

# NEWSLETTER OF THE SIERRA LEONE PARLIAMENT



Volume 1

*A Publication of the Parliament of Sierra Leone*  
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Issue 1



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# PARLIAMENT ON THE PATH OF CHANGE

## FOREWORD



With the enactment - and steady implementation of the Parliamentary Service Act 2007, the organisation and efficiency of Parliament have since undertaken a journey of change.

This publication itself is evidence of the evolving transformative changes, along with the setting up of new administrative structures/departments and strengthening of the overarching political ones.

It is still a learning process for us, but we hope the learning curve will continue to rise with visible effects.

From the Well of Parliament to the oversight domain and other representative functions, the Newsletter of the Sierra Leone

Parliament attempts to broadly highlight what Parliament represents - a legislature, an overseer and an advocate of the people.

Even beyond that - our international relations.

This is only the beginning; but we shall maintain quarterly publications so readers can be reasonably informed about the ongoing and unending range of parliamentary activities of great import to the electorate.

The commencement of this publication fills a five-decade information vacuum, putting us at par with sister parliaments and somehow bridging the communication gap between Parliament, her friends and citizens.

Let's embrace it and please feel free to send us your feedback.

In recent times, we have seen unprecedented changes and arguably more positive developments in the governance structure of the Sierra Leone Parliament.

## PARLIAMENT ENDORSES SLPMB ASSETS TRANSFER

Parliament has passed the Bill for the transfer of assets of the defunct Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board (SLPMB) to the newly established S/L Produce Marketing Company (SLPMC).

In the plenary before the passage, there was sustained debate following the call for the setting up of an interim Board; but it was argued it might not be necessary at this stage.

In clarifying the issue, the Hon. Chernor Bah said it is after the setting up of the company and transfer of its assets that further action will be taken to set up its Board.

Prior to the ratification, at the pre-legislative hearing, Chairman of the Legislative Committee, Hon. Ajibola Manly-Spaine revealed that the Committee had gone through the Bill and found it non-controversial, noting further that "the memorandum of objects and reasons is very clear on the rationale for the promulgation of the Bill into law" i.e. the transfer of the interests of the SLPMB to the new company.

## NEW MPs SWORN-IN



One of the newly Sworn-in MPs (in red & white) with Leadership figures nearby

Following recent bye-elections in Bombali and Tonkolili Districts at the end of June, the victors - two young candidates: Salieu O. Sesay (Con. 29) and Aron Koroma (Con. 62) were sworn-in as Members of Parliament, bringing up the total number of MPs to 121.

They replaced former Chief Whip Hon. Matthew Teambo (Con.62) and Hon. Alimamy Kamara (Con. 29) who were both appointed Ministers with substantive Cabinet rank.

# “CONNECTING PARLIAMENT WITH THE PEOPLE”

## SPEAKER'S NOTE



*Hon. Justice Abel N. B. Stronge  
Speaker of Parliament*

The growth of democracy in recent years has heightened awareness around the need to communicate information on what parliaments do, to their electorates. No wonder that in 2012, the Speakers' Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, meeting in Trinidad & Tobago had as theme, "Connecting Parliament with the People."

MPs may have observed my unease whenever the SLBC camera crew fail to turn up for debates.

It simply goes back to this fundamental need for Parliament to connect with its electorate, via the mass media. Indeed, the electorates have a right to be informed. So, if what Parliament does matters at all, this newsletter should hopefully add value to her venerable role as enshrined in the Constitution.

Let me therefore, on behalf of the entire Leadership and all Members of Parliament, thank all those who made this possible, particularly development partners such as the UNDP.

We send forth this newsletter as a new channel connecting our Parliament with its people - the 112 constituencies and 12 districts of Sierra Leone.

In addition, the Government, civil society, international community, international parliamentary bodies, political parties, public and private sectors also deserve to be informed on what goes on within the walls of the Legislature.

## PAC HITS THE ROAD WITH AUDIT SERVICE S/LEONE

Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) with technical support from Audit Service Sierra Leone, has undertaken an exhaustive round of oversight hearings in Freetown and throughout all Districts in the country.

With its own support staff and backed by a professional team from the Audit Service, the eleven-man Committee which is chaired by the Deputy Speaker, embarked on oversight outreaches to Bo, Kenema and Makeni, covering a wide range of auditee Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) as well as Local Councils spread across the country. These are in addition to hearings in Parliament's Seminar Room in Freetown.

All of this comes in the wake of the Auditor-General's 2011 Report, which the PAC Chair tabled some months ago in Parliament. It documents multiple findings and deficiencies in the use of public funds allocated by Parliament for the services of Sierra Leone.

Witnessed by a battery of journalists from the Press Gallery and local correspondents in areas visited, the findings of the Report and the Committee's hearings have been widely disseminated in the media. Further details may be obtained from the Committee's Secretariat.

## MINAH, ALHADI & BOCKARIE - LATEST PARLIAMENTARY APPROVALS

Following scores of Parliamentary approvals from 2012 onwards, the latest batch of Presidential nominees was successfully endorsed by the House on 12th July, 2013.

