



INDEPENDENT POLICE COMPLAINTS BOARD (IPCB)



REPORT ON FOCUS GROUP ENGAGEMENT

OCTOBER 2016

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACC	-	Anti-Corruption Commission
ACHPR	-	African Commission on Human and People's Rights
APCOF	-	African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum
APP	-	Annual Performance Plan
ASJP	-	Access to Security and Justice Programme
CDIID	-	Complaints, Discipline and Internal Investigations Department
CMS	-	Case/Complaints Management Systems
DPP	-	Director of Public Prosecutions
FGE	-	Focus Group Engagement
GoSL	-	Government of Sierra Leone
HRCSL	-	Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
IPCB	-	Independent Police Complaints Board
IPID	-	Independent Police Investigative Directorate (South Africa)
IPOA	-	Independent Police Oversight Authority (Kenya)
IGP	-	Inspector General of Police
JSCO	-	Justice Sector Coordinating Office
LAB	-	Legal Aid Board
MIA	-	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoU	-	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	-	Member of Parliament
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
OO	-	Office of the Ombudsman
PSC	-	Public Service Commission
SLP	-	Sierra Leone Police
SLTU	-	Sierra Leone Teachers Union
SOPs	-	Standard Operating Procedures
TRC	-	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme

PREFACE

The Independent Police Complaints Board (IPCB), is a non-departmental public body established under Section 158 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 (Act No. 6 of 1991). The functions of the 'Board' are set out in Section 3 of The Independent Police Complaints Board Regulations, 2013.

The IPCB is a civilian oversight and investigation body with a national scope and responsibility. The IPCB is an independent body which operates at arm's length from the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), and investigates complaints about possible police abuses resulting in death in police custody; police motor vehicle accidents resulting in deaths or injury; or the inappropriate, or excessive use of force or firearms by police personnel resulting in or leading to injury or death.

The IPCB's principal responsibility is to secure and maintain public confidence in the police complaints system. The IPCB's own reputation is crucial to achieving this aim; if the IPCB and its work are not well understood and respected, this will affect public confidence in the system it oversees. The IPCB is accountable to the Public and to Parliament and must communicate its work in a way that engenders public confidence.

A Communications Strategy has therefore been designed with the aim of ensuring that the optimum use of communication is employed to popularize the IPCB on how it intends to give full effect to its mandate while at the same time listening to its diverse range of stakeholders, learning from what they say, and exploiting the opportunities communication offers in order to secure and maintain public confidence.

There is also the specific oversight mandate in section 3 (2) of The Independent Police Complaints Board Regulations, 2013 which states that-

'The Board shall advise the Police Force on ways in which incidents involving the Police Force as provided for in these Regulations may be avoided or eliminated'.

The landscape in which the IPCB is working continues to evolve, and in charting a way forward we make use of opportunities as and when they present themselves, taking on challenges which we transform into opportunities for creative and innovative actions. The IPCB continues to look out for opportunities to work in partnership with stakeholders and other partners to secure public confidence in the SLP which is the core purpose of our existence.

Since its formal launch in October 2015, the IPCB has been receiving increased public interest about its work. The increasing public interest came at a time when the IPCB was just about rounding up the third stage of its countrywide public education campaign in the form of Focus Group Engagements (FGEs) in all the twelve Districts and the Western Area (Rural and Urban).

These FGEs (or Community Outreach Meetings) allowed the IPCB in a ‘top-down and bottom-up approach, to meet people in various communities across the country. In true consultative style, we heard first-hand; wide-ranging concerns and opinions of the citizenry the sum total of which has been encapsulated in this report which we believe should serve to engender further discussions/debate on the way forward.

I must confess to slight variations from the usual protocols to cater for the energy and perspicacity of the FGE participants, and ask that they and other readers see this document as a potpourri of events, spirited discussions (with emotions somehow kept in check), flow of ideas, inferences, lessons learnt and, above all, increments in our collective knowledge base on the intricacies of what civilian oversight of policing in Sierra Leone is all about.

I would admonish that this report should not be taken as ‘an end in itself’ but as a catalyst to open up a public debate, and in the case of FGE participants, a continuum of the quest we have committed ourselves working towards developing and eventually sustaining a durable relationship of trust and confidence between the Sierra Leone Police and the Community at large.

My thanks go to those who have helped make this venture a reality. I refer to the Membership of the Board for their wise counsels; the Country Director and Staff of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) who, without the least hesitation and within so short a span of time have invested so much in us, and latterly funding the Workshop for the Validation of this Report and its publication; the Team Leader and Staff of Access to Security and Justice Programme (ASJP) for part funding of the FGEs; Mr Sean Tait and Ms Jennifer Irish-Qhobosheane our Consultants and Mentors from the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF) based in Cape Town, South Africa); Senior District Officers and District Officers and Staff for the magnificent job done in successfully coordinating and organizing the Focus Group Engagements in all the twelve Districts; the Chairman and Staff of the National Youth Council of Sierra Leone for a job well done in successfully coordinating and organizing the

Focus Group Engagements in the Western Area(Rural & Urban); FGE participants all over who proved to be the driving force behind this endeavour; Dr Max Sesay, Chairman, Public Service Commission, Ms Sidratu Koroma, Director, Public Sector Reform Unit; Dr Henry Mbawa Jr., Coordinator, Justice Sector Coordination Office(who also moderated the Validation Workshop) for reviewing this document and Dr Ibrahim Bangura our erudite Lead Discussant. Lastly but by no means the least, the intrepid IPCB Staff Members though few in number but so magnificent and generous in their collective output!

I have tried as much as humanly possible to acknowledge various sources in footnotes.

Whatever faults, errors, omissions or other shortcomings there are in this publication, are entirely mine.

Valentine T. Collier, GCOR
Chairman, Independent Police Complaints Board

October 2016

CHAPTER 1

1.0 BACKGROUND

Sierra Leone has made significant progress in building stability after more than a decade of civil war ending in 2002. During the immediate years following the end of the conflict, the Government prioritized rebuilding State institutions with particular attention to the security sector, as well as basic infrastructure.

Although public perceptions of the security sector actors such as the police have improved, surveys still reveal a lack of public trust¹. It was in this regard that the Government of Sierra Leone in its Agenda for Change, 2008-2012 (PRSP II), concluded that only through enhancing the capacity of security actors and building oversight mechanisms for the sector, can economic growth and peace be sustained². This conclusion rhymes well with the UN Secretary General's finding in 2005 that there is ***"no development without security and no security without development"***³.

It was further noted that persistent poor quality of police service in terms of insufficient internal security management and control, harking back to the final years of the civil strife when the Sierra Leone Police was left with extremely little capacity, lacking in transparency, and seen as unprofessional and unable to meet the peoples' needs and might in the circumstance provide the catalyst for a new round of civil unrest and lawlessness.

In July 2013, the Government of Sierra Leone passed Regulations to establish an Independent Police Complaints Board (IPCB). The IPCB is a non-departmental public body established under section 158 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 (Act No. 6 of 1991). The functions of the 'Board' are set out in section 3 of the IPCB Regulations, 2013.

The role and functions of the IPCB are to receive and investigate complaints of a serious nature, and thereby to increase the public's confidence in policing. The IPCB is intended to act as an oversight and investigations body with a national scope and responsibility. In addition, the IPCB is intended to be an independent body which operates at arm's length from both the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and elected officials, and which investigates complaints about potential police abuses including deaths in police custody, police motor vehicle accidents, the excessive use of force by the police involving injury or death, and the use of firearms by police.

¹ Transforming Internal Security in Sierra Leone: Sierra Leone Police and Broader Justice Sector Reform, Peter Alexander Albright, Danish Institute for International Studies (2010:07) pp31-32.

² An Agenda for Change, 2008-12 The Republic of Sierra Leone, p102.

³ Report of the Secretary-General, 'In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All: General Assembly, 59th Session.

Vision

The vision of the IPCB is to ensure that the SLP is responsive to the needs and concerns of the people of Sierra Leone, which it serves.

Mission

The IPCB's mission is to build public trust and confidence in the Sierra Leone Police by holding the Sierra Leone Police accountable through investigation of alleged abuses, seeking to establish the truth, determining facts, and ensuring that justice prevails.

Communications Strategy

In order to give full effect to its Mandate, and as a primary action, the IPCB in consultation with the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF) has developed a Communications Strategy which defines the messaging architecture, maps out target audiences, and formulates key message content.

The strategy is designed to ensure that the IPCB makes the optimum use of communication to popularise the IPCB on how it intends to give full effect to its mandate while at the same time listen to its diverse range of stakeholders, learn from what they are saying, and exploit the opportunities communication offers to secure and maintain public confidence. It is in this vein that the IPCB embarked on its countrywide programme of Outreach and Public Sensitization as reported below.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 FORMAL LAUNCH OF THE IPCB

The IPCB was formally launched on Tuesday 20th October 2015 in Freetown. This occasion also marked the start of a nation-wide Self-Awareness Raising and Sensitization Programme.

