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**PRESS RELEASE**

**PARLIAMENTARY FEMALE CAUCUS HOLDS A TWO DAY DIALOGUE WORKSHOP ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION BILL**

The Sierra Leone Parliamentary Female Caucus has on 2nd July 2019 held a two day workshop for the preparation of an Affirmative Action Bill in the Western Area Rural District with the theme “engaging national stakeholders for gender sensitive laws and policies in Sierra Leone”.

Officially opening the two days session, the Clerk of Parliament, Hon. Paran Umar Tarawally commended the Leadership of the Female Caucus and International Organizations for supporting initiatives that are geared towards women's development in the country. He encouraged the female MPs to support the affirmative action and to work collaboratively with each other to achieve the aims and objectives that are embedded in the affirmative action for women's empowerment.

He recalled how the last Parliament fought to ensure that the objectives of the Female Caucus were achieved, but to no avail. He also noted that the current Government of President Bio has special regards for women, assuring that Parliament would cooperate with them to overcome the challenges that are affecting women's empowerment.

On her part, the President of the Parliamentary Female Caucus, Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay applauded the Clerk and the Leadership of Parliament and International Partners for supporting the Female Caucus in their efforts and strides to promote women's issues in the country. She used the platform to call on colleague female MPs to put aside political party affiliations and give priority to issues concerning the welfare and development of women and children in Sierra Leone.

According to Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay the affirmative action Bill would provide the road map on how they as a caucus would champion issues affecting women and children in the country.

Speaking at the workshop, Madam Mary Akumu, a Representative from the United Nations heaped enormous praises on the Female Caucus for championing women's issues in the country, whilst acknowledging the need for the 30% quota relating to women's participation in politics. She also spoke on the importance of the Sexual Offences Act relative to the objectives set in the SDGs for the development of the country.

Representing the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Sahr E. Juana averred that “in dealing with women's issues, it is high time we moved from preparation to actualization”. He also commended the Female Caucus and admonished them to work assiduously and collaboratively to achieve their aims and objectives. On behalf of the Leadership of Parliament, Hon. Juana promised their fullest support to the women in order to achieve the 30% quota for women's empowerment and advancement in the country. The two days dialogue workshop was supported by the Parliament of Sierra Leone in collaboration with United Nations Peace Building, United Nations for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Development Programme.

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