The House roundly approved Vandi Chidi Minah nominated as Ambassador to the UN; Madam Fatmata Bintu Alhadi, as Member of the Chamber of Commerce and Madam Augusta Bockarie as Electoral Commissioner South.

In recommending their endorsement, the Leader of the House, Hon. S.B.B. Dumbuya, who chairs the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, spoke of his tremendous regard for the educated as opposed to the rich.

First citing Mr. Minah who has thrice appeared before the House, he noted that the truly educated person must be objective and truthful. He described him as a befitting choice as Ambassador to the UN.

For Hon. Binneh Bangura, President Ernest Bai Koroma did not make a mistake in nominating the three as a reflection of his confidence in their respective abilities.

However, Hon. Jusufu Mansaray told the House that Madam Bockarie faces a grave task for which he called on her to display honesty, integrity and fairness so that peace could prevail in the country.

Speaking favourably of the nominees, Hon. Ansu Kai-Kai conveyed the concurrence of the Minority Leader Dr. Bernadette Lahai.

# LIBRARY, RESEARCH & DOCUMENTATION

This Department is made of three sections as named above.

The Parliamentary library offers reference and research services to Members and staff of Parliament. It includes core services for learning through the provision and control of information in print and media.

Legislators nowadays are in need of an increasing amount of useful documented and analyzed information. The Parliamentary library is a specialized one, serving a particular client - the Members of parliament, and their staff.

The parliamentary library also functions as an archive, which stores parliamentary documents. Other users are students, journalists, researchers, to name a few. The library staff also direct clients towards the appropriate sources of information they need.

The role of the library is not limited to collection, preparation and transmission services.

It also includes recommending how to use the facts collected from numerical databases and other data from official and semi-official sources such as Ministries, and Government directories etc.

Information is stored in the Library under a variety of forms such as through various kinds of books, translations, official publications, periodicals, magazines, newspapers, newsletters/reports, research papers, academic and scientific theses. The library provides prompt information and research services.

Through Current Awareness Services (CAS) and Selection Dissemination of Information (SDI) we provide new materials on specific areas of interest to legislative staff and Members.

## COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The collection consists of volumes of materials on history, enacted legislations, information on public policies

such as taxes, education, health and the environment.

The collection of the parliamentary library mainly reflects the social sciences that will enhance the knowledge of legislators.

Provision is also being made for electronic or virtual library services, which enable the researcher to link up with other libraries via the internet.

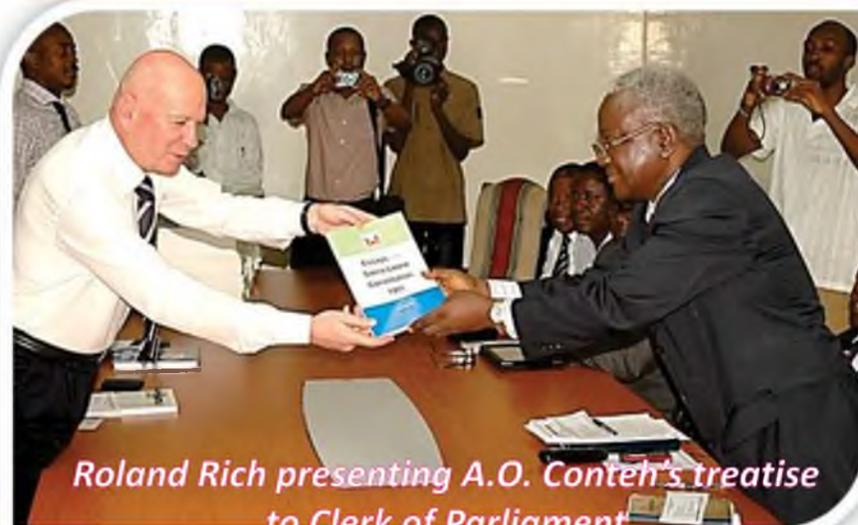
The use of modern technology has greatly increased access to information by Members of Parliament. Provision is also made in the Research unit to prepare research papers on demand by Members.

As a way of increasing collection of the parliamentary library, fifty (50) cartons of books were donated by Build On Books (BOB) U.K. We hereby register our sincere thanks and appreciation especially to the coordinator - Lori Spragg and to all those that contributed in divers ways.

These books have gone a long way in providing requisite information for our users.

*By Muctarr K Sowa, Director- Library, Research and Documentation*

# UNDEF HEAD PRESENTS BOOKS ON SL CONSTITUTION



*Roland Rich presenting A.O. Conteh's treatise to Clerk of Parliament*

The Executive Director of United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF)

Roland Rich, has presented 112 copies of the book, "Essays on the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone"

by Dr. Abdulai Conteh to the Clerk of Parliament Ibrahim Sesay, for use by Members.

This was done on behalf of Democracy Sierra Leone (DSL), a civil society organisation supported by UNDEF. DSL works actively in building the capacities of parliamentarians to enhance their effectiveness.

DSL has conducted a special seminar for women and youth parliamentarians, embarked on constituency outreach with the selected forty (40) Members and has plans to support the production of a directory for MPs.

## PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE COMMISSION HOSTS COUNTERPARTS FROM UGANDA

Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone offered warm reception to Leaders of the Parliament of Uganda, when they played host to a four-man delegation of Uganda's Parliamentary Service Commission, headed by Commissioner Emmanuel Dombo.

These Benchmark Commissioners included Hon. Bintu Jalia Lukumu Abwooli, Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi, and Hon. Elija Okupa who later joined the team from London.

In a courtesy call on Mr. Speaker, Justice Abel Stronge, Hon. Dombo explained that their mission was to review aspects of the S/Leone PSC so as to see how best to fine tune theirs from lessons learnt.

The team later had extensive discussions with PSC Members of the S/Leone Parliament, ranging from facilitation of political offices to promotion of parliamentary democracy and



*PSC Members, Parliament of Uganda*

managing and facilitating the staff of Parliament.

The two-sided discussions, initially chaired by Mr. Speaker, but later led by the Majority and Minority Leaders respectively, heard the views of the Majority Party Leader himself, Hon. S.B.B. Dumbuya, Minority Leader, Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai, their Deputies as well as those of the Chief and Minority whips.

Departmental Directors and Heads later made multi-faceted presentations on their respective roles and activities, covering the Library, Hansards, Finance, Committees, Public Relations, ICT and the Table Office. In another day's engagement, PSC Uganda had a wider, more interactive

experience sharing session with Committee Chairs, spearheaded by the Leader of the House, Hon. SBB Dumbuya.

A farewell dinner hosted in their honour heard sentiments of goodwill from both sides.

It should be noted that the S/Leone PSC was inspired by the Uganda model of parliamentary organisation, which led to the tabling of a Private Member's bill that became the Parliamentary Service Act (2007), piloted by the Hon. Ernest Bai Koroma, now President.

It underscores why speakers in succession paid tribute to the President for promoting parliamentary democracy in Sierra Leone.

## STAFF EVENTS

Significant developments around staff of the PSC.

Two Directors recently took to wife, changing their status significantly. What nuptial bliss!



*Cyril & Beatrice Juxon Smith*



*Muctarr & Haja Fatmata Sowa*

As a good number of PSC staff burn the midnight oil in the quest for advanced academic standing, three colleagues -

King, Gevao & Marah have happily earned their Masters in Public Admin & in Development Studies. Congrats & bravo!



*L-r: Cyril King, Kemoh Marah & Mohamed M. Ngevao scaling the academic heights!*

## CHINESE AMBASSADOR SEEKS CLOSER TIES WITH PARLIAMENT

**A**mbassador of the People's Republic of China to Sierra Leone, His Excellency Kuang Weilin, has paid a courtesy call on the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Justice Abel Stronge, to brief Justice Stronge and the Deputy Speaker, Hon. Chernor R.M. Bah on current Chinese developmental support to Sierra Leone.

Pointing to China's near completion of the new Foreign Affairs office, he told Mr. Speaker that the Chinese Government is to embark on the construction of elementary schools in the North, while the Airport Project is due for completion in 2015, and which he described as a very important project for Sierra Leone.

For Ambassador Weilin, this is a key to the future of Sierra Leone.

### PRESENTATION OF THE EU ELECTION OBSERVATION REPORT TO MR. SPEAKER

**R**ichard Howitt, Head of the EU Election Observation Mission, presented their final report to the Speaker and the Leadership of Parliament. He described the elections as being fairly conducted and congratulated Sierra Leoneans for their active participation in the electoral process.

He also discussed the need for independent candidates to stand for the presidency; nomination fees; removal of serial numbers from ballot papers to maintain confidentiality; possibility of prisoners who are on remand to vote; amendment of section 27 of the 1991 Constitution to give women greater participation; the media, passage of Right to Access Information Bill among others.

Members also raised the issue of affirmative action for getting more women elected to Parliament. The Speaker on behalf of Parliament thanked the Mission for sharing the report.

Going on to discuss "a huge water project," the Chinese envoy underscored the need for greater access to water by the populace.

He also touched on China's involvement in Agriculture and the recent completion of a new hospital at Jui, presently managed by Chinese medical experts.

He called for closer ties with the Speaker and Members of Parliament, seeing that the relationship between China and Sierra Leone has moved to a new height.

Ambassador Weilin spoke of golden opportunities for Sierra Leone with the new Chinese leadership, noting that



*Ambassador Weilin btwn. the Speaker (l) and Deputy Speaker*

prospects for mutual friendship are much higher now.

Responding to the Ambassador's request to speak to MPs about the new Chinese policy, the Speaker assured him it will be duly considered, as the Deputy Speaker promised to raise the matter with the rest of the leadership.

While thanking Ambassador Weilin for his endearment, the Hon. Speaker drew attention to the need for refurbishing Chamber seats, initially installed through Chinese assistance.

### WESTMINSTER VISIT MAY STRENGTHEN PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNANCE IN SIERRA LEONE

**D**elegates from the Parliamentary Service Commission of Sierra Leone recently undertook a week's tour of the British Houses of Parliament.