A prelude to the above was a series of pre-launch activities comprising:-

- i. **A 2-day multi-agency nationwide workshop** held on Tuesday 29th – Wednesday 30th September 2015 for staff working in civilian oversight and related agencies and the IPCB on the legislation, policies and procedures and the IPCB, ensuring that all stakeholders including the Sierra Leone Police, Human Rights Commission, Ombudsman, Directorate of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid Board, Public Service Commission, Public Sector Reform Unit, Civil Society Organizations, Traditional Authorities and Community Based Organizations were conversant with the role and procedures of the IPCB. This also facilitated inter- agency co-operation.
- ii. **A 2-day workshop held on Thursday 1st – Friday 2nd October 2015 on the implementation of IPCB Communication Strategy with Board Members and Staff**, resulting in a clear implementation plan for the Strategy.
- iii. **A Media Facilitation Event** held on Saturday 3rd October 2015 to introduce the IPCB, its mandate, policies and procedures to members of the Fourth Estate, and in the process attempt at building stakeholder relations and provide a knowledge base that will enhance the spread of accurate information to others and the general public about the IPCB.

These raft of activities comprised the first stage of the IPCB's Outreach and Sensitization Programme.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 REGIONAL LAUNCHES AND TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The second stage in the IPCB's publicity programme involved Formal Launches in the Regional Capitals of Makeni, Bo and Kenema on Monday 19th, Tuesday 20th and Thursday 22nd November 2015, followed in each instance by Two- Hour Town Hall Meetings which were broadcast live followed by radio discussion/ phone-in programmes. Participants were drawn from a cross section of society with vulnerable groups afforded adequate representation.

The IPCB made it quite clear at the start, that these meetings provided the opportunity for face to face encounters with cross sections of communities to introduce and inform them on the Mandate and Activities of this brand new organization, and provide them with a '**listening ear**' by coming together to discuss matters of common concern and, at the same time giving IPCB the opportunity to collect feedback which will help guide the manner in which it would deliver on its Mandate.

Historically, Town Hall meetings have proven to be an important medium to inform citizens about emerging circumstances/issues, gauging where a community stands and identify and implement solutions to problems.

These Town Hall meetings also presented the opportunity for the IPCB to get its message across to the public by generating news media coverage, jump starting local advocacy efforts and identify people who could be involved in IPCB's activities in the future.

These meetings thus gave effect to IPCB's Communications Strategy in which it is stated that external oversight bodies like the IPCB, were more likely to be successful if they had community and political support, and the involvement of Civil Society. A civilian oversight body would often need to conduct significant community outreach programmes to ensure that members of the public were aware of its role, functions and mandate. If an oversight body is unknown or not trusted, complaints would be reported to the police or, more often than not, go unreported. This potentially enhances opportunities for police corruption and bias in the handling of the complaint and results in impunity.

Engagement with Civil Society organizations could also enhance the capability of an oversight mechanism. Regular consultation with Civil Society, especially where Civil Society has significant community outreach or monitoring capacity, could dramatically enhance the effectiveness of an oversight body. Working with Civil Society bodies could be a force multiplier and oversight mechanisms could gain access to expertise, training, research and input into reform policies.

In order to position itself for success the IPCB has therefore embarked on the present course of action to win over community and political support and the participation of Civil Society.

Lessons learnt from the above engagements did help the IPCB to organize and plan its third stage activity encompassing the twelve (12) Districts and the Western Area (Rural & Urban).

CHAPTER 4

4.0 DISTRICT LEVEL FOCUS GROUP ENGAGEMENTS

This programme formed the third stage in the IPCB's Outreach and Sensitization activities, and was originally planned to take place in December 2015/ January 2016. Inordinate delays in securing donor funding only allowed the exercise to start in March 2016.

FGE Itineraries attached at Annex 1.

4.1 Intent and Purpose

Within the framework of its Communications Strategy, the IPCB facilitated a programme of Focus Group Engagements (FGEs) at District level and the Western Area. Participants were drawn from a cross section of communities and stakeholders and other key strategic partners throughout the country at District Level.

4.2 Objectives

This exercise was a critical component of the IPCB's community mobilization and sensitization initiatives with the aim of:-

- ***Ensuring effective communication, engagement and participation by taking the activities of the IPCB right up the people's door step; and***
- ***Gauging public perception of policing in their respective communities with specific regard to the complaints management process and handling of investigations.***

4.3 Methodology

4.3.1 Why focus groups?

Most people love to be asked their opinion and they are generally not shy about voicing it. A focus group is basically a way to reach out to communities for feedback and comment. Focus groups help people learn more about group or community opinions and needs.

4.3.2 When to use a focus group?

- *When you are considering the introduction of a new program or service.*
- *When your main concern is with depth of opinion, or shading of opinion, rather than simply with whether people agree or disagree.*

4.4 Modus Operandi

A diverse selection of participants from each District and the Western Rural and Urban Areas to constitute groups of up to twenty-five (25) with vulnerable groups afforded adequate representation as attached at Annexes 2 and 3.

Guidelines were prepared to guide the discussions so that issues at hand were kept in focus with structured questions/issues developed around thematic issues such as, complaints

handling & investigation (problem identification), including personal experiences with the police, forms of redress, suggestions for policy reform and behavioral change.

4.4.1 Poser: It is generally the requirement for focus groups that audio recordings of sessions should be done to help with accurate report writing and reference purpose. This approach presents a tricky situation as the very act of recording might just serve to impair meaningful contributions from the floor. Participants might not be candid when they know their comments could be attributed to them individually. This is more evident when juxtaposed with local condition and cultural settings.

The alternative approach of non-attribution was therefore decided upon since this medium creates the environment where participants will feel free to talk openly and give honest opinions on condition of anonymity.

Participants were actively encouraged to not only express their own opinions, but also respond and have exchanges with other participants.

4.5 Expected Outcomes

It was expected that the FGEs would significantly inform the IPCB's strategies for influencing widespread behavioral change, as well as enhance effective service delivery particularly in Complaints Handling and Investigations.

4.6 Findings, Inferences and Conclusions

The findings, inferences and conclusions derived from the discussions collated and analyzed to instigate research, policy reform and advocacy work, among other things.

CHAPTER 5

5.0 FOCUS GROUP ENGAGEMENTS

A handbook entitled 'FOCUS GROUP ENGAGEMENT AT DISTRICT LEVEL' was designed by the IPCB copies of which were made available to all participants together with IPCB Information Kits. Participants were encouraged to use these documents to further inform themselves about the IPCB and also to help spread 'the word' to others within their communities.

Each Engagement lasted for a 2-hour period followed by one-hour live radio discussion/phone-in programmes.

5.1 Programme for the Focus Groups was as follows:-

A. **Welcome and Introduction**

Introductions were made and the Moderator gave an overview including the aims and objectives of the engagement.

B. **Rapport Building**

Giving encouragement to participants to start talking and sharing, which took the form of an exercise in **Self-Awareness Raising**.

C. **Information Sharing**

The Communications Officer dealing with –

- i. Communicating with Complainants and Investigation Procedures
- ii. Citizen Journalism
- iii. Working Relations with SLP, CDIID and other bodies

D. **In-depth Discussion on the issue of Democratic Policing**

- i. Democratic Policing – what should this consist of?*
- ii. Are there benefits to policing democratically?*

5.2 Welcome and Introduction

Senior District Officers/District Officers welcomed all participants and introduced the facilitation team from the IPCB.

The Chairperson, IPCB, explained that the FGE was part of the Board's programme of Outreach and Sensitization which was now in the third stage; the first two being the Formal Launch on 20th October 2015 and Regional Launches/Town Hall Meetings during November 2015. The Chairperson also explained that the IPCB had decided that it needed to work in partnership with key stakeholders including the Sierra Leone Police, Human Rights Commission, Ombudsman, Directorate of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid Board, Public Service Commission, Public Sector Reform Unit, Inter-Religious Council, Civil Society Organizations,

Traditional Authorities and Community Based Structures, in ensuring that the IPCB successfully deliver on its Mandate.

5.3 Commitment by the IPCB to share results with Participants

Participants gave their time. The least IPCB could do, was to give them some feedback. The possibility that some members might have become more interested in the issues at hand, and would like to get more involved. The opportunity should therefore be given to do so, as it might provide a fertile ground for the building of reliable and active partnerships.

The IPCB in the above regard convened a Review Session in Freetown on Tuesday 6th September 2016, at which representations – three each from the sixteen (16) focus groups, were invited to participate

5.4 Rapport Building using Self- Awareness Raising Exercise

The sessions started with getting participants to do some ‘soul searching’- a kind of self-assessment and adding some value to one’s self.

A Case Study in the form of comparing the socio-economic circumstance and one’s standing within communities; for instance, that of Garbage Collectors/Farm Workers who were generally considered to be in the lower rungs of the social pyramid, and those at the opposite end. It was the consensus that there indeed existed disparities with the tendency of accepting that this was a fact of life.

As a counter, participants’ attention were drawn to the fact that this should not necessarily be the case, with references being made to the Constitution of Sierra Leone which provided equal protection of the Fundamental Human Rights of every Sierra Leonean, coupled with the fact that we were all **Equal before the Law**.

This assertion was generally given short shrift by participants with the reminder that the reality of prevailing life circumstance could not be ignored.

The case was however made that the issue at hand was that no matter one’s station in life, it still served a useful purpose for individuals to self-examine and try to see how best one can add some value to one’s self esteem. This was why as a first step, the need for **self-awareness** was essential.

Self-Awareness was then explained to participants as the mental ability to recognize who and what a person is. Self- awareness enables a person to consciously realize his/her own personality, feelings and desires and most important, self- worth.

