



**SIERRA LEONE PARLIAMENT
OAU Drive, Tower Hill, Freetown**

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PRESS RELEASE

PAC & ASSL PROBE COUNCILS & MDAs IN THE EASTERN REGION ON 2012 AUDIT QUERIES

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC), which is chaired by the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Chernor R.M Bah has returned from a week long oversight engagement where it interfaced with 5-Councils and 8-MDAs (Ministries, Departments and Agencies) in the Eastern Region following the audited queries in the 2012 Auditor General's Report which had been tabled in Parliament for appropriate follow-up actions.

Chair of Committee at its public hearings informed auditees that H.E the President, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma has rolled out the Agenda for Prosperity (AfP) for the benefit of Sierra Leoneans; and that everyone must be seen working and contributing very hard towards its success. He furthered that the Committee "neither prosecutes, nor persecutes anyone "but has responsibility to proffer corrective measures, and recommend for punitive actions to be taken against officials who have misappropriated public funds. PAC works in partnership with Audit Service Sierra Leone (ASSL) which is the technical arm of the Committee.

ASSL presents unqualified opinions on the five audited accounts of councils in the Eastern Region reflecting a true and fair view of their Financial Statements regardless of some financial procedural abnormalities. PAC particularly commends Kailahun District Council (KDC) for having a clean sheet in the 2012 audited report, and encourages other councils in the country to emulate and engage KDC on expertise, experience sharing, and best practices. PAC succeeded in recovering some monies paid into the consolidated revenue fund through withholding taxes and NASSIT deductions; and has referred others to end of June to regularize outstanding issues and documentations subject to the verification of ASSL and approval of PAC.

Some of the audited queries range from inadequate control over the disbursement of funds; failure to deduct NASSIT and withholding taxes; ineffective internal audit departments; ineffective management of councils' budgets; non-refund of unclaimed school fees subsidies; procurement procedures flouted; sitting fees and other allowances paid to councilors, and excess in contract payment, among others.



Clerk administering oath to auditees before PAC