Under the auspices of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the visit - which combined seminar sessions, tours and experience sharing, provided an opportunity for Members of the Commission to acquire additional insights that will enhance the governance and administration of the Sierra Leone Parliament. The delegation included the Minority Party



*L-r: Hon. Sheriff Hassan, Chief Whip Kamanda, Dr. Bernadette Lahai, Minority Whip Tunis, PC Kebbie, Hon. Patricia Browne & Clerk of Parliament, Ibrahim Sesay*

Leader, Dr. Bernadette Lahai, Majority and Minority Whips, the Clerk of Parliament and three other Commissioners, including Paramount Chief Victor B. Kebbie.

Among other engagements, delegates witnessed the Prime Minister's Question Time and paid a courtesy call on the Lord Speaker.

This visit to the UK Parliament came only two weeks after the Parliamentary Service Commission had hosted its counterparts from the Ugandan Parliament on a similar mission to Sierra Leone.



*Clerks-at-the-Table: Deputy Clerk, Principle Table Clerk & Legislative Clerk  
Overhead: the Presiding Speaker, Hon. Chernor R.M. Bah*

**I**n this maiden edition, we look at the Table Clerks, under the Office of the Clerk of Parliament but particularly review the remit of the Clerk himself, as Head of the Administrative wing of the House.

We shall bring you more, in subsequent editions. Thanks to the Principal Table Clerk for the following:

### ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

Beneath the Speaker's dais is a curved white table where the Clerk of the House sits with other Table Officers.

The Clerk sits below the right side of the Speaker, with two Table Officers sitting along the length of the Table. There are five Clerks at the Table namely:

- |                               |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Clerk of Parliament        | - Mr. Ibrahim Sesay  |
| 2. Deputy Clerk of Parliament | - Mr. Mohamed Lebbie |
| 3. Principal Table Clerk      | - Mr. Cyril F. King  |
| 4. Legislative Clerk          | - Mr. Lamin Yansaneh |
| 5. Table Clerk                | - Mr. Anthony Kamara |

*Contd. Page 8*

## QUIZZING COMMUNICATIONS ACTORS

**O**versight Committee on Information and Communications recently assumed a non-nonsense mood in quizzing key players in the telecommunications sector, especially mobile phone companies.

With particular reference to Airtel, Chairman Benneh Bangura explained that Airtel was invited because of continuous complaints from the public, who he argued, are the electorate.

He told Airtel Management

that members of the public are disillusioned with the Company's poor quality of service and said that as Members of Parliament, they will work assiduously to ensure that the Agenda for Prosperity is realized.

Among other things, the Committee called on Airtel to upgrade its network system.

The Committee also reviewed Sierratel, Comium and Africell, praising the latter for maintaining high standards, but urging them to also continue to improve on network service.

### The Clerk of Parliament

The duties of the Clerk of Parliament are spelt out in Section 11 sub-sections 1 to 13 of the Standing Orders of the Sierra Leone Parliament. He is responsible for the services provided by the permanent administration of the House to meet its corporate objectives.

He manages the House under the Speaker's general oversight.

The Clerk also works with the Heads of Departments on parliamentary strategic operations and policies.

The Clerk must certify that the bills being presented are exactly the same as the ones the House agreed to. He is Secretary of Sierra Leone CPA Branch.

He is the Vote Controller and Secretary to the Parliamentary Service Commission; Chief procedural adviser to the Speaker, the Leadership, Members of Parliament and Staff. The Clerk is expected to actively provide authoritative advice on procedural matters

### TRADE MINISTER BRIEFS PARLIAMENT ON LOCAL CONTENT POLICY PLAN

**T**he Minister of Trade and Industry, Alhaji Usu Boie Kamara has told Parliament that his Ministry has so far made progress by creating a thriving business environment.

Speaking to the Committee on Trade, chaired by Hon. Sidi Tunis, he dilated on the proposed Local Content Policy, which he said is being popularized, and hopes will soon be enacted into law.

Among other issues, the Trade Minister spoke about the construction of new markets planned for Ferry Junction, Wellington and eventually elsewhere in Freetown.

# PHOTO GALLERY



*L-R: PCMP Bai Kurr K. Sanka III, Ambassador John Yambasu, Russian Ambassador and Deputy Clerk M. Lebbie*



*CPA Sect-Gen. Shija (suit) sharing a laugh with (L-r) Chief Whip Kamanda, Dep. Minority Leader Kai-Kai & Hon. Nicholas*



*EU Delegate shaking hands with Mr. Speaker*



*Chinese Embassy Staff Visiting Parliament. Centre (red): Wife of Ambassador Weilin. Some two years back, Members' seats were refurbished through Chinese funds*



*DEMOCRACY SIERRA LEONE CONDUCTS WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN & YOUTH MPs  
L-r: CGG's Valnora Edwin, Opposition Leader Dr. Bernadette Lahai, Deputy Speaker C.M. Bah, Clerk of Parliament Ibrahim Sesay & Chief Tech. Adviser Lachsmi Pillai*



*Leader of the House & of Government Business, Hon. S.B.B Dumbuya welcomes Members to consultative presentation on the Millenium Challenge, led by Chief of Staff, Hon. Dr. Richard Conteh. (seated)*



*Build-on Books' Lorri Spragg presenting second consignment of books to Deputy Clerk of Parliament, Mohammed Lebbie, watched by Director Sowa*