What is the importance and value of self- awareness?

Self- awareness was important because when we have a better understanding of ourselves, we were able to experience ourselves as unique and separate individuals. We were then empowered to make changes and build on our areas of strength as well as identify areas where we would like to make improvements. This was not the preserve of any sector of society, but a God given right to all humanity irrespective of social status.

The IPCB saw this exercise as a foundation laying process, and an attempt to attune mind sets to the idea of self- protection of ones’ human rights backed by the fact that we are all equal before the Law.

5.5 Information Sharing

IPCB Information Kits & FGE Handbooks

The Communications Officer made references to information provided in the IPCB Information Kits and FGE Handbooks distributed to all participants.

Right from the start questions were raised regarding ready means of communications with the IPCB and the fact that the IPCB had no physical presence anywhere outside of Freetown.

The above was countered with the explanation that IPCB only started operating in October the previous last year, and was taking the first steps to reach out and sensitize communities throughout the country, whilst at the same time listening to the wants and desires of communities; that plans were already in hand for a first stage expansion with the recruitment of three Outreach Officers to be stationed in the regional capitals of Makeni, Bo and Kenema; that the only setback presently preventing this to happen was an embargo on recruitment placed by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

The participants were informed that as an interim measure, Complaints could be made either in writing or orally, in person, on the phone or by email. All complaints received will be logged and acknowledged within 48 hours by the Complaints Handling Officer (CHO).

Participants were further informed by the Communications Officer of on-going negotiations that would enable IPCB to buy into SALPOST Post Call Centre Service which by harnessing the power of technology would provide a direct and reliable means to connect complaint calls from all parts of the country via the use of mobile phones which all agreed were now a common feature in all parts of the country. Participants were informed that the service would be up and running by August 2016.

5.5.1 Complaints Handling

Participants were taken through the series of actions to be taken by the IPCB in dealing with their complaints as laid out in the pamphlet 'HOW TO LODGE A COMPLAINT WITH THE IPCB'. Reference was also made to the contents of paragraph 5.0 COMMUNICATING WITH COMPLAINANTS in the FGE Handbook for further clarity.

Complaints that have merit would be handed over to the Investigations Officer for the commencement of an investigation. On completion, the Board's Findings and Recommendations would be forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) for a criminal offence, and to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) for disciplinary proceedings and for the taking of any other action that the Board considered appropriate. These Recommendations and Findings would also be copied to the complainant and the police officer concerned to keep both of them informed of action taken and the reason for the action.

Discussions on the above were concluded with participants being reassured by the Communications Officer, that the IPCB's principal responsibility was focused on securing and maintaining public confidence in its complaints and investigations systems, noting that the IPCB's own reputation was crucial to achieving these aims. If the IPCB and its processes were not well understood and respected, public confidence in the system it oversees, would be adversely affected. This was the paramount reason why the IPCB made itself accountable to

the Public and to Parliament, and would always strive to communicate its work in a way that engenders public confidence.

5.5.2 Managing Complainant Expectations

The Communications Officer in rounding up discussions informed participants that the IPCB would always endeavour to provide as much information as possible to complainants and to the subject police officer(s), particularly at the beginning of the process. These communications should be taken as opportunities to address any misgivings or uncertainties about the complaints process, and to dispel potential misunderstandings regarding the scope of the IPCB's role and mandate, and would go a long way to manage the expectations of all parties.

If a complainant has unrealistic expectations regarding the IPCB's processes and mandate, or regarding the length of time an investigation might take, dissatisfaction and criticism would inevitably be the result.

Explaining how the IPCB's complaints process works, what some of the key steps and likely outcomes would be, and what the IPCB could do regardless of the circumstances that gave rise to a complaint, therefore also allowed for a more effective and potentially satisfying outcome for all concerned.

5.5.3 Police on Police Complaints

Section 8, sub-section 2 of **THE POLICE (DISCIPLINE) REGULATIONS, 2001**, states as follows:-

'It is an offence against discipline for a member of the Force to seek or obtain the intervention in any grievance or other matter relating to his service in the Force of any person or authority, whether political or otherwise ...'

It was observed that the above stipulation was at complete variance with the provisions under Chapter III – THE RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF THE INDIVIDUAL of the Constitution of Sierra Leone.

Over and above, the stipulation appeared to be at complete variance with the provision in section 9 of **THE INDEPENDENT POLICE COMPLAINTS BOARD REGULATIONS, 2013** which states:-

'The Board may conduct an investigation on its own initiative or on the basis of a complaint made by a member of the public, a police officer or a public body.'

5.5.4 Conclusion of IPCB Investigations

The issue of the Board forwarding the Findings and Recommendations from its investigations to the Director, Public Prosecutions and the Inspector General of Police heightened the debate, with participants posing questions as to why the Board lacked the mandate to prosecute police officers who were found wanting. In this regard the attention of participants was drawn to the fact that there was already in place a State prosecution service, and it would not serve any useful purpose to have a duplication of the function of such a high profile and strategically placed office.

During discussions the question was often raised regarding the safety of complainants for fear of reprisals experienced in the past. The IPCB readily accepted that this was a difficult situation to be dealt with based on the fact that IPCB being a new comer would find it hard to give ironclad assurances regarding the safety of complainants. All that could be said within the circumstance, was that the IPCB would strictly ensure the confidentiality of the complaints process which would go a long way to ameliorate the situation and the fact that any incidence of attempted reprisals if brought to its notice would be seriously dealt with.

5.5.5 Citizen Journalism

Citizen journalism is the dissemination of information by people who are not professional journalists. Citizen reporters do not do this kind of journalism because it is their job, but because of the way they want to help improve society.

One problem to guard against is the tendency for citizen journalism being marred by inaccurate reporting.

Citizen Journalism is not a novelty in Sierra Leone as this method of reporting and news sharing was extensively used to great effect during the Ebola Crisis.

The Ebola crisis had been a difficult story for mainstream media to report on as it was often difficult to access areas that were most affected by the epidemic. It was these citizen reporters who regularly shared news about how Ebola has affected their communities all around Sierra Leone – from cities and mining towns to remote villages. Their reports were submitted using basic mobile phone technology, which was available to them, sharing information via recorded telephone interviews, WhatsApp audio and photo functions, and SMS.

The aforementioned is a practical demonstration of the effective use of New Media technology, such as social networking and media-sharing websites, coupled with the increasing use of mobile phones, making citizen journalism a reality and at the fingertips of people nationwide.

Citizen journalism could in value added terms be seen as a stanchion of democracy that ends passivity by encouraging citizens and communities at large, to actively participate in civic and welfare affairs in their various communities. The opportunity is also provided for marginalized people to reclaim their voices to tell their otherwise silenced stories up front. The rapid growth in mobile use across the country is improving transparency and giving a voice to the citizens irrespective of socio-economic status.

5.5.6 Working Relations with SLP, CDIID and other bodies

The IPCB at its very formative stage initiated action in June 2014 to build working partnerships with the Complaints, Discipline and Internal Investigation Department of the Police (CDIID), the Police Community Relations Department, the Public Service Commission (PSC), the Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU), the Justice Sector Coordinating Office (JSCO), the Legal Aid Board (LAB), the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL), Office of the Ombudsman (OO), UNDP, Access to Security and Justice Programme (ASJP) and most recently, the International Security Advisory Team (ISAT).

The reason for building partnerships were as follows:-

- The development of Protocols for a working relationship with the Police.
- To clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the different entities such as IPCB, the Ombudsman and the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL).
- To clarify overlaps between the IPCB and the Complaints, Discipline and Internal Investigations Department (CDIID) and Police Internal Disciplinary Regulations.

5.6 In-Depth Discussions

Discussions began with an introductory statement by the Moderator asking participants to note that the topics to be discussed should be cast against the backdrop of recognizing the IPCB as a 'Trust & Confidence Builder', committed to the overarching cause of ensuring Justice for all.

The moderator further mentioned that the above was related to the fact that IPCB from its inception, in June 2014 made it known to the Executive Management Board of the Police that its approach to delivering on its Mandate will be non-confrontational, with the IPCB taking on the challenging role of 'bridge builder'; building a relationship of trust and confidence between members of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and communities which was a prerequisite for effective policing and community safety.

The topic: '**Democratic Policing - what should this consist of?**' was tabled for discussion.

Participants expressed concern over what had obtained historically and which continued to manifest itself in present circumstance regarding negative aspects of police actions. Participants generally conceded that it was not 100% bad in terms of the comportment and actions of the police; that there was also evidence of positive actions except and sadly so, it would appear that the evil and dishonest actions perpetrated tended to overshadow whatever good deeds there were; that many of the illegal actions perpetrated were common knowledge within communities, leaving victims with hardly any room for redress.

Participants also conceded that there were instances wherein community members by means of 'INFLUENCE AND AFFLUENCE' employed the services of police personnel to pervert the course of justice. It was the consensus that the untoward actions of the undisciplined and ill-intentioned members of the police had constantly brought the image of the police into question in the eyes of communities.

IPCB also reaffirmed that it would at all times endeavour to uphold the integrity of the Police as a national institution, but would not relent in delivering on its mandate in dealing with errant officers of the law.

