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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **PARLIAMENT PLEDGES TO SUPPORT MEASURES AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE**

In his opening remarks, Chairman for the Parliamentary Committee on Transport and Aviation, Hon. Alpha Babatunde Lewally has pledged to support budgetary and legislative measures to the Meteorological Department with the view of combating emerging climate change issues in the country.

He also encouraged Sierra Leoneans to adopt adapted and mitigated measures including tree planting, proper waste management, avoid deforestation for charcoal burning, and the provision of alternative livelihoods with the aim of reducing the impacts of disasters like flooding. These measures, he said if adopted would “avoid the avoidable, and manage the unavoidable” through timely dissemination of information and early warning signs. He further called on the project to capacitate MPs to sensitize their constituents on issues related to reducing the impacts of climate change in the country.

He made these statements during the course of a two days’ workshop (22-23 September, 2016) in Makeni for policymakers which was sponsored by UNDP, and facilitated by EPA and the Ministry of Transport and Aviation.

UNDP’s Mariatu Swarray, whilst making a brief statement on behalf of the Country Director said that the presence of MPs has demonstrated a collective obligation to combat climate change by stimulating such determination at constituency, national, regional, and global levels. She also called on MPs to increase budgetary allocation to the Meteorological Department and pass, ratify, and domesticate the necessary legislations aiming at a climate resilience country. Whilst speaking to MPs on the project, she emphasized an integrated approach involving all sectors to combat climate change, noting their engagement with EPA, ONS, and the Ministries of Water Resources and Transport and Aviation. She later described climate change as a “national security threat” with a huge tendency of derailing our development.

Senior Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Transport and Aviation, Ambrose Massaquoi described the workshop as an opportunity to learn about emerging issues relating to climate change, whilst noting the institution of an early warning and information systems aimed at building the capacity of the Meteorological Department.

Some of the topics include an overview of climate change issues, managing climate risks, presentation on forecasting and early warning systems in Sierra Leone, mainstreaming

climate change and development, and the roadmap for the implementation of the Paris Agreement amongst others.

The facilitators were Abdul Salim of EPA and Alpha Bockarie of the Ministry of Transport and Aviation. Others present were ONS, CSOs, and the University of Makeni.

The workshop also resolved for the creation of a parliamentary action group on climate change.