*CPA Secretary-General Dr. Shija with member of the Female Caucus of the Sierra Leone Parliament*

# PHOTO GALLERY



*Cheers! Hon. Rosaline J. Smith, one of many MPs receiving certificates @ the end of Westminster's 2012/13 post-election training*



*Members of Committee on Foreign Affairs (Chair: Hon. Torto) Pose for snapshot @ Nigeria High Commission with High Commissioner Eyo Asuquo*



*Parliamentary camaraderie! Sr. Parliamentarians: Hon. Sidi Tunis, Hon. Francis Konuwa & Hon. Eric Koedoyoma*



*The Hon. Leader of the House, S.B.B. Dumbuya, in his usual oratorical submissions*

## CLERKS AT THE TABLE

*Contd.*

on a daily basis to the Speaker, the Leader of the House and other Members, the Chairmen of Committees and individual Members.

The Clerk sits at every sitting in the Chamber of the House and keeps a supervisory watch over its proceedings. He calls up the Business of the House and participates in ceremonial occasions, e.g State Opening of Parliament.

He also monitors authentic records of proceedings of the house and signs or endorses all orders and official communications of the House. He is also responsible for preparing the texts of Acts of Parliament and endorsing the proper copies of Bills and Acts.

*Cyril F. King  
Principal Table Clerk*

## Newsletter Committee

- Director Public Relations (Chair)**
  - Director Committees**
  - Director Finance**
  - Director Library Research & Documentation**
  - Chief Technical Adviser**
  - Manager IT**
  - Principal Table Clerk**
  - Head PACO**
- For Feedback: [cyriljesse@yahoo.com](mailto:cyriljesse@yahoo.com)**

## Editorial Team

- Cyril Juxon-Smith**
- Lakshmi Pillai**
- Peter Kulagbanda**
- Cyril F. King**

**NEW FACE OF ICT IN PARLIAMENT  
WATCH OUT FOR NEXT ISSUE WITH IT  
MANAGER BRIMA J.Y. KAMARA**

## CPA ENVOY-SIERRA LEONE'S SPEAKER SECURES SUPPORT FOR AFR. CANDIDATE OF CWP INTERNATIONAL



Centre: Hon Speaker, Justice NAB Stronge & Speaker of the Cameroon National Assembly, Rt. Hon. Cavaye Yeguie Djibril . Extremers: Speaker's P.A., Chris Syl-Turay

**T**he Speaker of the House of Parliament, Hon. Justice Abel Stronge, who is the President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Branch of Sierra Leone in June, 2013 embarked on a joint sub-regional tour with Hon. Cletus Avoka of Ghana Parliament, as CPA Regional Representatives for West Africa.

Together, they visited the Parliaments of Cameroon and Ghana.

This high-level duo discussed matters such as CPA Africa Regional events, members' commitments, election of International Chairperson for Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), and staff development programmes.

Hon. Speaker Stronge and Hon. Avoka also discussed some of the challenges and programmes of the Parliaments visited.

Welcoming Speaker Stronge, the Speaker of Ghana, Rt. Hon. Edward K. Doe Adjaho affirmed that Ghana is a very active member of the CPA, pledging their full support for the candidature of the outgoing Chair of CWP Africa Region, Rt.

Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, as Chair of CWP International. In Cameroon, the Regional Representatives met with the

Speaker of the Cameroon Parliament, Cavaye Y. Djibril and the President of Senate, respectively, eliciting favourable responses from similar discussions.

Earlier, Justice Stronge and Hon. Avoka had a working session with the CPA Cameroon Branch. While the Sierra Leone Speaker urged Branch Members to strive to make the Association meaningful to the grassroots, Rt. Hon. Cletus Avoka advised they maintain separate delegations to both CPA Africa and CPA International, the latter being where major decisions are ratified.

Whilst Africa is one of the CPA's nine regions, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association brings together more than 170 Parliaments and Legislatures in over 50 countries worldwide.

As at press time it had emerged that the Hon. Speaker of Uganda did get elected CWP International Chair.

## AS GOVERNMENT RELAUNCHES THE PRINTING DEPARTMENT HON. FOFANAH ADVOCATES FOR NEW ENGLAND COMMUNITY

**M**ember of Parliament for Constituency 109, Hon. Amadu Fofanah seized the occasion of the launch of the Public Private Partnership between the Government Printing Department (GPD) and Excellent Printing Press of Ghana, to direct attention to the corporate social responsibility of the relaunched entity.

Hon. Fofanah called on the Management and Board to consider giving back to the community by way of employment and other benefits.

It was perhaps the most stirring speech in the formal ceremony marking the launch of the new business model for the GPD.

Welcoming the role of the MP and other players, chief

investor Ghanaian Dr. Agyepong called on the public and private sectors to patronise the business - a five-year joint venture agreement, without which its success could not be guaranteed.

Presidential Adviser, Alhaji I B Kargbo, deputized for HE the President in relaunching the GPD.



Hon. Amadu Fofanah at end of the High Table

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Following the establishment of the Parliamentary Service Commission, the Department of Public Relations was set up to promote public information and awareness around the role of Parliament.