5.6.1 What should democratic policing consist of?

It was agreed that democratic policing should first and foremost be based on the strong foundation of total respect for everyone's human rights; that the SLP should –

- i. be accountable to the law and not a law unto itself
- ii. be accountable to democratic structures and the community

- iii. demonstrate transparency in its activities
- iv. protect human rights
- v. adhere to high standards of professional conduct
- vi. be representative of the community it serves.

There was also the general observation that policing within a democratic environment has its complexities and contradictions. This could be seen in role conflict – best example of which was the requirement that the police should simultaneously enforce the law and protect civil liberties. Controlling crime in a democratic environment was a complex one – i.e. the police was expected to deal aggressively with criminal and other anti-social behaviour, yet in doing so in accordance with constitutional provisions that guaranteed the right of citizens to be free from unreasonable government intrusion.

5.6.2 Benefits to Policing Democratically

On the question of there being any **benefits to policing democratically**, participants felt that policing democratically will have value on the condition that –

- i. the Police must observe the rule of law
- ii. community trust and engagement will be enhanced
- iii. the Police will be more effective
- iv. service delivery will be improved
- v. fair policing and equal justice is more likely to occur
- vi. this will increase accountability and transparency
- vii. the Police must realise that they operate within a democracy
- viii. it will be of much benefit to the Police themselves
- ix. the Police must operate within the Constitution.

The Moderator at this juncture reminded participants that it was in order to put a stop to acts of injustice, and at the same time build trust and confidence between communities and the police, that led to the creation of the IPCB; that the IPCB as a ***'listening organization'*** had organized these Focus Group Engagements to learn more about the thoughts and opinions at the community level that will help guide its direction and future actions.

Participants were reminded of the role and functions of the IPCB as in paragraph 3.1 of the FGE handbook. Participants were also encouraged to make good use of Information Kits handed out together with the FGE handbook, which should be used to spread the word and knowledge about the IPCB to other members of their communities.

5.6.3 How Independent is the IPCB?

An off shoot from discussions turned the spot light on the IPCB itself, with questions being asked about how ***'independent'*** the IPCB would be in the discharge of its functions, and how credible were its much talked about high level of accountability and standards in terms of ethics and practice.

The Moderator made it quite clear that the IPCB being a relatively new organization and as yet to be tested, would not ask for any concessions; that the IPCB's worth and credibility should be tested in practice by the people, with history as the judge.

Participants however were of the view that-

- i. The IPCB must be held to the same standards
- ii. The IPCB must protect rights
- iii. The IPCB must be firm on its mandate
- iv. The IPCB must be accountable
- v. The IPCB must engender and win community confidence.

The Moderator in the above regard referred the attention of participants to the issue of **Accountability** in section 3.0 of the IPCB Code of Conduct for staff members which states as follows:-

As a member of IPCB staff you are expected to:

- ***Conduct yourself without bias and with integrity, objectivity and honesty. You should not deceive or knowingly mislead others, including other staff, the Board, or the public.***
- ***Deal with the affairs of the public sympathetically, efficiently, promptly and without bias or maladministration. You should always aim to offer the public the highest standards or conduct and service.***
- ***Ensure that the IPCB's resources are used in the most economical, efficient and transparent manner.***

In all of the above the IPCB continued to operate within the strictures of its Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which are detailed written instructions in the form of internal rules governing how the IPCB conducts its operations as provided for in its statutory mandate. The purpose of the SOPs is to achieve and maintain efficiency, quality output and uniformity of performance, and at the same time enable the IPCB to be accountable and transparent in all its actions.

In all of the above, the IPCB is guided and directed by its reliance on the Eight Principles of Public Life (at Annex 4), as enshrined in its Codes of Conduct for both Board and Staff Members.

5.6.4 Finger-Pointing

The incidence of finger-pointing (the blame game), on a few occasions did rear its emotional and fractious head, and had it not been contained, would have caused a deviation from the purpose of the exercise.

The adage holds true that – pointing an accusing finger leaves the accuser with the other four fingers pointing back. Objective reasoning should be the key. Very few people in time of crisis do point the finger of responsibility at themselves. It would be so uplifting to hear at least one person owning up by accepting responsibility for the problem.

What can be done to avoid finger-pointing in a time of crisis? Extracts culled from an article titled '**7 Steps to Stop Finger-Pointing in a Crisis**'⁴ provided some guidance.

- 1. Encourage everyone on your team to remember four words** that can help all of you get through your crisis in the best way possible: '**help more, judge less**'.
- 2. Try to get team members to focus on a future that they can impact**, not a past that they cannot change anyway.
- 3. Try to get people to take responsibility for their own actions.** Sometimes it is easier to see our own mistakes in other people than in the mirror. We may not be able to change what other people have done, but we can certainly change ourselves.
- 4. Ask each person to reflect on the question, "What can I learn from this crisis?"** Anyone can provide leadership when times are easy. Great leaders – and great teams – step up when times are tough. Rather than get lost in whining, have each team member focus on how he or she can grow from this experience.
- 5. Ask everyone on your team to reflect on the question, "What can we learn from this crisis?"** After each person's individual reflection, encourage your team to engage in collective reflection. Find ways to improve cross-team communication and build teamwork.
- 6. Encourage each team member to avoid speaking when angry or out of control.** We all get angry. That is natural and completely appropriate. We just don't have to talk until we settle down and can collect our thoughts. Plenty of research has shown how our 'angry mind' can lead to irrational behaviour that we later regret.
- 7. Before speaking don't just ask, "Am I correct?" – ask "Will this help?"** Just because we believe that something is true, we don't have to say it. If our comment may be hurtful to individuals or destructive to teamwork, it can sometimes just be left unsaid.

⁴ Harvard Business Review: Marshall Goldsmith: 2008

CHAPTER 6

6.0 PEOPLES' VOICES DURING FGEs

During the countrywide engagements some time was allowed for experience sharing by participants of encounters with the police within their various communities. Participants were encouraged to be as accurate as possible and to avoid the temptation of being 'carried away' by emotion and /or using the opportunity for revenge etc. Responses were wide ranging and diverse hence the need for reporting under the following categories:-

6.1 Voices of Young People

Young people who form the bulk of the poor and deprived are always at risk due to the fact that they receive less protection from policing and because their already limited assets made it difficult for them to deal with the consequences of crime and injustice.

Mention was made of the fact that over the years a number of incidences have been reported alleging police violence resulting in grievous bodily harm and at times fatalities, with seemingly no action taken by the police to investigate.

- Vicious assault of a local worker by an expatriate businessman in one of the Districts resulting in the worker losing a tooth. The victim reported the matter to the Police and by a quick sleight of hands found himself being locked up despite the physical evidence of the assault.
- A civilian was filming an affray involving the police and students and his camera was forcefully taken away from him and all the films were erased by the police.
- A police officer employing the reckless use of a catapult resulted in serious eye injury to a bystander, and no action was taken to bring the offending officer to book.

6.2 Voices of Gender Violence

It is common knowledge that there is an unacceptably high level and frequency of GBV across the country including domestic violence, sexual assault, including rape of adults and minors, rape in marriage and school-related sexual abuse. The continuing, deepening culture of violence against women, continue to make headlines.

60% of the population of Sierra Leone are women. Yet, women suffer disproportionately from gender based violence, because of societal values and a general acceptance that violence against women and children is fair game.

There is the case of a woman, who had to flee for her life in the Bonthe District from a group of men. What was her crime?

This is what the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs said in a press statement –

***“Condemning a Societal Violence against a Woman in Bonthe Municipality”:
Tuesday 26th July, 2016.***

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs is concerned about the recent societal violence suffered by a woman; Madam E. S (full name withheld) in Bonthe Municipality on 16th July, 2016 by some youths who claimed to be members of the Poro Society in Bonthe.

The youths alleged that the woman interfered with what they described as “sacred” to men which should be unspoken of by female counterparts.

Whilst the Ministry fully respects the culture and traditions of the aggrieved youths, we believe the youths should have channelled their complaints through an established legal system instead of taking the law into their own hands.

Therefore, the Ministry views the action of these youths as undermining the Government’s Agenda for Prosperity which aims at empowering women and other marginalized groups.

The ensuing violence also resulted in loss of lives of some youths as they clashed with security personnel. Such loss of lives is so needless and we extend sympathies to bereaved families and the injured.

Meanwhile Government will like to assure that Madam E.S is currently safe and unharmed. Social Services Officers in Bonthe and our Southern Province Officers for Advancement of Women & Gender, are closely monitoring the situation.’

It was noted that while there were adequate laws in the country guaranteeing the rights of women and the girl child, the administration of justice with the police being the first point of contact and the protection of the vulnerable have little or no efficacy.

The forlorn question was asked: When will the most vulnerable in Sierra Leone begin to enjoy freedom from violence and marginalisation? Regretfully, all that was heard was ***‘the eerie sound of silence ...’***

Within communities, particularly where traditional male domination was still entrenched, cases of GBV even when reported and under investigation by the police were compromised by the active interference and manipulations by some of the very elders within communities using the inhuman logic of settling matters ‘in a family way’ under the invidious guise of the

Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism which has allowed the (mis)use of personal discretion.

This extreme case of insensitivity according to community responses demonstrated the extent to which the power of **'AFFLUENCE AND INFLUENCE'** had in the past and presently continued to pervert the cause of justice, not to talk of marginalization and discrimination against the female poor and deprived.

