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A Comparative Study of Child Rights Protection Systems in Lesotho and Sierra Leone

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to assess the status of Child rights in the two African countries of Sierra Leone and Lesotho. The study will begin by analysing the Treaties and conventions and bills, legal instruments relating to the protection of children signed by respective countries. The protection of children rights has increasingly become a significant focus for most countries in recent years, the evidence is that many countries of the world aim to protect children rights by Prioritising education, ending child marriages and child labour among others through the formulation of legislation and policies. Lesotho and Sierra Leone respectively have adopted and ratified various international bills and convections that aim to protect children's rights. The paper will compare and analyse the strides and efforts of the two to protect children rights. Lastly, the paper will give out recommendations, strategies as well as lessons that can be adopted to further strengthen the protection of children rights in both countries.

INTRODUCTION

Lesotho and Sierra Leone are both countries from Africa continent, Lesotho is found in Southern Africa region, While Sierra Leone is a country found in West Africa, both countries have ratified the International Conventions and legislations that protect the rights of children.

Sierra Leone has a population of 7 million and above of which more than 50% are aged 18 or under and 18.4% of the population is less than 5 years Sierra Leone signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1990 to which it is now legally bound and has enacted into national laws through the national Child Rights Act 2007.

The kingdom of Lesotho is a constitutional monarch, mountainous country completely surrounded by South Africa. It has a population of 2 million and 38% of Lesotho population are children below the age 18 years. The government of Lesotho has also ratified a number of International instruments which protect the rights of children including The convection on the rights of a child, The African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child, International Labour convection 138 on the minimum age for employment and International Labour organisation 182 on the worst forms of child Labour. (Social Work and Society,2018).

The International Treaties Signed by both Countries on the Rights of a Child

The Convection on the Rights of a Child (CRC)

Is an International Human Rights Treaty which sets out the civil, Political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. The convention defines a child as any human being under the age of eighteen unless the age of majority is attained earlier under the national legislation. The United Nations General Assembly adapted the convection and opened it for signature on the 20th

November 1989 and came into force on 2 September 1990 after it was ratified by the required number of nations. As of 22 January 2023, 196 countries are party to it including every member of the United Nations. Two optional protocols were adopted on the 25 May 2000. The first optional protocol restricts the involvement of children in Military conflicts and the second optional protocol prohibits the sale of children and prostitution and pornography. Lesotho and Sierra Leone are both part of the ratification of this treaty and both countries have domesticated the treaty into their national laws.

The African Charter on the Rights And Welfare of a Child (ACRWC)

Was adopted by the Organisation of African Unity in 1990 and enter into force in 1999 like The United Nations Convection on the rights of a child, the children charter is a comprehensive instrument that set out rights and defines universal principles and norms for the Status of children.

The ACRWC and the CRC are the only international and regional Human Rights treaties that cover the whole spectrum of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights its calls for the creation of an African committee of experts on the rights and the welfare of the child. Its mission is to promote and protect the right established by the ACRWC, to practice applying these rights and to interpret the disposition of the ACRWC as required of party states. As February 2009 the ACRWC has been ratified by 45 of the 53 countries in the continent of continent both Lesotho and Sierra Leone have ratified the treaties.

Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour Organisation 182

Was adopted in 1999 at Geneva General conference

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of the International Labour organisation. According to Article one of the convention, each member which ratifies this convention shall take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour. This legislation must be followed by measures to Sensitize Public opinion and to mobilize public support to combat the worst forms of child labour , Rehabilitate children who have been so removed and reintegrate them into the schooling system, Provide subsidies and income support for the children in greatest need and their families, (Organisation, 2006) Prevent children from being lured into the worst forms of child labour.

Domestication of the International Legislations in Lesotho

In 2021, Lesotho made moderate advancements in the efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. Lesotho's multisectoral committee on combating trafficking in persons launched the national Referral mechanism in trafficking in persons. The Government of Lesotho also created standard operating procedures for responding to human trafficking violations with the Home affairs Ministry distributing the documents in 10 districts of the country. In addition, the labour inspectorate significantly increased the number of inspections conducted during the reporting period. (LNC, 2009).