This entails communications planning and implementation supportive of the overarching role of Parliament, thus bridging information gaps between the Legislature and the electorate, and creating greater confidence in her role.

Through its PR Department, Parliament seeks to create and support sustainable media programmes for wider public consumption. Unfortunately, this has not been fully realized. In 2012, a transitional Media Outreach Plan could not be implemented for want of resources. However, the Sierra Leone Parliament is on the verge of mounting specific media programmes, airing her own voice via traditional Radio, TV and Press. Soon, we shall introduce a new TV magazine, "Voices in Parliament." This is in addition to the platform provided by Social Media which we shall be pleased to inaugurate with the inception of the website. The PR Department so far supports parliamentary outreaches, oversight visits, special events and constituency dialogues, in synergy with specific parliamentary committees, while coordinating the Press Gallery- an important partner in our media relations. Furthermore, MPs may request professional advice and support for their constituency programmes through the PR Department. The Department's role also covers public enquires, field trips/educational tours, audio visuals (video and still photography), newsletter publication, content management of the envisaged website and a range of publications. In addition, it is expected that protocol services for Parliament will be centered in the Department.

A Director and Senior Public Relations Officer were recruited, but as we are excited about showcasing the good work of Parliament, more personnel and resources may be needed to fully activate the wider and critically relevant remits of this new Department. *By PR Department*

## PARLIAMENT RATIFIES PETROLEUM LICENCE AGREEMENT

Parliament has ratified the Petroleum Licence Agreement for three separate blocks.

The Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, who presented the agreement, told the House it was not new to Members, adding that some of the companies fell short as the requirements were stringent.

He said three years later, they would relinquish 50% interests to Government and admonished the companies to pay their licence fees and respect their CSRs.

## FIRST S/LEONE MP AS CHAIR IN PAN AFRICAN PARLIAMENT



**Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai**

The Minority Party Leader, Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai, has become the first Sierra Leonean MP to be elected Committee Chair of the Pan African Parliament (PAP), headquartered in South Africa.

Following their 2012 post election return to the S/L Parliament - Dr. Lahai, Majority Leader S.B.B. Dumbuya and PC Bai Kurr Kanagbaro Sanka III took the oath in South Africa to

serve the PAP for the ensuing term. Two new Members, Hon. Suleiman M. Sesay and Hon. Isata Kabia were also sworn-in at the PAP.

On Dr. Lahai's election as Chair of the PAP Committee on Transport, Industry, Communications, Energy, Science and Technology, Sierra Leoneans in Pretoria hosted a celebratory dinner in her honour.

In his congratulatory remarks, Sierra Leone's Consul in South Africa, Major-General Keith Mokoape said he was very delighted with Dr. Lahai's preferment and that he will always stand by the interests of Sierra Leone.

The Pan African Parliament is one of ten organs of the African Union, adopted by the Thirty-Sixth Ordinary Session of the Conference of the Heads of State and Government in Lome, Togo in July 2000.

## PARLIAMENTARY ASSISTANCE COORDINATION OFFICE (PACO)

In June /July 2010 UNDP supported mapping exercise revealed that the Parliament of Sierra Leone engaged with more than 40 development partners who are providing material, technical and /or financial assistance to parliamentary Committees, individual MPs and Parliamentary staff.

Partner interventions have fallen short of holistically identifying the needs of Parliament.

In some cases, partners have provided technical assistance, materials and/or invitations for participation in international workshops and seminars directly to MPs and Parliamentary Committees without knowledge of the Speaker or the office of the Clerk, increasing tensions between MPs from different parties and committees.

In this context, the Ad-Hoc Committee on Parliamentary organization and Development proposed to establish a Parliamentary Assistance Coordination Office as part of the Parliamentary Service.

The Parliamentary Assistance Coordination kicked off in February 2011.

The composition of PACO is as follows: a Development partner programme Coordinator and Head of PACO, a Technical Advisor, a Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and an Administrative and Finance Officer.

Since its inception a lot has been achieved in terms of coordinating partners' support to Parliament.

So far the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) has played a great role in capacity building for Parliamentarians and staff.

Trainings and equipment have been donated to the Hansards Department.

An agreement with the Government of Sierra Leone of two million dollars has also been signed with the African Capacity Building Fund (ACBF) for capacity building for Parliamentarians and staff.

International organizations such as the Commonwealth



Parliamentary Association (CPA), Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), World Bank, UNFPA, and UNICEF have been working closely with Parliament in the promotion of good governance.

Local NGOs such as Democracy-Sierra Leone, 50/50 group, Campaign for Good Governance, IPAS, a reproductive health organization, have also worked closely with Parliament to build the capacity of Parliamentarians and staff.

The office has coordinated several seminars, trainings, meetings and workshops for Parliamentarians and staff at the national and international levels since its inception.

*By Finda F. Fraser*  
*Head of the Parliamentary Assistance Coordination Office*

## SPEAKER WELCOMES LEADING FIGURE IN THE COMMONWEALTH

The Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Justice Abel Stronge, this year welcomed to Sierra Leone the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Dr. William Shija, one of the leading figures in the Commonwealth.