Instances were also given in which genuine police investigations were frustrated by non-appearance of key witnesses; and as the story goes, these witnesses who in the main were the women folk, were forcibly removed and hidden away.

A potential game-changer was the increasing level of activism among women groups coupled with the development of community based networks to help deal with the problem.

6.3 Voices of Petty Traders

Many petty traders, particularly women, who were unable to repay small debts end up in prison, with about 10% of all charges issued by the Police involved the failure to repay small debts. The downside is the fact that civil matters of this nature end up being converted into criminal prosecutions with those affected mostly petty traders being detained and adding to the problems of intensified poverty and break up of families. According to AdvocAid⁵, **'... The only reason these women were in prison is because they were poor and could not afford representation ...**

For many women who find themselves caught up in the legal system, they lack an understanding of the basic legal concepts and the legal rights to which they are entitled. The overwhelming majority of women charged with fraudulent conversion are illiterate and do not have access to a lawyer, often not understanding the difference between pleading 'guilty' or 'not guilty'. When a woman accused of fraudulent conversion are asked in court whether they took the money or property ("Yu tek di moni?"), they will often admit to this as they did indeed receive the money or property which was lent to them. However, they do not understand, or it is not made clear, that what is being asked is whether they intended to take the money loaned to them and not return it.

This is clearly illustrated in a case from the UNIOSIL Report⁶:

"Ibrahim Bangura, a businessman, received a loan of Le 3 million from his in-law, and when the matter was taken to the Makeni Police, following delay in payment, the police charged him with fraudulent conversion. Upon his first appearance, he was asked if he owed the complainant the money, and when he answered in the affirmative, it was deemed to be a

⁵ Women, Debt and Detention: An Exploratory Report on Fraudulent Conversion and the Criminalization of Debt in Sierra Leone. AdvocAid July 2012

⁶ UNIOSIL, 2007: Behind Walls: An Inventory and Assessment of Prisons in Sierra Leone. Freetown

plea of guilty to the charge of fraudulent conversion. He was immediately sentenced to 7 years imprisonment with no alternative fine”.

The issue at hand is why should matters of such a nature which is civil should at the stroke of the pens of the police end up being criminalized. Here again, the powerful and ubiquitous hand of ***‘INFLUENCE AND AFFLUENCE’*** comes into play backed by allegations that police stations were being used as arenas to pervert the cause of justice with some police personnel in the complicit role as ‘middlemen’ and for a fee, engage in debt collection and other pseudo-legal manipulations where rough justice too is meted out to the highest bidder. Sad to observe, there is hardly any noticeable change in the status quo.

6.4 Voices of the Forgotten Child Prisoners of Sierra Leone

There was also the issue of child prisoners; child inmates are left to languish in prison with no visitors or legal assistance as many wait for years for a trial.

Take the case of Sorie* whose last day of freedom was a few weeks before his 14th birthday, when the well-to-do father of a girl he liked got word that his daughter had been hanging around with a street boy.

The girl’s father had him arrested for “conspiracy to commit sexual penetration”, and after a brief stay in the local jail house, Sorie was transferred to Freetown’s Remand Home, the pre-trial destination for most of Sierra Leone’s juvenile detainees.

That was more than three years ago and Sorie has spent every day since living in a cell with 13 other boys, despite having never been formally charged with a crime.

“Her family never came to court and the magistrate never called for me again.” He says, sitting in the edge of the tattered foam mattress he shares with two other inmates.

Orphaned by Sierra Leone’s 11-year civil war, Sorie is one of dozens of Sierra Leonean children left to languish in juvenile detention, living in perpetual fear of their 18th birthday and transfer to the country’s only adult penitentiary.

But even those who are lucky enough to have been convicted and sent to the Approved School face unreasonably long sentences for minor crimes ...’

‘Guilty until proved innocent’

Children accused of a crime in Sierra Leone have no right to due process, despite the country having ratified various international treaties that guarantee such protections. As a result, they are often considered guilty until proved innocent, with detention being the first resort for all offences, regardless of their nature.

Their problems all start with the police, because they are their first contact with the law,” stated a child social services worker.

“The officer will get violent with them or say a child is lying about his age. Below age 14 you can’t be criminally liable and these police are supposed to be a filter, but they’re not doing their jobs. We’ve written and distributed age-assessment guidelines, but they don’t use them. The Remand Home is more crowded than it has ever been, and that’s not because children are committing more crimes.”

There [was the case of] four inmates who were mistakenly sent to the adult prison after their arresting officers wrote down different ages than those the children gave after they could not produce birth certificates.

“It was the most terrible time,” said 16-year-old Anthony*, who after spending 11 months at the adult prison was discovered by Italian NGO Don Bosco and transferred to the Remand Home in November 2015. “I had to sleep on the floor with no room to move, I had no clothes but my shorts and older prisoners always harassed me ... I don’t think anyone would have come for me if (Don Bosco) didn’t find me.”

Anthony began court proceedings after his transfer to the youth facility, but his trial has been adjourned six times for reasons ranging from there being no fuel in the Remand Home court vehicle, to prosecuting attorneys calling in sick.

His case was recently adjourned for another month after the judge determined that, without a birth certificate, they have no proof that he was underage at the time of his arrest, and that the case can’t be pursued in juvenile court until one is produced.

‘You do not find wealthy kids in these facilities’

The majority of the detainees were either homeless or living in unstable conditions before their arrests and Ian Leigh, the Logistics Officer for Defence for Children International’s Sierra Leone office, says a child’s social background has a direct effect on how quickly they move through the justice system.

“You do not find wealthy kids in these facilities, but rather children who are already very vulnerable,” Leigh said. “When you check their backgrounds, most of these kids were picked up off the streets ... Some of them have been committed for years ..., sometimes as high as four or five years, for simple offences like larceny, all because they have no one to advocate for them on the outside.”

The Remand Home is a dead end for a child’s schooling with no educational or technical training options available to them. Inmates are confined to their cells 16 hours a day and are not permitted to leave the cell block, although a dozen of the [best] behaved inmates are let out for two hours on Saturdays to play a game of football. Beyond that, their whole lives are lived within their cells where, without access to bathroom facilities, children must relieve themselves in plastic bags to be collected and disposed of by staff the following day.

David Conteh, the social worker in charge of the facility, calls it a “dark world” where children don’t know their legal status ...”⁷

*The names of inmates have been changed to protect their identities.

⁷ Culled from: ThisIsSierraLeone Online News Portal: 29 April, 2016

6.5 Voices of Pre-trial Detention

A sizeable number particularly the less privileged and the poor, are effectively punished even before they face trial in the courts, trampling on due process which grants the accused the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. Granted the fact that not all pre-trial detention is irrational or unlawful; this is so in the case of persons who present a genuine flight risk or of endangering witnesses before trial. The problem is that this is generally not the case. There are reported instances of many pre-trial detainees who have been held on charges linked to minor, non-violent offences, with the consequences of many defendants spending more time in jail awaiting trial than the maximum sentence they would have received if convicted.

6.6 Voices of Commercial Transport Operators

The main feature of reporting under this category highlights the high level of acts of extortion perpetrated by Traffic Police personnel all over the country. The intensity of such actions which could under no circumstance be justified in Law, at first hearing appeared to have really stretched the boundary of truth and credibility, had it not been for the incisive and well – documented expose’ published by The Citizen’s Agenda for Prosperity (CAP) Coalition: Critical Perspectives of Governance, Vol. 6, January 2016, titled ‘**Corruption Stops with Us: Ending bribery for traffic offences in Sierra Leone**’. The consistency of complaints/comments related by both operators and passengers alike seems convincing enough and are in sync with the following extracts from the Summary of Main Findings of the CAP Report:-

i. Acts of Extortion and Bribery

- Nearly 3 in 5 drivers state they pay bribes when stopped by traffic police.
- Of those paying bribes, about 60% stated they paid between Le5,000-20,000. Okada, poda poda and taxi drivers were the most likely to pay these sums (90%) while private vehicles were more likely to pay Le 20,000 and above.
- The most common traffic offences are license-related.
- Being charged to court resulted in guilty verdicts for 98% of drivers. Likewise, over 90% said that they could be put on remand if they plead innocent in court.
- Sierra Leone’s traffic regulations are somewhat vague with respect to what punitive measures should obtain for specific traffic offenses.
- Taxi and poda poda drivers admitted to asking passengers to double or triple regulatory or official fares for distances in order to make up for revenue lost to bribery.
- It is estimated that at least Le81 billion worth of illicit payments were made to traffic officials in the last one year by nearly 60% of traffic offenders.⁸

The irony of the above situation is the fact that these extortionate acts are fed and nourished by some of those mainly in the commercial transport sector who in many ways benefit from traffic violations in league with complicit bent cops always ready to oblige.

⁸ Extracts from Citizens Agenda for Prosperity(CAP) Coalition: Critical Perspectives of Governance Vol.6 January 2016

li. Acts of Violent Behaviour

Several instances of 'Okada' riders in full public view being physically assaulted by police personnel using cudgels, canes and night sticks like baseball bats to violently dislodge both riders and passengers whilst in motion, resulting in serious injuries and in some cases alleged fatalities.

Widespread incidences of seizures of drivers' licenses and extortionate demands by police at check points, road blocks and on the highways to liberate their licenses still continue unabated.

