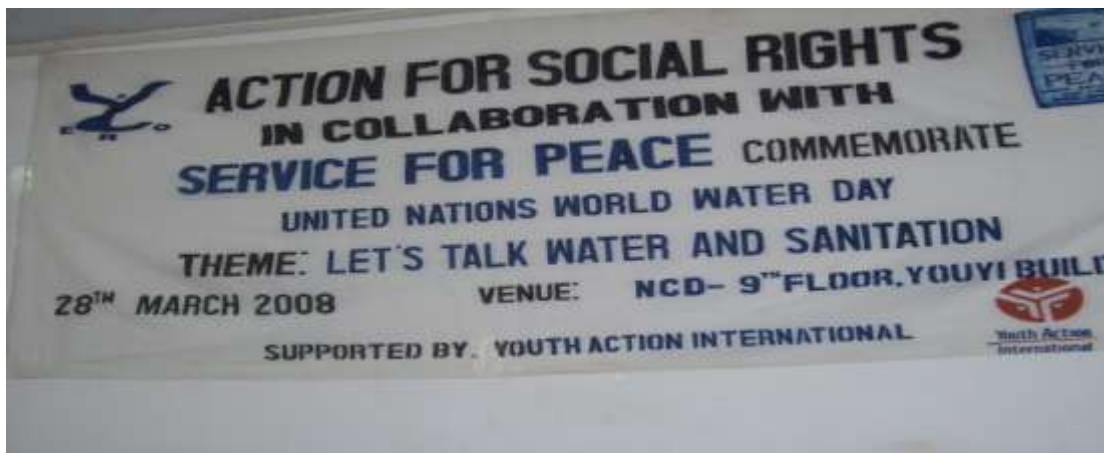
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**Report on the International
Year of Sanitation,
World Water Day 2008**

“Let Talk Water & Sanitation”

**An Interactive & Participatory Discussion
Forum**

28th March 2008



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Introduction

Action For Social Rights {AFSoR} in collaboration with Service For Peace- Sierra Leone and the commemorate this year World Water Day 2008 which had been dedicated as the International Year of Sanitation an initiative supported by Youth Action International-Sierra Leone. The commemoration takes the form of an Interactive & Participatory Discussion Forum at the National Commission for Democracy Conference Room. The report highlighted in details the overview of the commemoration, presentations, concerns raised, recommendations made by panelists and participating organizations and participants and an

Acknowledgement

Action For Social Rights and Service For Peace wish to acknowledge the support given by Youths Action International-Sierra Leone as an

**Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day
of Sanitation World Water Day 2008**

organization. And also want to acknowledge Mr. William Lifongo for his moderation, Mr. Joseph Musa, James Mathew, Abudulai Abubakarr Sesay, Mr. Sulaiman Parker for their presentations

For the resource made available to us for the completion this report, we acknowledge the administration and management of ENCISS especially the Resource Interns Mr. Eric Marah.

Lastly, with the timeless and tremendous effort of all staff /volunteers in making the event and this report a success.

Dedication

The Management and Staff of Action For Social Rights and Service For Peace-Sierra Leone is deeply dedicate this report to all those who are trapped, violated and abuse in search of pure water and proper sanitation.

Wurie Mamadu Tamba Barrie

Executive Director

Action For Social Rights

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Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

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Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

Introduction

This is the report on the commemoration of United Nations World Water Day which took place on the 28th March 2008 at the Youyi Building 9th Floor NCD Conference Centre. It was commemorated by Action For Social rights in collaboration with Service For Peace and it was supported by Youths Action International.

Welcome Statement

Donald B Kalokoh Program Office YAI welcomes the participating organisations and panelists present for honoring the invitation for this occasion. "It is very remarkable day to be recognized and water is one of the most important issues to be noted in term of economic development". He finally gave on the indulgency of every body to come up with good recommendations at the end of the day.

Overview

**Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day
of Sanitation World Water Day 2008**

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008



The Executive Director of Action For Social Rights {AfSoR} Wurie Mamadu Tamba Barrie give an over view of the importance on the commemoration and the reason why it is incumbent on the organisation to commemorate this International Year of Sanitation on the theme “*Let Talk Water and Sanitation*” in collaboration with Service For Peace International Sierra Leone Associate with support form Youth Action International.

In his over, he said Action for social Rights is an organisation that advocates for the protection and promotion of social rights. He continued to say that “it is inline with our organisation thematic focus which are: Education, employment, HIV/AIDS, adequate Standard of Living which looks at the rights to Food, Health, housing and water and sanitation”. He said the collaboration with Service for Peace International Sierra Leone Associate is part of the on going activities marking the 40 days of peace drive.