The Deputy Speaker, other Members of the parliamentary leadership and the Clerk of Parliament also heartily welcomed Dr. Shija. The CPA Secretary-General in turn extended warm sentiments to

all MPs, explaining the basis of the CPA and its major thrusts.

The Secretary-General was accompanied by a team of resource persons drawn from Commonwealth Africa, who delivered interactive sessions in a Post-Election Seminar for Members of Parliament.

Accompanied by the Leadership, the CPA team called on HE the President, once a senior parliamentarian, visited development projects in Waterloo and Kambia and held press briefings with the Parliamentary Press Gallery.



*L-R: Dr. Shija, Deputy Speaker Cherner R.M. Bah, Mr. Speaker Justice Abel B.N. Stronge, Justice Edmund Cowan & Hon. Ibrahim Bundu at formal opening of the CPA Post-Election Seminar*

Notably, the visit of the Secretary-General was part of an ongoing capacity development process, for Members and staff of Parliament.

## LOSS TO PARLIAMENT, PLUS TO THE EXECUTIVE Hon. Ibrahim Sorie, Voice from Kambia Central

**T**he Newsletter of the Sierra Leone Parliament brings readers, profiles of Parliamentarians with varied backgrounds.

In this maiden edition, we feature Hon. Ibrahim Sorie, arguably one of the most compelling personalities produced by the Sierra Leone Parliament.

Although he has bowed out of parliamentary politics, he left an indelible imprint of four terms (1982-2012) as a Kambia representative that continues to inspire younger Members.

A product of the famous Kolenten Secondary School in Kambia, Hon. Sorie studied at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, earning the Bachelor of Arts Degree with a Diploma in Education and a PG Diploma in Management Studies from the Glasgow College of Technology, Scotland. He is also a Chartered Insurer (CII), a Member of the Insurance Institute of London and of the British Institute of Management (MBIM).

Hon. Sorie had a teaching spell before launching his professional career as a Marketing Officer and rising to managerial levels at the National Insurance Company (NIC). In 1982 he was elected to Parliament as MP for Kambia Central and served in the Executive Arm of Government



Hon. Ibrahim Sorie, presenting paper on parliamentary Debate to new Mps of 2012-2017

(1982-1986) as Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources & Minister of State, Ministry of Trade & Industry.

In Parliament, he became the Chief Whip of the All Peoples Congress Party and was simultaneously Chairman for APC Kambia District, which he represented during his long spell in the House. He formed and chaired several parliamentary network organisations, including Parliamentarians for Global Action, Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Parliamentary Network on the World Bank. While serving as Head of Delegation to the ECOWAS Parliament in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria

(2008-2013), Hon. Sorie was focal person for its ACP/EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly Affairs and Vice-President of its Legal and Judicial Affairs Committee.

As a fitting sequel to a distinguished career in Parliament, where he became an excellent debater, Hon. Sorie was nominated by HE the President and roundly approved by Parliament as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Kingdom of Belgium and Head of Mission to the European Union (EU), with multiple accreditations to the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Greece and the Vatican.

He also serves as Sierra Leone's Representative to UNESCO in Paris, the World Customs Organisation (WCO) in Belgium and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Organisation for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, all in The Hague, the Netherlands.

A Justice of the Peace and Commissioner of Oaths, His Excellency Sorie holds the National Honours Award of Commander of the Order of the Republic of Sierra Leone (CRSL).

Missed by Parliament, his diplomatic tenure will undoubtedly add great value to Sierra Leone's representation abroad.

*By the PR Department*

### PARLIAMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES SYSTEM

**A** democratic Parliament performs three important functions and that is to make laws for the governance of the country, to represent the electorate and oversee the Executive branch of Government.

*In our next edition, we shall commence a serialized treatise by Peter Kulagbanda, Director of Committees, on Parliament's Committees system, offering a critical analysis of background, mandates, powers & impact of Parliamentary Committees.*

### MR. KNOW IT ALL

#### BUDGET DEBATE

**Q:** Did you know that when the Appropriation Act is being delivered by the Minister of Finance in the Chamber of Parliament, all Vote Controllers - Directors, Heads of Departments, Permanent Secretaries and Professional Heads are required to witness the proceedings?

**A:** Ohh...well, now I know. Thanks to you. I wish I knew it all like you!

## CLERK, PAC AT WESTMINSTER SEMINAR

The Clerk of Parliament, Ibrahim Sesay was among nearly sixty delegates, including Clerks and Members of Parliament at the 2012 **Sixty-First Westminster Seminar** on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure in London, U.K.

This seminar provided a forum for Members and Clerks of Parliament to explore parliamentary work within the framework of a Westminster model of legislation.

The 58 delegates from 40 Commonwealth countries had a conducted tour of the House of Commons and the Lords and later witnessed the famed "Question Time with the Prime Minister."

This year, the Deputy Speaker and Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Hon. Chernor R.M. Bah led a small delegation consisting of Hon. Lahai Marah and PAC Clerk, David Saffa to the

**Sixty-Second Westminster Seminar** in June 2013.

This year's attracted over 90 new parliamentarians and mid-career clerks, focusing on topical issues such as the media's role in parliamentary oversight, women in politics and commonwealth issues.