Provision for health care is one of the biggest challenges especially for a small mountainous country like Lesotho. This is because its geographical nature makes it very difficult for some places to be accessible thus placing hindrance on the authorities to make availability of the necessary medical check-ups in an emergency situations or regular check-up, hence a decrease in children's vaccination processes.(Global partnership, 2009). However according to Lind institution (2019)necessary measures have been taken by Lesotho government to make provision for maternal and child's health to fight against human immune virus, malaria, tuberculosis amongst many other diseases. This is because the above diseases in general tend to impact more negatively on children from poor backgrounds, the situation is even worse in Lesotho highlands due to poor road infrastructure, economic as well as cultural factors that restrict access to facilities.

Additionally, Lesotho's government has taken various measures towards the improvement of its citizen's lives. The implementation of Lesotho's immunisation expanded programme and integrated management of childhood is one of the strategies implemented by the government based on immunisation guidelines that fully vaccinate and cater for diseases which result in children death.(Global Partnership, 2009). Those diseases include measles, diarrhoea, malnutrition and anaemia. Moreover preventive measures are also being implemented by Lesotho government to reduce human immune virus transmission, this is emphasised by the ministry of health and social welfare, following the realisation that Lesotho

ranks second in countries affected by HIV in Africa thus mother to child infection is found to be high.

Right to non discrimination

Customary law plays an important role in preventing discrimination, albeit some believes and tradition do limit women to access specific social areas. Some forms of discrimination that affect children especially girls are, but not limited to: gender based violence, HIV, AIDS, as well as unequal participation in decision making process (UNICEF, 2018). However in 2000 numerous laws have been passed and implemented to deal with the above violations. The sexual offence act of 2003, the legal capacity of married persons act of 2006, gender and development policy act of 2003 which prioritises more on gender bases violence. (Universal periodic review 2013).

Additionally, between 2013 and 2017 the national action plan on women, girls and HIV which gave framework for the protection of women and girls with HIV in the context of gender based violence (Universal periodic review 2013).

Status of Children Rights in Sierra Leone

The lingering effects of colonialism and the civil war in Sierra Leone have left children's rights in a very precarious position. Due to various long-term issues such as frequent child marriage, gender inequality, poverty and restricted access to education, the country has sought to implement a variety of national polices in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sierra Leone ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1998, to mainstream the protection of women and children into legislative frameworks. The country also ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 2002. As Sierra Leone is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a regional group promoting economic cooperation and integration to improve the living standards of its member states, together in 2017, they committed to adopting the Strategic Framework for Strengthening National Child Protection Systems. Broadly, the country's children's rights response is encompassed by its Child Rights Act of 2007, the Sexual Offenses Act 2019, the Devolution of Estates Act 2007, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act 2005, the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act 2007 and other legislation. However the Child Right Act 2007, broken down into eight distinct 'parts', the body of legislation forms the backbone of all child protection initiatives on going in the country (Child Protection –The Basics & Protection Mechanisms within Sierra Leone report, 2017).

The Child Right Act 2007

The Child Rights Act 2007 of Sierra Leone provides for the promotion of the rights of the child compatible with the Convention on the rights of the child adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on the

20th November 1989 and its Optional Protocol of 8th September 2000 and the African Charter of Rights and Welfare of the Child.. It includes information set up of a National Children's Commission, Specific rights provided and the specific child welfare functions of local committees and District Councils in the interpretation section of the Act, gave us a definition of who is a child, "child" means a person below the age of eighteen; (The Child Right Act 2007 Act no.7)

Section 23

Provides that every child has the right to life and to survival and development to the maximum extent possible and that it shall be the primary responsibility of parents to provide support to their children in the enjoyment of this right (The Child Right Act 2007 Act no.7)

Section 25

States that every child has a right to grow up with their parents.

Section 26

States that parent have a duty and responsibility to NOT deprive a child of their welfare, regardless of the status of their relationship. This includes protecting the child from neglect, discrimination, violence, abuse, exposure to physical and moral hazards and oppression; providing good guidance, care, assistance and maintenance for the child and assurance of the child's survival and development; ensuring that in the temporary absence of a parent, the child shall be cared for by a competent person and that a child under eighteen months of age shall only be cared for by a person of fifteen years and above (The Child Right Act 2007 Act no.7).

