

SUMMARY: HUMAN RIGHTS BROWN BAG WITH Mr. BRIAN OSUNDWA – 8th APRIL 2015

- ❖ The Human Rights Brown Bag session was delivered by Mr. Brian Osundwa who focuses on International Human Rights Law for his Law School Programme.
- ❖ The brown bag was on the **role that human rights initiatives and advocacy groups play in the realization and protection of social, economic and political rights** and used the Kenyan Students for Human Rights Initiative conceptualized by Mr. Brian Osundwa at the University of Nairobi School of Law. The initiative is premised upon identifying and addressing human rights violations or non-respect for human rights that happen in institutions of higher learning such as discrimination along gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and racial perspectives.
- ❖ The presentation by Mr. Osundwa began with an overview of the crucial role that human rights initiatives, regardless of the size of the initiatives (including single individual advocacy movements) can play in effecting change and spark thought and conversation on human social, economic and political rights.
- ❖ A sample of a campaign that had been run by the **Kenyan Students for Human Rights Initiative** titled ‘I, too, am Human’ was presented by Mr. Osundwa. For the campaign, the Kenyan Students for Human Rights Initiative and students at the University of Nairobi School of Law came together and spoke out against some of the common, demeaning, retrogressive and even inflammatory stereotypes that they encounter in their day to day lives. **Gender, racial and tribal stereotypes** are some of the facets of stereotyping that they wanted to speak out against because they understand how much a society can be possessed, and even destroyed, by them. They expressed their sentiments in a photo campaign aimed at sparking thoughts and igniting conversations within the society they live in.

Here is a link to the campaign: <http://i2amhuman.tumblr.com/>

- ❖ Mr. Osundwa prompted everyone to be human rights advocates, even at the individual level. By asking ‘why’ and by questioning some of the institutionalized violations of human rights that are undiscussed can make significant efforts in realizing and in protecting some of the social, the political and the economic rights that every human being is entitled to.
- ❖ The second part of the presentation was a **human rights briefing session** which was on the basic human rights and human rights of particular relevance to UN-Habitat.

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- ❖ The presentation was the final session of the briefing sessions which had been rolled out to the various branches as the basic trainings that set the ball rolling for the Human Rights Based Approach checklist and **Human Rights Marker** by Ms. Sonja Ghaderi and the **intermediate and advanced training on human rights** by Ms. Clara Polsinelli on the **27-28 May**.
- ❖ Subsequently, Mr. Osundwa expressed that if any branch of UN-Habitat was still interested in the human rights briefing sessions, he would be more than happy to share the briefing sessions with any interested persons.
- ❖ After the presentations, questions, comments and suggestions were welcome from the audience. There was a general agreement that there was need for human rights advocacy by individuals, organizations and initiative, acknowledging their **fundamental role in realizing and protecting human rights**.