The Executive Director said the commemoration of that World Water Day was officially recognized on the 22nd March 1991 by the United Nations in conference held in Rio De Janeiro. This year commemoration was specify as the International Year of Sanitation with the International theme “Sanitation”. The Executive Director stated that the Interactive and Participatory discussion Forum was tailored to look within the boundaries of Sierra Leone on Water and Sanitation on the theme “Let talk Water and Sanitation”

To holistically bring together, Government, service providers, Civil Society etc to assess the current status of Water and Sanitation in the country . To called on the attention of all stakeholders on the deplorable condition of pure water and poor sanitation in the capital city and their environs within the country. To provide recommendations and to commit themselves in providing pure water and proper sanitation for all. He pointed out that the United Nations Agenda for this year world Water Day was to increase awareness and commitment, mobilize government, Secure Real commitment and increase financing, develop and strengthen institutions and human capacity, enhancing the sustainability and promote and capture learning from all levels. He revealed that 2.6 billion peoples are without proper sanitation and inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene contributes to the death of 1.3 million children and women exposes to violation and abuse as woke-up as early as 2:00 AM in the morning to fetch water and dispose of refuse illegally.

He spoke of important of the day with regard to Water as the most precious element to mankind. As the United Nations has recognized this day, They as an organisations with the support from youth Action International had took up this challenge to commemorate the day, through they have constrains of resource but they go ahead to do it.

If only we can take a look at children, girl child who took most of there time fetching water and even the using of push cat to carry water which is very dangerous to them.

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

His organisation is aim in advocating for the protection and promotion of social rights and water and sanitation form part of it thematic. “Today is important that we deliberates here and come up with good recommendations at the end of the day that will take us forward in our advocacy”.

In his conclusions, He said “ Water is an essential element for all living human being and animals, the rights to pure and proper sanitation is a rights to justice” and with adequate protection and promotion of social rights, economic and political stability will be realised”

I thank you all for come.

Introduction Moderator

The moderator of these Interactive and Participatory discussion Forum was a dynamic gentle man that work for the United Nations Integrated Office In Sierra Leone, attached to the Human Rights and Rule of Law Section and head of the Freetown Human Rights field Office. Due to his wealth of experience on the topics to be discussed. He was chosen among other to serve as a moderator. The Executive Director Action for Social Rights graves the indulgence to help him welcoming Mr. William Lifongo.

Remark Moderator

Mr. William Lifongo , the moderator said “ I don not have enough knowledge about the topic as people may think on the subject matter but I will narrow it based on the human rights perspective” “ I will like to thank the organisers especially Action for Social rights and Service For Peace International Sierra Leone Associate, with the support of Youths Action International Sierra Leone for giving me this opportunity to moderate this Interactive and Participatory Discussion Forum in recognition to commemorates the United Nations World Water Day on the theme ‘Let Talk Water & Sanitation’ within the confines of Sierra Leone with a look on the capital city and other environs. A philosopher says that “all over the world there are wars on political stance point but there will be a time when people will fights for social amenities like water, food etc. some times when we talk of water the first thing that run into my mind is how mush water do I consume per day” Here today we have the expertise that will talk on specific topic, in that regard I want to invites Mr. Joseph Musa PRO Guma Valley Water Company, Mr. James Mathew

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

National director Network Movement For Democracy and Human Rights, Mr. Abdulai AbuBakarr Sesay Country Representative Service For Peace International Sierra Leone Associate, Mr. Sulaiman Parker Environmental Officer, Freetown City Council and the others will join us later.

He went on thanking the organizers of the program as it a very good initiative specifically of water and sanitation. We always think of conflict and water within our continent. As animals feed on water and even the plant. The usefulness of water show direct impact

relation to water in our daily lives, especially, the human consumption per day. Water is the basic rights although there is no law stated in all document like wise other types of rights. Water should be accessible and affordable to all human being and t can be of good quality to enhanced good health.

