

LOCAL NEWS

By Jariatu S. Bangura

The United Nations Resident Coordinator, who doubles as UNDP Resident Representative, Sunil Saigal, has noted that there would be no development without peace, security and human rights.

Mr. Saigal was yesterday speaking at the opening session of the Regional Africa workshop with Parliamentarians for Global Actions, held in parliament to raise awareness and understanding on the importance of becoming state party to the Biological and Toxin Weapon Convention (BTWC).

The session, which is held once every ten years, was to elaborate on how other member countries could ratify the convention and domesticate it. Already, Sierra Leone and 177 countries have ratified the treaty.

The UN Resident Coordinator stated that there were some fundamental targets at which the UN builds its walls on those treaties including peace, security and human rights.

He noted that Sierra Leone and other countries needed peace and security, which are very important requirements to actualising development, stating that Sierra Leone was making significant strides in the Ebola recovery process.

He said for the past years, the UN has seen the country making development in areas such as the installation of solar systems in communities to access energy, supporting Ebola survivors to be freely involved in community works, and assisting boys and girls in skills training to protect them from abuse.

The Coordinator said Sierra Leone has been stronger and progressive in her

"No development without peace, security & human rights" ...says UN Resident Coordinator

development, adding that by ensuring the country be safe from cultism, it must be able to maintain peace and stability by implementing the Biological and Weapon Convention.

Speaking on behalf of the speaker of parliament, Deputy Speaker, Hon. Chernor R.M Bah, commended the Parliamentarians for Global Action for hosting such a meeting in Sierra Leone since 2008, and expressed hope that the session would bring good opportunity to revitalise the country's links with the organisation.

"It is a matter of deep regret that we live in a world today faced with many threats of very different kinds to our individual, collective wellbeing and security. These threats confront all of us, in every country of the world. They are sometimes caused by disease and we in West Africa are sadly no strangers to the devastating consequences of such calamities," he said.

Not just for Sierra Leone, he said, all over Africa and several other regions of the world have seen the devastating human impact in terms of conflict and loss of human lives and other grave suffering that has been occasioned by the inadequate regulation of arms and weapons.

The Deputy Speaker maintained that, in recent years, there have been increasingly troubling reports of how non-state actors and groups, including terrorist organisations were not satisfied simply to seek and acquire conventional weapons in order to further their murderous agendas.

"Since Sierra Leone has signed and ratified the Biological and Toxin



UN Sunil Saigal

Weapons Convention in June 1976. It requires and demands immediate action by all to do so, including ratification and implementation of the treaties which aim to make it more difficult for such groups to get their hands on such weapons," he stated.

However, he said because of the new threats described by non-state actors, it would be very helpful or important for everyone to undertake a review of the

existing national legislation to ensure it adequately addresses all the threats, not just those that existed in 1976.

On her part, Minority Leader of Parliament, Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai, said Sierra Leone was one of the signatories to the treaty, but noted that the convention has become obsolete.