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3RD JULY 2018

PRESS RELEASE

PARLIAMENT ELECTS HON. VERONICA KADIE SESAY AS ACTING SPEAKER

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Tuesday 03rd July 2018 in a resolution voted overwhelmingly for Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay to preside and act as Speaker of the Parliament of Sierra Leone for today's proceedings, following the absence of the substantive Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, the Rt. Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu and Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas.

She is the longest serving female MP in the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone and the second female MP to act as Presiding Officer (Acting Speaker) after the late Hon. Elizabeth Alpha Lavallie, who was Deputy Speaker in the Second Parliament of the Second Republic.

Congratulating MPs for the confidence reposed on her to act as Speaker of the House, Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay said that; the women of Sierra Leone have started to see the light at the end of the tunnel, adding that what men can do with respect, women can do it even better. Referring to the accolades heaped on her as acting Speaker of Parliament, she promised to pursue and do follow-up with the authorities concerned in order to improve on the welfare of MPs, saying those who had suffered have the right to enjoy; calling for tributes to the living rather than dead which she considered of no effect; that her tomorrow will be greater than today; and that even a day's King is a King; whilst calling on the 18 female MPs to work alongside the men; with the view of wooing their support towards the development of women in the country.

She also said that the votes and proceedings could not be adopted because it was not properly laid before her, whilst recognizing a Team from the United States that is supporting the Government and the people of Sierra Leone particularly in the area of education across the country, which is the flagship programme of the "New Direction".

The Clerk of Parliament, Hon. Umar Paran Tarawally had earlier reported to the House the unavoidable absence of both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, and called for nominations to be open in line with Section 88 (c) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone and Standing Order 10 (1) of the House's Rules of Procedures, aimed at electing one among the MPs to preside over the proceedings for a day.

The Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mohamed Sidie Tunis nominated her to act as Speaker of Parliament for the day's proceedings, and was seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Chernor Ramadan Maju Bah respectively.

By a resolution of the House, Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay was returned, withdrawn, robed, and advised by the Clerk of Parliament "to take the Chair as Presiding Officer and acting Speaker of the Parliament of Sierra Leone for the day's proceedings".

Congratulating her on her ascendancy to act as Speaker of Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Chernor R.M Bah said that men should do all they could to support capable women to succeed, adding that "he was proud of her election to act as Speaker of Parliament".

The Deputy Leader of Government Business, Hon. Sahr Mathew Nyuma said that "the New Direction is supportive of the affirmative action geared towards the growth and development of women, whilst calling on the acting Speaker to address issues that are related to the rights and welfare of MPs, cognizant of her being "the longest serving MP" in the current Parliament.

Contributing, Hon. Rebecca Y. Kamara of C4C said that she is proud to see that a noble woman and a "Mother of the House" who cuts across the political boundaries has been elected to act as Speaker of Parliament, whilst speaking on the need for the Leadership of Parliament to capacitate the 18 female MPs, with the view of lifting the banners of women higher and higher.

The Leader of NGC, Hon. Alhaji Dr. Kandeh Yumkella said that "he could not resist the temptation of saying Madam Speaker", and described her election as "a major step to gender parity", and added his support to the cause of women who could one day occupy the presidency of Sierra Leone.

The Chief Whip of Parliament, Hon. Dickson Rogers said that "the APC, SLPP, NGC, C4C and the other parties in Parliament are working together in unison", whilst calling on their supporters not to fight as they are brothers and sisters in Parliament.

Extending her congratulatory remarks, Paramount Chief of Pujehun District, Hon. Matilda Lansana Yaya Minah said that "this is the beginning of attaining the 30% quota for women in Sierra Leone".

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Ibrahim Ben Kargbo said that "women and men are co-equal", describing her election as acting Speaker as a continuum of her political career; that she is even qualified to become Vice President one day; adding that she is a multi-linguist and a true Sierra Leonean who has demonstrated leadership over the years.

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