Panel Presentations

Topic: *The Effect of Water and Sanitation*

Mr. Joseph Musa P.R.O Guma Valley Water Company on the left

“The role and responsibility of Guma Valley Water Company under an act of Parliament is to provide safe drinking water in the capital city from Freetown and the Peninsular” The PRO Guma Valley Water Company praised the organizers to bring in people to such an interactive and participatory discussion forum to come and discussed about safe drinking water. He said that “our operation started from Sussex on to Allen town from the western Area and SALWACO are responsible for the provincial area”. In his proceeding on the topic The Effect of Water and Sanitation he asked Water and Sanitation on What? And then refine it as “The Effect of Water and Sanitation on Health” 90% on the earth surface is filled with water and only 1% of fresh water he noted that 1.1 million people lack access to water and 2.2 billion people lack proper sanitation, that leads to Malnutrition, diahearhea and other diseases. “The availability of safe drinking water and proper sanitation contributes to the health of that particular community” **Developing countries like Sierra Leone is threatened by this problem and if not considered can hampered a country development.** The reservoir that we are presently using was built in the 1960s for less than 1million people and Freetown in now approximately 2 million. The company used to cater for 400,000.00 people only in their targeted operation

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

but today the population has gone up to 2,000,000.00 people. The ration that demands for water can no longer be cope due to the increase in population and we use to supple 19 million gallons every day to people in Freetown. The water we are now supply was stored in 2007 dry season. Due to the indiscriminate building of structures, Increase in

population, Massive deforestation has affected the flow water supply and the change in the climatic condition. However government and it partner is trying to create another dam in Ogoru River in the eastern part of the capital city to help in reducing the suffering of water. He finally pointed out that our economy can also be improved if we have the rights to safe drinking water and advice that we should change our attitudes to see how we can maintain good sanitation in our communities. Mr. Joseph Musa called for the urgent need for awareness raising on Water and Sanitation and recommends that, government incorporate it as a pillar in the country PRSP document. And also the committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights adopt a proposal and general comment on Water and Sanitation

Topic: *Water and Human Rights*

James Mathew National director Network Movement for Democracy and Human Rights on the Left

He said he is very much impressed to witness Programme and gave his sincere appreciation to the organizers for a job well done. “Water is Human Rights” said the National Director. James Mathew stressed that the slum communities such as Dwarzak, New England Ville, mount Aureole and the Brookfields communities are grossly affected as they more than 2 hours to fetch pure water from down the hills. He called that there is need for advocacy groups and mass sensitization on water and other social and human rights issues. “Let do every thing we can to include Economic Social and Cultural rights in our programmes, the time is now to interact and interface with the government on protecting and promoting socio-economic rights” in a series of questions asked such as “What do we think will happen after five years, if pure water and proper sanitation is not enhanced? What is the stance of parliamentarian on the issue of pure water and proper sanitary mechanism? He concluded his statement saying “Water is not necessity but human rights that should be provided and protected”. He apple to participatory organisations

Firstly, he spoke of politicians who always focus on their politic during the electioneering process other than thinking of our social rights. more attention need to be focus on our economic, social and cultural rights. we don’t have the culture of water management.

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

About 60% of the population lacks safe drinking water and we are always attacked by sickness. We should not always oppose GVWC but we should go to the Government and make our own recommendations. It is good we table these problems to the parliamentary committee to act on them. We should create an advocacy group to sensitize about the care and control of safe drinking water. If not we are going to fail.

Topic: Waste Management and Sanitation

Suliaman Parker Environmental Officer Freetown City Council on the Left

“I considered this as a right step in the right direction, in organizing such an interactive and participatory discussion Forum by the organizers” “I want us to give an hand of applause to Action For Social rights in selecting the topic Waste Management and Sanitation”. Mr. Parker said, “As long as we are living human being we bound to generate waste” Mr. Parker asked, What is Waste? And defined it as things we don’t want. He went further to give the types of waste such as solid, liquid, gaseous waste and then categorized them as organic and non-organic waste. Organic waste is bio-degrading

such as fish bones and pills etc and inorganic waste are not bio-degrading such as broken bottle, plastics, zincs etc, they interfere with the natural resources such as water. He said “If adequate attention is not paid we are heading for a doom”. The waste generated individually in the city is 0.45 kg per day multiply by 2 million people, 600 tons waste is generated per day and 110 tons are cleared per day by Freetown City Council, secondary or less attention have been given to waste management and the lack equipments to carry out functions well. Depositing in the wrong places and drainages had added to the increase of waste in the city and contributed to the proliferations of Malaria and Child mortality. “Water has a direct relation with waste’ and there is a desperate need to manage waste properly to avoid contamination of water, adequate sanitary practices must be employed by all individuals Five gallons water is need to flush a defecate”. Freetown City Council had provided 48 public toilets to lessen the sanitation problem but some have poor access to water which makes them less effective. “An interactive forum like this is very useful in helping the government effort to sensitize the community to improved water and

sanitation nationally, therefore, it is a dear need to embark on small project to transformed and sensitized people about this whole issue of Waste Management. “I therefore want to recommend that the waste management be given back to the council the local government”