Section 34

Provides that the minimum age of marriage is 18 and that a child has the right to refuse betrothal or marriage (The Child Right Act 2007 Act no.7).

The Sexual Offenses Act (2019)

The Sexual Offenses Act 2012 provides rights that protect children from a range of different forms of sexual violence and abuse, and covers all potential perpetrators of the violence including family members, teachers, or people in positions of power and community influence in addition to perpetrators unknown to the victim. The Act specifies that a child is anybody under the age of 18 years old (The Sexual Offenses Act 2019 Act no.12).

Section 19

Prohibits the sexual penetration of a child and provides that any person who engages in any act of sexual penetration of a child - if convicted - will face a jail sentence of 15 years (The Sexual Offenses Act 2019 Act no.12).

Section 20

Prohibits the sexual touching of a child. This includes

both the perpetrator touching the child, or forcing the child to touch their body (The Sexual Offenses Act 2019 Act no.12).

Section 21

Prohibits sexual activity in the presence of a child where the intention is that the child is aware of the activity (The Sexual Offenses Act 2019 Act no.12).

Section 22

Prohibits a person from causing a child to either watch other people engaging in sexual activity, or showing an image of a person engaging in sexual activity (The Sexual Offenses Act 2019 Act no.12).

Section 23

Prohibits meeting a child for sexual purposes. This includes both meeting and travelling with the intention of meeting a child for sexual purposes (The Sexual Offenses Act 2019 Act no.12).

The Devolution of Estates Act (2007)

This act protects women from being denied access to their deceased spouse's property and guarantees the right of children born in and out of wedlock to own their deceased father's property. Section 7(1) provides that where an intestate is survived by one child and no spouse, parent or grandchild, the whole of the estate shall devolve to the surviving child. Section 7(2) further mentions that where an intestate is survived by two or more children and no spouse, parent or grandchild, the estate shall devolve to the children in equal shares. An interesting new concept that was introduced in the Devolution of Estates Act which was non-existent in the Administration of Estates Act is that of posthumous births. Section 12 of the Act states that any child or grandchild of the intestate conceived before the intestate's death, but born afterwards, shall inherit as if he had been born in the lifetime of the intestate and had survived the intestate. Section 5 of the Devolution of Estates Act also provides for the maintenance and education of natural children of the intestate. It stipulates that any natural child of the intestate shall be entitled to be maintained and educated from the residue of the estate of the deceased until such child attains eighteen years or upon leaving secondary school or completion of an undergraduate university or college course whichever is the later. There are however exceptions which narrow the Act's jurisdiction. It does not apply to family property, chieftaincy property or community property held under customary law Section15 (The Devolution of Estates Act 2007 Act no.21)

The Anti-Human Trafficking Act 2005

The Anti-Human Trafficking Act 2005 criminalises moving a person from one place to another for the purposes of financial or other gain without the consent of the person being used. This is particularly relevant for situations where families send their children to live with

another person or family member under the premise of the child receiving an education and the person uses the child against their will to work (CRC–SL report, 2021).

The Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act (2007)

This act legalizes all marriages under the customary law, Mohamedan and the civil laws and Christian belief. The act aims to protect women and girls married through customary marriage. Before the legislation, many women and girls did not have any rights to property/land or recourse due to the customary nature of the marriage (CRC–SL report, 2021).

Sierra Leone signed the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) on 13 February 1990 and ratified it on 18 June 1990. Sierra Leone has also ratified the following international and regional human rights instruments relating to the protection of children: the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. As the country follows a “dualist” approach to international law, all international treaties require national/domestic legislation to be implemented. The Parliament adopted such legislation by enacting the Child Rights Act of 2007 and other Act that protects Children (CRC–SL report, 2021). With the enactment of the Child Rights Act of 2007, Sierra Leone incorporated the CRC into its national legal order. Such incorporation was direct, as opposed to subject “by” subject, which means that the statute was adopted to incorporate the whole treaty and not isolated provisions of it. However, the Government of Sierra Leone, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and NGOs are assiduously working towards child rights issues in the country who are members of the Child Rights Coalition Sierra Leone (CRC–SL).