## VISIT OF THE PEACE BUILDING COMMISSION TO PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

Earlier in the year, an eight-member, high level delegation of the UN Peace Building Commission led by the Chair, Ambassador Rishchynski, called on the Speaker and the Leadership of Parliament.

The Speaker on his part informed about the new Parliament, noting that about 66% of the Members were new and required training on parliamentary functioning and maybe even many of the second time Members. He also stated that previously there were only 6 staff who were managing most of the work, but with UN assistance, 20 new Committee clerks have been recruited and trained which has substantially improved support to the Members. He spoke about taking Parliament to the people and demystifying Parliament by holding provincial sittings in Bo, Kenema and Makeni.

The Minority Leader dwelt on the gender issue stating that in 2002 there were 19 women, in 2007, 17 women and now after the 2012 elections there were just 15 in the House. She said that maybe Sierra Leone should consider affirmative action in terms of reserving seats for women or maybe opt for proportional representation. She said that there is need to empower women to participate in the development process.

The PBC Chair further asked about the interactions of Parliament with the executive and challenges in terms of social cohesion and political inclusiveness. The leadership maintained that every agency presents its annual report to Parliament and there is definitely interaction with the executive where it reports on matters raised in the House. On the issue of social cohesion, members responded by saying that the current electoral framework that is, the First-past-the-post system does not reflect the political realities and is likely to alienate minority groups. They hoped that there would be genuine political dialogue around the current constitutional review process. Issues related to youth were also stated as a key area of concern.

## POST ELECTION BRIEFING

The Parliamentary Service with the support of UNDP conducted a post election briefing, following the 2012 national elections. The aim of the exercise was to introduce

the Members to parliamentary processes and procedures for oath-taking, leading to the process to elect the Speaker of the House. Erstwhile Clerk of Parliament, J. A. Carpenter explained the steps involved in the election of the Speaker and informed that formally, it will be the First meeting of the First Session of the Fourth Parliament of the Second Republic and went on to explain each point of the title. Hon. Ibrahim Sorie, now Ambassador to Brussels, made a presentation on debating procedures. At the end of the session Members sought clarifications which were replied to by Mr. Carpenter and the present Clerk, Mr. Ibrahim Sesay. Since many of the Members are first timers and new to Parliament, they found it very useful and practical UNDP's CTA, Lakshmi Pillai, chaired the briefing. Members later introduced themselves followed by introduction of the Staff of the Parliamentary Service. MPs were then taken round the premises and shown the Committee rooms, the Chamber, the Lobby, Library and important offices within Parliament Building.

# GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN



National Leader of the All Peoples Congress, passed away in Makeni on 15th July 2012. Their memories linger even as the pain of parting subsides with time.



But fresh in our minds this 2013 is the loss to Parliament of a vibrant woman parliamentarian, the much loved and respected **Alice Tewoh Foyah** (Con. 001/Kailahun), described by her Minority Party Leader as "the rose of Parliament." Gone may be the "rose" but her sweet fragrance lingers....

**D**eath, says Shakespeare, "lays its icy hand on Kings." This was not far from the truth when in 2012, three key players in the Legislature, passed on.

That's within the province of the Divine and man cannot question it. Parliament, Government and many sympathizers, local and international, mourned the passing away of these national figures.

**Momoh Pujeh**, parliamentary Leader of the Opposition Sierra Leone Peoples Party (Con. 008/Kailahun) passed away on 17 May 2012, followed by Hon. **Paramount Chief Dr. Jeremiah Sinnah-Yovonnie Kangova** of Kamajei Chiefdom, Moyamba District, announced by the Clerk's Office in early July.

As though it was not enough, Deputy Speaker **Victor Chukuma Johnson** (Con. 94/Waterloo), also Deputy

RIP

## YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT POSES DANGER

**Y**ACAN - Youth and Child Advocacy Network, has alerted Members of the Parliamentary Committee on Youth and Sports that worsening youth unemployment poses a dangerous socioeconomic crisis which needs urgent national attention.

Speaking to members of the Committee, National Coordinator Hassan Foud Kanu quoted an ILO study titled "Global Employment Trends for Youth, 2013" which says the global youth employment rate, estimated at 12.6% in 2013 is close to its crisis peak.

It says Africa and Sierra Leone in particular, have an unenviable share of the negative employment statistics for youth.

Among their many recommendations, YACAN called for a review of the



*YACAN's Fuad Kanu presenting Position Statement to Deputy Chair, Hon. Hassan Sesay, Centre: Hon. Amadu Fofanah, Member*

employment laws, improved opportunities for youth; loan schemes for young entrepreneurs with lower interest rates; and increased allocation to Local Councils for youth development initiatives.

The Committee welcomed the YACAN research findings, acknowledging the widespread youth unemployment. Members of the Committee, chaired by Hon. Martin Bangura,

further identified immigration-labour loopholes.

Members renewed their commitment to youth advocacy including increased Youth Ministry Budget so the Ministry can better carry out youth empowerment schemes throughout the country.

YACAN is a member of many organisations and various coalitions advocating for children and youth.



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