6.6.1 Consultative Meeting

The SLP on Tuesday 1st March 2016 convened a one-day ground breaking consultative meeting of key stakeholders in the Management of Traffic and Road Safety with a significant outcome in the form of '**THE KINGTOM COMMUNIQUE ON ENDING CORRUPTION IN TRAFFIC AND ROAD SAFETY MANAGEMENT**', issued on 3rd March 2016. Full text of Communiqué is at Annex 5.

The IPCB, judging from extensive discussions/interviews conducted, is of the view that the problem extends way beyond the incidence of extortion and lawlessness which has engulfed the conduct of traffic on our roads.

6.6.2 Inferences Drawn

- i. There is the hard fact of life that road infrastructure in Freetown is quite inadequate and cannot in any way cope with the volume of traffic both vehicular and pedestrian.
- ii. The above has been compounded by the regretful nationwide malaise of disregard for traffic rules and road etiquette within the sub-sector of the transportation environment (viz: commercial, private and public), compounded and negatively complemented by unethical practices by rogue elements within the traffic section of the Police and accomplices (civilians and other operators) who continue to exploit the situation with abusive practices and rent-seeking activities contrary to Law and Ethics.
- iii. Traffic Management should have as its main aim taking care of traffic i.e. the travel and transport of people and goods in relative safety. This is now not the case, as the quality of training prior to taking a driving test which qualifies anyone to drive or ride is now a thing of the past. Road etiquette, discipline and the strict observance of the highway code have all been lost.
- iv. Road users (both vehicular and pedestrian) have taken it as a personal right to embark and disembark as and where it suits their personal convenience directly resulting in the further disruption of the sluggish flow of traffic; there is the added problem of intersections and junctions being used as stopping points adding to the already confused state of traffic jams.

- v. It is the considered opinion of the IPCB that blame for this state of lawlessness also squarely resides with the very commercial transport operators particularly some bike riders, taxi and poda poda drivers; evidence abound of their reckless behavior in traffic and in so many instances bordering on the suicidal, lending credence to the belief that quite a number of these operators do drive/ride whilst under the influence of narcotic and/or alcoholic substances.
- vi. In these dangerous situations which appear to be on the increase, those in charge of traffic could have restored some sanity if only they had taken the moral and professional high ground rather than being so complicit by engaging in rent-seeking activities.

6.7 Voices of Community Policing

- i. Civilian/police understanding led to the arrest of a passenger carrying a dismantled AK47 and ammunition in a rucksack. The bike rider (an ex-combatant), whilst ferrying the passenger grew suspicious of the rucksack contents placed between him and the passenger, due to prodding of something metallic on his back.
- ii. Orders given by a superior officer to use fire arms for crowd dispersal was ignored by the subordinate on the grounds that it might result in unlawful killing and injuries. He was queried and the community rose up in support of his action.
- ii. A vehicle missed hitting an inattentive young girl. The young girl's father was arrested and thrown into a police lock up where he remained incarcerated for four days until a protest was made by a sympathetic NGO worker, before he was released.
- iii. A police officer took a loan of Le 3Million from a teacher and failed to pay back after he was transferred to another station. The matter was taken to the LUC who in the pursuit of fairness and without any 'inducement', ensured that the offender was located and got him to make good on his indebtedness.
- iv. A Local Unit Commander (LUC) has taught his personnel to 'use smoke not bullets' for crowd dispersal.

Comment

The above actions demonstrating community policing are quite commendable and instructive and, must be publicized in the hope that these will serve as game changers, and examples worthy of emulation.

CHAPTER 7

7.0 LESSONS LEARNT

The IPCB should -

- continue with its programme of outreach and sensitization to enable the general public gain a better understanding of the IPCB and its work
- get the public to understand how the objectives of the IPCB will be implemented in the interest of fairness and justice
- get the assurance that SLP will cooperate with the IPCB in the fulfilment of its mandate
- establish how much political will is there to support its work
- develop a good working relationship with CDIID
- build good and active relationships with Civil Society
- address how the police can build better relations with civilians and in the process rebuild public confidence
- be able to assess how accessible the IPCB will be for people in different areas of the country
- be professional and independent
- look at how effective it will be without prosecutorial powers
- assess the extent of its authority/mandate to enforce compliance
- ensure the public are aware of where to make complaints against police officers who violate their rights
- build public and stakeholder trust and confidence in the IPCB as a credible independent police oversight body.

Civilian oversight of the police is a key component of a democratic state. Any democracy requires the active engagement of the people. It is necessary for civilian oversight mechanisms therefore to engage with the community/community groups it serves.

Having said thus, it is of concern to note that most if not all of **The Peoples' Voices**, are not new; they are just a rehash of history and sadly so, current happenings which have already been extensively researched and written about. The issue of the veracity of **The Peoples' Voices** are therefore not in doubt. The use of arbitrary or excessive force, high handedness and extensive rent-seeking activities, abuse of due process and lack of demonstrable professionalism, when juxtaposed with discrimination and marginalization of the socio-economically deprived the bulk of which are our young people, creates a toxic mix with awkward portents.

CHAPTER 8

8.0 WHAT NEW QUESTIONS DO ARISE?

8.1 Policing in the 21st Century

In an attempt to put some perspective into this discourse, and within which the IPCB believes lay the crux of the matter, is the issue of what direction 21st Century policing should take in Sierra Leone.

It is an accepted fact that all is not well in terms of comportment of the police due to the indiscretions of some of its personnel which has cast a long shadow blacking over the good and honourable deeds of the fair minded ones.

The question at hand requiring an answer with regards to a positive way forward, is what needs to be done to bring about a change in focus and mindset?

It would of course seem natural for the police establishment to take umbrage and reject the findings and opinions expressed in this report. IPCB however hastens to aver that the exercise undertaken was not steeped in the imaginary, but rather is a collation of **The Voices of the People** coming from the length and breadth of the country.

We who have been entrusted with the sacred duty to protect and serve the common good cannot continue to be in denial as demonstrated by the dint of our daily acts of extortion and meting out of rough justice mainly against the poor and underprivileged, and who happens to constitute the majority.

8.2 The Pros and Cons

Relative to the above, IPCB will at this juncture put the pros and cons within an organizational and historical context in an attempt at unraveling some of the controversies and complexities involved.

Public-police partnership we all agree is necessary for effective community policing and service delivery. In November 2015, a week after WHO declared the end of the Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone, the Sierra Leone Police launched the Community Policing Project in the border district of Kambia. This is a UNDP programme of support under the Security Sector Reform projects seeking to enhance peace preservation and conflict prevention through better community relations with the police and other security services.

During the launching ceremony, it was inter alia stated that the police is-

“A new and professional police force committed to providing best professional service. [The]Police cannot be an effective and modern police force if we do not work closely with the community. The Sierra Leone Police is a modern police force seeking to provide excellent professional service to the country and ... communities. Policing is a service. It is a service to the country. We will ensure that we provide you with the best professional service.”

Laudable and impressive as the above is, yet **The Peoples' Voices** across communities during our FGEs seem to tell a dissimilar story. Incidences of police brutality are still in vogue including the discharge of firearms and using cudgels as baseball bats on hapless citizens, with hardly any evidence of moves to rein in and /or sanction the offending personnel.

Accepting the fact that there will invariably be situations wherein errors of judgment do take place especially in the 'heat of the moment; what riled victims and their relations was the lack of display of any sense of remorse from the perpetrators.

This therefore brings into focus the dichotomy between the positive tenets of community policing as enunciated in Kambia, and the existing **Organizational and Management Structure** of the police which is still fashioned along the traditional form of quasi – or paramilitary lines steeped in the doctrine of command and control, regulating right down to minute detail, the actions of those under its control. Decentralized decision-making which is a hallmark of community policing with emphasis placed on service delivery, continues to be a novelty and is yet to be embraced or valued.

Added to the above is the fact of history that contemporary policing in Sierra Leone continues to be an inheritance of our colonial past, and was created and groomed to enforce law and maintain order so that the colonizers could exercise dominance over the colonized. Policing then did not aim at meeting the needs of local communities; rather colonial police forces were trained and deployed as 'forces of occupation' to suppress any form of protest or dissent.

At Independence, post-colonial leaders adopted the above status quo in all its forms. Post-colonial states in general thus experienced many instances of violation of basic human and peoples' rights associated with enforcement of law and order by the police, especially during civil unrest.

It is only within recent history, starting in the early 1990s and onwards, that African States including Sierra Leone embarked on democratic reforms and gave increasing recognition to citizens' human rights. However, draconian police methods continue to exist particularly, within the context of civil unrest and protests and in the handling of criminal matters, where police actions continue to result in serious injuries and at times, fatalities.⁹

As if to further complicate and confound the case for reform, there is also the perennial issue regarding operational responses of the SLP which continues to be characterized in many cases as inconsistent and lacking institutional discipline. This problem was raised as a particular concern in September 2013 in the **Joint UNIPSIL&UNDP Project on Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone: *Building Effective and Accountable Institutions for Increased Citizen Security*** as it relates to the police taking a measured and uniform approach to civil disorder, with a focus on riot and crowd control. It was noted that the OSD, the armed wing of the police, and in charge of public order management duties, virtually operates under a parallel chain of command with respect to the unarmed General Duty (GD) personnel, tasked with daily routine operational duties. As a result, there have been several instances of disturbances in

⁹ IPCB Presentation to the Constitutional Review Committee: 27th November, 2015

which the command of the Local Unit Commander (LUC) conflicts with that of the OSD leadership. The consequence has been, and continues to be, the deployment of OSD personnel employing the use of lethal force ending with casualties and fatalities that could have been avoided.