Domestication of the Child Rights in Sierra Leone Civil Rights and Freedom

The Coalition acknowledges actions by the Government to enhance the civil rights of its citizen through the establishment of the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) and the undertaking of Civil Registration. Children are now included in an integrated birth register, and this will promote their civil rights. The Coalition point out that the right of freedom of expression of children was limited during the last reporting period (2016- 2021), compared to now when there is increased awareness through the press and social media on child rights issues following implementation of the Child Rights Act in 2007. Child participation is much more felt at Government’s events and projects of NGOs and UN agencies. For example, children engage in role modeling activities during the “Day of the African Child” (June

16 annual events) and this has motivated thousands of children especially when they mimic high ranking officials including the President, Cabinet Ministers and First Lady of the Republic of Sierra Leone (CRC–SL report,2021). However, meaningful participation can only be achieved if child participation is ensured by policy and practice at major decision-making process such as budgeting, policy formulation, construction of public buildings and roads, and other developmental interventions. It is worth noting that challenges to the participation of children in decision making is rooted in cultural beliefs, traditional values, and perceptions of adults that children are not matured, sensible and are not capable of making decisions that affect them. In some cultures, in rural communities for instance, children are not allowed to speak loudly when adults are engaged in conversations with them. The Coalition is concerned about the growing reports of commercial child sexual exploitation such as internet related sexual harassment including cyber bully against girls in Sierra Leone. It is evident that information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become a fundamental part of children’s lives giving them access to unlimited connections and information (OHCHR, 2021). However, the coalition is mindful that ICTs also expose children to new forms of abuses resulting in an alarming growth of new forms of child sexual exploitation online. This is worrying especially when one considers that online sexual violence puts parents and children at risk of harm and serves as an impediment to active participation of girls in public domain. In view of addressing online child sexual exploitation, Parliament of Sierra Leone passed the Cyber Crime Bill into law, titled “The Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021”. The act which is introduced in Sierra Leone for the first time will provide prevention on the abusive use of computers and provide a timely and effective collection of electronic evidence for investigation and prosecution of cybercrime. It is envisaged that once this Act is fully implemented nationwide, the safety of children online will be guaranteed (CRC –SL report, 2021).

Child Labor

The Coalition acknowledges efforts by the Government of Sierra Leone such as the FQSE Program in addressing child labor which has devastating effects on the developmental needs of children. Even though the Government has ratified various International Labor Organization Conventions and criminalized child labor as spelt out in the Child Rights Act 2007, the country remains among the Sub Saharan African countries with one of the highest rates of child labour (CRC–SL report, 2021). As a country, Sierra Leone signed the Partnership Protocol Agreement between the Government, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the European Commission (EC) in October 2008. Following the ratification of ILO Convention no.138 in 2011, a Minimum Age for Work Declaration was stipulated: 15 years for non-hazardous work, and 18 years for hazardous work (ILO, 2020). That notwithstanding, evidence suggest that over 45% of

children aged 5 -17 are engaged in child labour, with over 20% involved in dangerous work including in the mining sector, commercial sexual exploitation, quarrying stone and fishing. The worst forms of child labor (indecent work and child exploitation) are particularly common in major towns and cities such as Freetown and Kenema (GOAL, 2020). In 2019, the Government launched the FQSE program, and this has increased school enrolment rate among boys and girls across the country. However, many children are still out of school and used by their parents or care givers for different purposes of economic exploitation.

Child Trafficking

The Coalition acknowledges the efforts of the Government and its partners in taking significant steps to address human trafficking in general and child trafficking in particular. The country adopted its Trafficking in Persons Act in 2005, which is now under review and has also set up the Trafficking in Persons Taskforce that is actively coordinating policy reforms and programs that address trafficking. In 2017, Defence for Children International, facilitated signing of the Standard Operating Procedures between Sierra Leone and Guinea on the one hand, and between Sierra Leone and Liberia on the other hand to enhance practical actions for cross border collaboration in ending cross border child trafficking between Mano River Union Countries. In 2019, Defence for Children International, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and World Hope International conducted trainings for border security officials that are now paying dividend (CRC –SL report, 2021).