Topic: Peace & Water Service For Peace

Mr. Abdulai AbuBakarr Sesay Country Representative Service For Peace

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

On this World Water Day, I have the pleasure to do a presentation on *PEACE AND WATER* a paper prepared by **Service For Peace-Sierra Leone** as a contribution for the “**40 DAYS OF PEACE**” that is on-going started from the 1ST March-9th April 2008. It was against this back drop we foster partnership with Action For Social Rights and Youth Action International-Sierra Leone to commemorate this day with theme: “**Let’s talk water and sanitation**”. Because the 40 days of Peace is about stimulating peace in communities using thoughts of prominent people like Martin Luther King(MLK) and commitment to pledges through effective service delivery and partnership.

The Country Representative SFP said “Peace refers to as the inner peace, a state of mind, body and mostly soul, a peace within ourselves” where as water is very important for life. We need water to drink, to wash our hands. Water is goods that must serve for the development of the whole person and of every person. Water is used in all forms of life and it is greatly a significant to religion. Human being cannot survive without safe drinking water and lastly said that we should all take the drive to advocates for pure water and proper sanitation.

“The inadequacy in the supply and access to water has only recently taken centre stage in global reflection as a serious and threatening phenomenon and the human being, however, human beings can survive only a few days without clean, safe drinking water”.

Water plays a central and critical role in all aspects of life – in the national environment, in our economies, in food security, in production, in politics. Water has indeed a special significance for religion, cultural practices, while vital to humanity; water has a strong social content. It is highly charged with symbolism and is one of the essentials of life.

Among the important social characters of water is its role in human nourishment, health and sanitation as well as peace and conflict avoidance. With respect to this, growing pressure due to increasing demand for water can be a source of conflict. When water is scarce, competition for limited supplies has lead nations to see water as a matter of national or regional security. History provides ample evidence of competition and disputes over shared fresh water resources.

Interactive Discussions by Panelists, Participating Organizations & Participants

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008



During the interactive discussion between the panelist and participating organizations, several or same concerns, contributions and questions were directed to the panelists for their response. In responding to some of the questions, Mr. Joseph Musa, said there are strategies that will be put in place for the distribution of water which will be in three faces and the gallons of supply will be cutting down to 12 million gallons per day instead of 19 million gallons. He said the only remedy to the situation is the construction of the Oguru River Dam Mr. Parker said they have built 48 public toilets and two vehicles are currently clearing waste in the East and West respectively and advice individuals should practice good waste management system In highlighting some of the concerns raised by

participants are the slum areas such as Mount Areole, Sumalia Town, Sorie Town, Red Pump, Dwarzak, New England Ville, IMATT are all deprived from pipe burn water {Pure Water}and they are seriously depends on boreholes or Water Wells.

“The current situation of Water and Sanitation in the country is totally deplorable which was unanimously agreed... ”.

Recommendations

- That the culture of maintenance should be adapted
- The reformation of exiting laws with regards Environmental protection
- Advocates for facilities converted to private property
- Transferring the responsibilities of Waste management to the Freetown City Council
- To replicates the interactive & discussion forum program to the provinces
- To sensitized citizens pay water bills and taxes
- Adequate Management our resources
- Sensitized our local communities in local languages

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008

- To speedily commence construction of the ogoru river dam to help solve the water problem.
- Appealing to the government and community to provide adequate land for the construction of community toilet and market.
- Rehabilitate the toilet facilities
- To upgrade the existing Water Wells and Boreholes as a modern Water Wells to subtitle the constrains of the urge of pipe burn water
- To reform laws that deals with waste management, environmental security and land deforestation
- To advocate for adequate protection and provision of social rights
- To dialogue with the Freetown City Council, Guma Valley Water Company and other Stakeholders.

Vote of Thanks

Madam, Yeanoh Conteh Country Rep. YAI gives the vote of thanks to all facilitators and participation present to make the programmes a success.

She said that, it they supported this Programme as it is our concern as Sierra Leonean to help in advocating for us to have good water And sanitation as a rights to us all finally she admonish every body to keep the sprit in helping building up our communities where we live. I thank you all for coming.

Group Picture with Panelist and Staff/Volunteers from AfSoR and Country Representative Youth Action International and Overview Statement by the Executive Director



Report on the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Sanitation World Water Day 2008