The fallout is a continued lack of public confidence in the Police. Clear enforced lines of authority would enable a staggered decision making process which ensures the use of force as a last resort. The need for adherence to clear lines of command and control ultimately go to the heart of police discipline.

8.3 Actionable Measures for Better Policing

Comments by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiatives (CHRI) quoted hereunder, and which is relative to the issue discussed above provides a suitable epilogue:-

It is the State's duty to provide the public with an efficient, responsive and law-abiding police service. As such, the government must ensure that each police officer and the police as a service go about their functions and duties in a manner that respects human rights and the rule of law, builds confidence and cooperation with the community and is accountable for:

- (i) all wrong-doing, including the failure to follow procedure; and***
- (ii) provide efficient, responsive and unbiased every day policing that is regularly evaluated and can demonstrate year on year improvement and public satisfaction. To achieve this, the State must ensure that the police are equipped with sufficient manpower, management, infrastructure, equipment and training to do its job.***

The agenda for better policing, then, requires that the police function:

- As a service and not as a force***
- As an upholder of the law and not merely as an enforcer concerned with maintaining law and order. This means it must do all its work in accordance with the constitutionally mandated human rights framework and within the bounds of law as well as ensure that no one breaks it and if they do, then they are brought to justice. This means that the police must not only protect life and property but also protect the constitutional rights of each individual. As citizens in uniform entrusted with special powers and duties and not an alien privileged force isolated from the public. Modern policing relies on enjoying the support and confidence of society and especially of local communities. Each individual police person must therefore act lawfully, professionally, ethically, and with integrity and be accountable to the law as much if not more than any ordinary person.¹⁰***

It therefore of necessity if not for any other reason, for modernization through a process of reform and change to enable the SLP meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

¹⁰ Police Reforms – Commonwealth Human Rights Initiatives – www.humanrightsinitiative.org/content/police-reforms

8.4 Police Stress

The view of the IPCB is that **Stress Factor** in police work is an issue that cannot be downplayed or continued to be ignored. It must be brought to the fore and given the attention it deserves. The very nature of a police officer's job is to become deeply involved in the lives of those who have either committed a crime or been the victim of a crime. There is also the other side of the coin of having to spend a lot of time working with people who are experiencing high levels of stress. These situations are bound to have some effect on one's own emotional state. The unfortunate fact is that police officers spend an above average amount of time around pain, suffering and sadness.

The public in general see the police as the mainstay that should ensure law and order and stability in society. The responsibility of being the first line of defence in the above regard cannot be taken lightly. The stress of this responsibility can sometimes amount to too much for some members of the police, and can be a source of great strain and even misconduct/irrational behaviour to some.

Also, the exercise of extreme patience and the ability not to rise to provocation are just two of the many emotional skills that police officers must employ on a regular basis. Often coming into contact with hostile and inflammatory individuals, police officers have to repress and restrain a number of natural emotional responses that might occur in these situations. The constant effort at exercising self-restraint can in itself, be very stressful in the long term.

Stress in the work place is a worldwide issue. A report by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2005)¹¹, revealed that police services the world over have been ineffective and have also failed to address the matter of police stress, and bureaucracy in the police service has been identified as a major cause of occupational stress among police officers.

Esterhuyse and Heinecken (2012)¹² observed that in America, Europe and Africa, police service structure was hierarchical, authoritarian and assertive and similar in structure to that of the military. Bureaucracies have rigid hierarchical power control structures, where the greatest degree of control resides at the top of the organization. Therefore those at the lower rungs tend to have the highest demands and the least amount of control hence suffer from the highest levels of occupational stress (Shane, 2008). Heinecken and Van der Waag-Cowling, (2009)¹³ pointed out that the hierarchical nature of the police service is characterized by rigid

¹¹ World Health Organization.(2005). Mental Health Policies and Programs in the Workplace

¹² J. Esterhuyse, A., &Heinecken, L. (2012).Report to the Chief of the SA Army on the Military Culture and Institutional Ethos of the South African Army .Unpublished Paper.

¹³ J. Heinecken, L., & Van der Waag-Cowling, N. (2009). The politics of race and gender in the South African Armed Forces: Issues, challenges, lessons. Commonwealth & Comparative Politics, 47(4): 517-538.

rank, command system and strict disciplinary codes. Police officers are also trained on classic Weberian bureaucracy principles which entail discipline and respect for the chain of command, and are indoctrinated to be conformist and authoritarian.

Stress Factor is therefore an issue that cannot be downplayed or ignored. It must be brought to the fore and given the attention it deserves. IPCB had entertained the belief that stress was a key factor contributing to the excessive use of force by the police and that a key causative factor for this disposition has to a large extent not understood by the public and venture to say, not even by the police hierarchy itself. This phenomenon is not peculiar to Sierra Leone.

This therefore calls for some kind of psycho-social intervention since we are now talking of policing 21st Century style which speaks not only of service delivery to the people, but also of the mental state and general wellbeing of serving officers.

8.5 Local Police Partnership Board (LPPB)

The LPPBs were adequately represented throughout our FGEs. Their participation were most welcomed and did add value and perspective to issues raised and discussed. There was however the discernment that willingness and enthusiasm to 'get engaged' were not enough to drive the process forward. There was talk of lack of resources that has hampered LPPBs being capable enough to adequately deliver on its mandate. IPCB believes it goes beyond the issue of resources; roles and functions needs to be reviewed with a view of giving it a proper focus and sense of direction.

IPCB also believes that a revamped, resourced, better focussed and mandated LPPB, no doubt within the context of organizational reform within SLP, has a crucial role to play particularly in making community policing a reality.

IPCB will be quite happy to partner with such a restructured body.

CHAPTER 9

9.0 RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES - Attempts at building police accountability

- i. IPCB acknowledges that building police accountability will not be an easy task. Just as policing is multi-faceted and challenging, so is policing accountability.
- ii. The IPCB is fully aware of the risk of being seen by the Police as its antagonist. There is also on the other hand, the need to attend to the demands from the public. It is therefore essential that the IPCB carries out its functions to the highest standards, and through robust organizational and investigative practices, provide the citizens of Sierra Leone with some means of protecting themselves against poor or abusive police practices.

The above will be undertaken with a view to strengthening and improving the Sierra Leone Police as a whole, and to improving its reputation and standing with the community over the long term.

- iii. The IPCB's own reputation is crucial to achieving these aims; if the IPCB and its work are not well understood and respected, this will affect public confidence in the system it oversees.

CHAPTER 10

10.0 Conclusions

- i. Good policing is an essential component of good government. Effective and democratic police services in a developing country like Sierra Leone is vital to achieve safety, security, access to justice and the reduction of poverty.
- ii. Building a relationship of trust and confidence between members of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and the community is essential to effective policing and community safety. The public's perception of the SLP, and of its effectiveness and professionalism, rests in turn on the behaviour and integrity of individual police officers; a commodity which appears nationwide to be in short supply.
- iii. Complaints provide a way for citizens to raise concerns regarding the policing services they receive, and serve as a way of alerting police executives to potential problems with individual personnel or with broader organisational practices. Police services can then work to provide police officers with better supervision or guidance, or can apply internal disciplinary measures when this is required and appropriate, extending if necessary to the dismissal of police officers and thereby demonstrating their accountability to the public.
- iv. The IPCB is the central component of the Government of Sierra Leone's police accountability structure, and it is crucial that the IPCB functions in an effective and efficient manner, and is seen to do so by the public.
- v. Citizen complaints, particularly those involving more serious issues, should not be considered a burden on the police or a distraction from their operational duties, but as both a recourse for citizens to voice concerns about poor policing practices, and as a valuable tool for police managers to understand where their organisations and practices are weak and in need of adjustment.
- vi. Complaints can thus be used to monitor and hopefully modify the behaviour of police officers, and as a way to identify problems that exist at the organizational level, for example with police policies or practices in general.
- vii. The need for effective and credible police accountability which is a strategic objective of Government is now a reality in Sierra Leone. This is an undertaking that the Government of Sierra Leone is fully committed to and has taken on board with the establishment of the Independent Police Complaints Board of Sierra Leone.

- viii. The African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights resolved in 2006 that ***'accountability and the oversight mechanisms for policing forms the core of democratic governance and is crucial to enhancing rule of law and assisting in restoring public confidence in police; to develop a culture of human rights, integrity and transparency within the police forces; and to promote a good working relationship between the police and the public at large.'*** The Commission therefore called on states to ***'establish independent civilian policing oversight mechanism where they do not exist, and which shall include civilian participation'***.¹⁴

The aforementioned is an undertaking that the Government of Sierra Leone is fully committed to and has taken on board with the establishment of the Independent Police Complaints Board of Sierra Leone.

- ix. The **IPCB** will continue working as 'BRIDGE BUILDERS' with the objective of developing and eventually sustaining a relationship of trust and confidence between the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and the community at large. Both aspects of the above are necessary prerequisites for the enhancement of community safety and police legitimacy and integrity in our Democracy.

¹⁴ Please see Annex 6 for references and full text of Resolution.

