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**PRESS RELEASE**

**AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN PAYS COURTESY CALL ON THE SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT**

The Ambassador of Japan to Sierra Leone, His Excellency Tsutomu Himeno has on Monday 24th June 2019 paid a courtesy call on the Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament, Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu, in his Office at Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown.

They exchanged diplomatic pleasantries and spoke on the need to continue the process of strengthening the bilateral relationships between the two countries.

Welcoming the Japanese Ambassador, the Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament, Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu said “he is gratified to see the Japanese Ambassador’s visit to Parliament” and acknowledged the good bilateral relationships that had existed between the two countries. The Hon. Speaker spoke on the need to empower the youth through vocational skills and training through the establishment of Vocational Training Centers in all District headquarter towns in the country. He also applauded the Government for putting sound policies in place that are geared towards the improvement and development of the country’s economy. The Speaker informed the Ambassador that Sierra Leone is open to foreign direct investment.

In his statement, the Japanese Ambassador, H.E. Tsutomu Himeno appreciated the Speaker of Parliament for the warm welcome accorded him and said his visit is to prepare the road map for the visit of His Excellency the President, Julius Maada Bio to Japan to attend the “Tokyo International Conference on African Development” at the end of August 2019 where over 50 African Presidents will be attendance through an invitation by the Japanese Government. The Ambassador also said that the visit of the President to Japan will open a lot of private partnership investments, whilst acknowledging the role and support the Government of Japan is contributing to the African Continent.

Ambassador H.E. Tsutomu Himeno informed the Speaker that the Japanese Government is partnering with IOM for training migrants in Sierra Leone on vocational training skills around the country and that recently Parliament ratified an Agreement on Sierra Tropical Limited Company, a Company owned by Japanese Investors to plant and produce pineapple juice in Sierra Leone.

The Ambassador also engaged the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Sidie M. Tunis on the need for stronger bilateral relationships for both countries and pleaded for support to Parliament in the area of capacity building for MPs and staff of Parliament.

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