

# The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia



## TRC Fast Track

February 14-28, 2007

### TRC Meets Children in Buchanan

A one day children's workshop was held on Saturday, February 3, 2007 in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. Seventy five children (mostly school children), between the ages of 6-18 fully participated. The aim of the workshop was to examine the level of awareness among children about the TRC process. The facilitators came from a child protection agency, the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Issues discussed were, the TRC mandate and the role of children in the TRC process, Child's Rights and Child Protection and problems that could arise with children's participation in the TRC process.



Commissioner Syllah talking about the role of children in the TRC process at the workshop in Buchanan, February 3, 2007

Concerns were raised about the protection of children's dignity and reputation, including the importance to prevent children from humiliation, insults and embarrassment. Thus, child's rights, confidence and personality will be respected to enhance their full participation in the TRC process.

Most participants knew little about the TRC process before. The children asked the TRC to organize sports and community activities to educate children about the TRC, to engage churches and mosques where children go to worship, and encourage schools to discuss about the mandate and work of the TRC with the children.

The County authorities promised to support the TRC

process and encouraged the Commission to prioritize the involvement of children, giving the fact that they



Commissioner Dolopei addressing childrens' concerns at the workshop

are the future leaders of Liberia. It is important that the experiences of the children be reconciled in order to gain a peaceful future.

The TRC intends holding children workshops in districts, towns and villages where strong violations might have occurred, particularly to children. In attendance were Commissioners Dolopei, Stewart and Syllah, EU technical assistance expert Lucy Daxbacher, David Ntambara from the UNMIL Child Protection Unit, Onika Gooding-Freeman from Don Bosco, representatives from several CPAs and TRC staff.



A participant presents the suggestions one of the children's working groups made

## ICTJ Holds Workshop on Hearings for the TRC

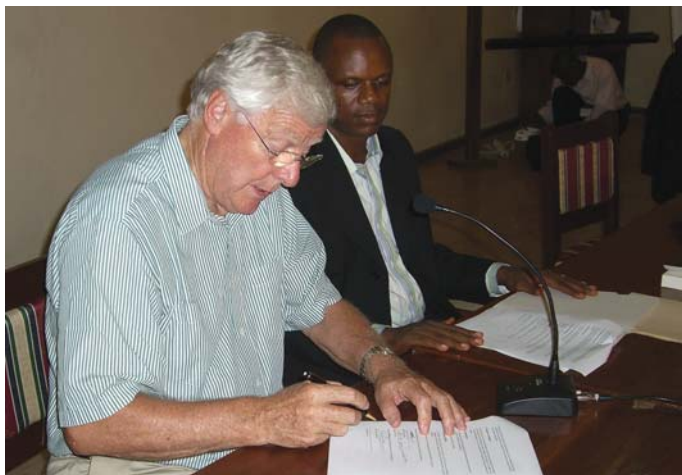
In preparation of its nationwide hearings, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Liberia has concluded an extensive three day Training Workshop on Hearings at the Corina Hotel, Sinkor. The training commenced from February 6 to the 8, 2007. Dr. Alex Boraine, Vice Chairperson of the South African TRC and founder of ICTJ, Javier Curlizza, Executive Secretary of the TRC in Peru (2001-2003), Ozonnia Ojielo, Officer-in-Charge of the TRC in Sierra Leone (2002-2005) and Priscilla Hayner, Director of International Policy Makers, ICTJ, facilitated sessions about fundamental set-ups of hearings in different countries, strategic planning and policy decisions for hearings and programming and realization of hearings.



ICTJ facilitators and participants at the workshop, February 6, 2007

The three day workshop further highlighted the role of individual staff in the hearings and the care that needs to be given the statement giver. The Peruvian, Sierra Leonean and South African experiences were also discussed. TRC Commissioners and the Hearings Committee alongside the Programme Assistants took part in the training.

At the end of the workshop, the TRC and the



Dr. Alex Boraine, Chairman of the ICTJ and Cllr. Jerome Verdier, TRC Chairman, signing the MOU, February 8, 2007

ICTJ signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for a service oriented relationship between the two institutions. The ICTJ has been providing human resource development services to the TRC and will continue to do so.

## Training for Journalists Reporting on the TRC

The International Media Support (IMS), the Liberian Media Centre (LMC) and the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) conducted a training for editors and reporters in cooperation with the TRC. This is to ensure that reporting on TRC activities will enhance the process.



IMS trainer Lars Møller brainstorming with journalists, February 5

The programme started with a one day meeting with editors of media institutions on January 26 at ECOWAS Headquarters, and continued the following week with a three day training each for two groups of reporters, conducted by two international trainers, Lars Møller from Denmark and David Tam-Baryoh from Sierra Leone at the University of Liberia.

Participants got a clear idea about the aims, structure and process of the Liberian TRC and were encouraged to do an accurate, responsible and balanced media coverage of the TRC process.

The training will be followed by a three months group reporting exercise. LMC and the regional consultant will engage and coach the participants in the actual coverage of the TRC process over a three months period. It will include news, feature and background reports on various issues such as children, women and other witnesses needing special treatment appearing before the TRC.

Meanwhile local trainers will train journalists in the Counties.

### Quote of the Week

*"Every staff member is essential to the achievement of the TRC mandate."*

TRC Chairman at a TRC staff meeting, February 9, 2007