ANNEX 1**FOCUS GROUP ENGAGEMENT ITINERARY**

Round 1		
SN	Date	District
1	Monday 14 th March, 2016	Kailahun District
2	Tuesday 15 th March, 2016	Kenema District
3	Wednesday 16 th March, 2016	Bo District
4	Thursday 17 th March, 2016	Pujehun District

Round 2		
SN	Date	District
1	Monday 4 th April, 2016	Kono District
2	Tuesday 5 th April, 2016	Tonkolili District
3	Wednesday 6 th April, 2016	Koinadugu District

Round 3		
SN	Date	District
1	Thursday 14 th April, 2016	Port Loko District
2	Friday 15 th April, 2016	Kambia District
3	Thursday 21 st April, 2016	Bombali District

Round 4		
SN	Date	District
1	Wednesday 4 th May, 2016	Moyamba District
2	Thursday 5 th May, 2016	Bonthe District

Round 5		
SN	Date	District
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Waterloo – 16th July 2016 ii. Tombo – 18th July 2016 	Western Area Rural
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ferry Junction – 20th July 2016 ii. National Stadium – 21st July 2016 	Western Area Urban

ANNEX 2

CATEGORIES OF PARTICIPANTS (25) FOR THE FOCUS GROUP ENGAGEMENTS

DISTRICT LEVEL

- i. Youth Groups (2)
- ii. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) (1)
- iii. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) (1)
- iv. Inter-Religious Council (2)
- v. Market Traders' Union (2)
- vi. Bike Riders' Union (1)
- vii. Motor Drivers' Union (2)
- viii. Traditional Leaders (2)
- ix. Complaints, Discipline & Internal Investigations Dept. (1)
- x. District Office (2)
- xi. Local Government (2)
- xii. Local Policing Partnership Board (1)
- xiii. Women's Organization (1)
- xiv. NGOs – (2)
- xv. SLTU (1)
- xvi. District Security Committee (DISEC) (1)
- xvii. Community Radio (1).

ANNEX 3

CATEGORIES OF PARTICIPANTS (25) FOR THE FOCUS GROUP ENGAGEMENTS

WESTERN AREA – RURAL & URBAN

- i. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) (2)
- ii. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) (2)
- iii. Senior Secondary (2)
- iv. Inter-Religious Council (2)
- v. Market Traders' Union (2)
- vi. Bike Riders' Union (2)
- vii. Motor Drivers' Union (2)
- viii. Tribal Head (1)
- ix. Complaints, Discipline & Internal Investigations Dept. (1)
- x. Western Area Rural/Urban Council (1)
- xi. Local Policing Partnership Board (1)
- xii. Women's Organization (2)
- xiii. NGOs – in Advocacy (2)
- xiv. Community Radio (1)
- xv. Youth Groups (2)



THE EIGHT PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

These Principles of Public Life apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources.

The Eight Principles are:-

PATRIOTISM AND LOVE FOR COUNTRY

Holders of public office must put the interest of Sierra Leone and the People above all else.

SELFISHNESS

Holders of public office should act solely in the interest of the public.

INTEGRITY

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organizations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decision in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

OBJECTIVITY

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

TRANSPARENCY

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

HONESTY

Holders of public office should be truthful and forthright in all undertakings.

COMMITMENT

All Holders of Public Office should commit themselves to exhibit these principles in their own behavior. Public Office Holders should actively promote and robustly support these principles and be willing to challenge bad and negative behavior wherever it occurs.

(Culled from Code of Conduct of the IPCB)



THE KINGTOM COMMUNIQUE ON ENDING CORRUPTION IN TRAFFIC AND ROAD SAFETY MANAGEMENT

At the end of a one day ground breaking consultative meeting of key stakeholders in the management of Traffic and Road Safety, including the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority (SLRSA), the Motor Drivers and General Transport Workers Union (MD>WU), the Sierra Leone Commercial Motorbike Riders Union (SLCMBRU), the Passenger Welfare Association-Sierra Leone (PAWEL-SL), the Independent Police Complaints Board (IPCB) and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) held at the Senior Police Officers Mess, Kingtom in Freetown on Tuesday 1st March 2016 to address the persistent levying of accusations of corruption against the Sierra Leone Police as an institution particularly the Traffic Police Directorate and Traffic Wardens of the SLRSA, an understanding was reached hereinafter called the Kingtom Communiqué.

Whereas the SLP is mandated under the Road Traffic Act of 2007 and the Traffic Regulations of 2011 for the management of traffic and road safety,

Whereas the SLRSA is charged with the responsibility to regulate and coordinate development in the transport industry, including the registration and licensing of vehicles, drivers and prescription of routes for goods and passengers and other matters connected thereto including enhancing road safety,

Whereas the MD>WU, SLCMBRU, PAWEL-SL organizations are pressure groups set up to advocate on behalf of its members and regulate their conduct amongst other things, and

Whereas the IPCB is an independent civilian oversight institution established under Section 158 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone (Act No. 6) of 1991 whose functions are set out in Section 3 of the Independent Police Complaints Board Regulations of 2013 to receive and investigate complaints of a serious nature and thereby to increase public confidence in policing, and

Whereas the ACC is the lead agency for the prevention, investigation, prosecution and punishment of corruption and corrupt practices and other related matters as provided for in the Anti-Corruption Act of 2008, and

Mindful of the damage corruption has had on the image of the Sierra Leone Police, the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority and the country as a whole, now resolve as follows;

1. That the SLP and the SLRSA will work with key stakeholders to segregate minor traffic offences for warning from serious traffic offences for litigation. This will be publicized in the shortest possible time for the attention of all road users.
2. That the SLP, SLRSA, the IPCB and other key stakeholders, raise public awareness regarding Section 87 (6) of the Road Traffic Act 2007 which states:

"Where a person is required under this section to produce a license or a certificate or any other document relevant to driving a motor vehicle or motor cycle, the person shall produce it immediately or within twenty-four hours of being so required."

3. That Traffic Police Officers and Traffic Wardens are forbidden to collect any form of an advantage either in the form of a bribe, gift, or token in the conduct of their duties.
4. In the above regard, the public particularly drivers and bike riders, are admonished to desist from offering any form and or kind of advantage to officers of the law, noting that such actions violate Section 28 (3) of the Anti-Corruption Act 2008
5. As a follow up to ongoing efforts to reduce the presence of personnel at check Points, stakeholders encourage Government to consider the reinstatement of traffic lights nationwide
6. Stakeholders agreed that further consultations will be held to address a number of other issues related to the above.

Signed and dated at Freetown, this 3rd day of March, 2016

1. The Inspector General of Police _____
2. The Executive Director, Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority _____
3. The Chairman, Motor Drivers and General Transport Workers Union (MD>WU) _____
4. The Chairman, Sierra Leone Commercial Motorbike Riders Union (SLCMBRU) _____
5. The Chairman, Passenger Welfare Association-Sierra Leone (PAWEL-SL) _____
- ✓ 6. The Chairman, Independent Police Complaints Board (IPCB) _____
7. The Deputy Commissioner, Anti-Corruption Commission _____

ANNEX 6

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

103a: Resolution on Police Reform, Accountability and Civilian Police Oversight in Africa

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights at its 40th Ordinary Session held in Banjul, The Gambia, from 15th to 29th November, 2006,

Being aware that police forces throughout Africa play a critical role in the maintenance of law and order, the administration of justice, the respect for the rule of law and enhancing peace and the security of persons and property in every state,

Noting, that policing is increasingly recognized as a basic foundation in building democracy, promoting human and peoples' rights, without which democratic practices, economic, and social development and the promotion of human rights are constrained and even jeopardized,

Recognizing, that the establishment and existence of many police forces in Africa trace their history from laws and practices which originate from the past colonial experience of our continent,

Concerned that in many of the African States, there exist no independent policing mechanisms, to which members of the public may report police misconduct and abuse of their powers for redress and that where they do, they are directly under the police authorities,

Recognizing that Police forces in African states, which do not have independent oversight mechanisms require reform in order to become effective instruments of security, safety, justice, and respect for human and peoples' rights across the continent,

Further recognizing, that a wealth of local knowledge and experience on policing reform in Africa is available to inform emerging reform initiatives,

Noting that accountability and the oversight mechanisms for policing forms the core of democratic governance and is crucial to enhancing rule of law and assisting in restoring public confidence in police; to develop a culture of human rights, integrity and transparency within the police forces; and to promote a good working relationship between the police and the public at large,

Encouraged by the initiative taken in the formation of the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF), through the collaboration of Civil Society and State Civilian Police Oversight agencies, as an African initiative to promote police reform and with it the building and strengthening of civilian police oversight in Africa,

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights:

1. Calls on State Parties to the African Charter to take measures in terms of Articles 1 and 5 of the African Charter, to ensure that police **forces** respects the dignity inherent in the individual during the discharge of their duties in the maintenance of law and order;
2. Calls on State Parties to the African Charter to adopt laws and regulations implementing the guidelines contained in the Resolutions of the African Commission on the Guidelines and Measures for the Prohibition and Prevention of Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Africa, otherwise known as the Robben Island Guidelines, as far as they relate to Policing in Africa;
3. Urges State Parties to the African Charter to establish independent civilian policing oversight mechanism, where they do not exist, which shall include civilian participation.