Sexual Violence

Sierra Leone records high rate of sexual violence. Since the last reporting period in 2016, the government has made great strides in minimizing the growing rate of sexual violence particularly against minors. In September 2019, the Government amended the Sexual Offences Act of 2012 and increased penalties including the life imprisonment for perpetrators. This development is believed to have empowered victims to bring forward more reports. Furthermore, with the introduction of the Free Toll line for reporting of child abuse, evidence suggests that from April 2020 to October 2020, 39,000 calls were recorded on the Sexual Gender Base Violence (SGBV) helpline. This can depict: an increase in reported cases or an increase in the use of the helpline. It is reported that, 329 of these calls were related sexual offences of which 212 were related to sexual penetration. 17 of the calls reported rape and 97 related to domestic abuse (Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs Report, 2020). During the period under review, the President of Sierra Leone imposed a State of emergency against sexual violence and introduced several measures that can suppress the menace. The Sexual Offences Act was amended; a Special Unit within the Family Support Unit (FSU) of the Sierra Leone Police was established,

charged with the responsibility of investigating all reports of sexual violence. A model court was instituted in the capital Freetown for adjudication of cases of sexual violence. It is expected that the establishment of a model court would facilitate speedy trial of SGBV cases especially those involving children as victims (CRC –SL report, 2021). With this development in Freetown, more prosecutions and convictions of sexual crimes have been recorded in recent times. Another progressive step by the government in addressing SGBV is instituting One-Stop-Shop Centres in 7 districts. These centres provide opportunities for survivors of sexual violence to access legal, medical, psychological, and other support services from a centralized location. One–Stop-Shop centres have reduced financial burden on thousands of victims as they do not have to move from one centre to the other. However, these centres need to be capacitated to make provision for more victims of SGBV emerging. Moreover, the First Lady’s Office launched the “Hands off Our Girls” campaign which has raised nationwide awareness and high-level advocacy on ending SGBV. A Presidential Task force was created in 2018 to oversee SGBV cases from the office of the President (CRC –SL report, 2021).

Education, Leisure and Cultural Activities

The Coalition notes that as part of the Government’s Human Capital Development expansion, total budgetary allocation to the education sector was 1.4 trillion Leones representing 21 percent of total primary expenditures as indicated in the Government Budget and Statement of Economic and Financial Policies (Financial Year, 2020). In 2018, Government launched the FQSE scheme from nursery to senior secondary schools which children are benefiting from. The FQSE scheme has abolished all school charges and subsequently reduced financial burden on parents and increased school enrolment rates from 112.75% in 2018 to 143.71 % in 2019 (UNESCO, 2020). There is now an early childhood development secretariat at the Ministry of Basic Senior Secondary school Education (MBSSE) which provides early year’s educational support to children. However, the secretariat needs to reach out to more families especially in deprived communities and rural communities. The Government accepted the ECOWAS court ruling in December 2019 which found that the policy barring pregnant girls from attending school amounted to discrimination and human rights violation and has lifted the ban on pregnant girls from attending mainstream schools in compliance with previous recommendation of the UNCRC Committee. Another progress noted from Government in the best interest of the girl child is the integration of the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) into the National Basic Education Curriculum. This would now mean that teachers and pupils can have an opportunity to talk about sexual and reproductive health issues openly with girls and this may raise more awareness on SGBV. Comprehensive Sexuality Education has the potential to

expose the girl child to preventative and safe reproductive health thereby increasing their chances to make choices and reach their fullest educational potential (CRC –SL report, 2021).

Disability, Basic Health and Welfare

According to the Sierra Leone 2015 Population and Housing Census, there were around 23,000 children (0 -18 years) recorded with disabilities and majority falls within the age group 15–19 years (7,161). As a progressive move, the Government of Sierra Leone adopted the Persons with Disabilities Act 2011 and established the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities. There are provisions in the Persons with Disabilities Act 2011 for free health care and inclusive education for persons with disabilities. However, specific provisions need to be clearly spelt out for children with disabilities. The Coalition also notes the adoption of the Radical Inclusion Policy by the government of Sierra Leone, which provides policy framework for equal access to education for at risks groups including children with disabilities. This is however an aspiration yet far from reality. For example, there are some primary schools for blind children in Freetown, Makeni, Kabala and other parts of the country (The Sierra Leone Population and Housing Census report 2015).

