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PRESS RELEASE

PARLIAMENT ADOPTS A RESOLUTION ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 14th February 2019 debated and unanimously adopted a resolution on women, peace, and security that was laid on the Table of the House on Thursday 07th February, this year.

Presenting the Resolution prior to adoption by the House, the President of the Parliamentary Female Caucus, Hon. Veronica K. Sesay recognized UNDP's global project on "The Role of Parliaments as Partners in Women, Peace, and Security", with minimal funding from the government of Norway. As such, she continued that UNDP's commitment is to work with four legislatures, including the Sierra Leone Parliament which is the only one chosen from Africa, to progress their national identified priorities that are geared towards supporting women, peace, and security in their home countries. The four countries identified for this pilot project are Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka.

Hon. Veronica K. Sesay also said that the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda was formally initiated and adopted by a UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and was endorsed on the 31st of October, 2000. Since then, Resolution 1325 had been affirmed through subsequent ones, aimed at calling attention to the unique needs of women in conflict-affected situations, such as a variety of interventions to protect women and girls affected by conflict and to ensure their inclusion in peace building processes that affect them, promotion of women's participation in decision-making, peace processes, political, judicial, elections, post-conflict peace building and efforts to prevent violence and extremism.

Highlighting the four main pillars under Resolution 1325, Hon. Veronica K. Sesay said they include participation of women at all levels of decision-making, protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, prevention of violence against women, and relief and recovery measures to address international crises through a gender lens.

In adopting the Resolution, MPs have committed to do some of the following by using parliamentary processes and advocacy to promote law reforms in support of gender equality and women's peace and security, push for the amendment of Section 27 (4d & e) of the 1991 Constitution which allows for discrimination against women, fast track the adoption of amendments to the Child Rights Act of 2007 to make it consistent to the Registration of

Customary Marriage and Divorce Act of 2009, and to debate and enact a Bill on affirmative action for Parliament among others.

MPs who spoke to the motion acclaimed and referred to the Resolution as non-controversial and that it is geared towards protecting women, children and girls from all forms of gender based violence, cognizant of efforts that had been made by Government to combat such acts against women and girls in Sierra Leone in light of inheritance, control, and decision-making processes.

They have also called on Government to promote issues relating to women such as the speedy conclusion of cases pending determination in court, recruitment and promotion of women in employment, provision to get forensic evidence against perpetrators of rape, and huge budgetary allocation with stringent supervision on issues relating to the prevention, participation, and protection of women and girls in Sierra Leone.

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