Analysis

Ratification

Lesotho and Sierra Leone have signed and ratified the Convention on the Right of a Child (CRC), the African Charter on the rights and Welfare of a child and the International Labour Organization (ILO): conventions No.138 and No.182. As both countries follows a “dualist” approach to international laws (Access to justice for children report S/L 2013).

Domestication

The Sierra Leone parliament adopted CRC by domesticating it into national legislation; such national legislation are: the Child Rights Act of 2007, the Sexual Offences Act 2019, the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act 2007, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act 2005 and other relevant national policies geared towards the protection of children in the country. With the enactment of the Child Rights Act of 2007, Sierra Leone incorporated the CRC into its national legal order. Such incorporation was direct, as opposed to subject-by-subject, which means that the statute was adopted to incorporate the whole treaty and not isolated provisions of it (Access to justice for children report S/L 2013).

On the one hand, Lesotho adopted the Children protection welfare act of 2011 with the aim of promoting their welfare as well as protecting their rights inclusive of the right to identity, birth registration, and life with parents, education, health, and social security, protection from labour and torture, as well as parental property. Furthermore, according to article 13 of the CRC, the

child has the right to freedom of expression, inclusive of freedom to seek, receive, impart information and all kinds of ideas, irrespective of frontiers, either spoken, written, or, in an artistic way or through media chosen by the child. Statistically, freedom of expression and opinion are a bit challenging to apply to children, this is because according to Afrobarometer(2018)

Pro Bono and Awareness Campaigns

There are organizations in Sierra Leone that offer pro bono legal services and awareness campaigns, some of these organizations are: Timap for Justice, BRAC , LAWCLA, Caritas and others. In addition, children and their representatives can obtain free legal services from some NGOs specializing in children’s rights, like: Center for Human Rights, Children and Women Empowerment Society. Furthermore, on the part of government, it has established the Legal aid board that is providing free legal service towards children and any other persons. However, the government needs to do more in the area of awareness campaigns to protect children in some part of the country. The Family support Unit (FSU) of the Sierra Leone Police was set up in 2003 to specifically handle cases of rape, other sexual offences and domestic violence (Access to justice for children report S/L 2013).

Sierra Leone has one of the highest child marriage rates in the world with 39% of girls married before their 18th birthday (UNICEF 2016). Further evidence from research has inextricably linked early child marriage to adolescent pregnancy (UNICEF Report, 2021). In Sierra Leone, girls that are forced into marriage have experienced other forms of exploitation including domestic abuse, sexual exploitation and violence. In 2018, the National Strategy for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Marriage (2018 – 2022) was launched with support from UNICEF but implementation has been slow.

The kingdom of Lesotho has placed the responsibility of related services to be delivered by different ministries; however maximum responsibilities are placed on the following ministries: ministry of social development, justice, correctional service and ministry of policing. The judiciary also plays an important role. Minimal responsibilities are placed on ministry of health, education and training as well as the ministry of home affairs, Ministry of labour and employment. Over and above, according to world vision (2020), queen of Lesotho, Her Majesty, Mamohato Seeiso is an advocate for children’s rights and has declared that children should be protected against all forms of abuse early marriage included and legal measures should be taken against the perpetrators. However, it is worth noting that, under the ministerial commitment on comprehensive sexuality education and reproduction health services, Lesotho is among the 20 countries that were committed to end child marriage by 2020. Non-governmental organizations involved in the awareness campaign of children’s rights include: National coalition of Lesotho, World Vision, Lesotho council of NGOs.

CONCLUSION

The following are recommendations with regards to child rights. There should be countrywide campaigns and programmes with regard to children rights. Similarly, parents should be empowered on children's rights, care and protection. Emphasis should be more on children with special needs, thus for this empowerment to succeed, child care professionals including counsellors, psychologists, social workers should be mobilised to offer more support on child's rights.

Government department and other stake holders such as nongovernmental organisations, faith based organisations and civil society can also offer counselling programmes. Secondly, there should be proper dissemination of Information using other mediums such as radios, televisions and pamphlets on the welfare and rights of children.

In conclusion, Both Sierra Leone and Lesotho governments have played a pivotal role in improving the rights of children through signing of the United Nations convention on the rights of a child (CRC). There is a significant improvement as laws and enactments protecting children have been domesticated.

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