



**PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE
PARLIAMENT BUILDING
O.A.U DRIVE, TOWER HILL
FREETOWN**

Website: www.parliament.gov.sl

Email: info@parliament.gov.sl



**UK HIGH COMMISSIONER ASSURES PARLIAMENT OF BRITISH SUPPORT TO SIERRA LEONE
Freetown, 27th August, 2014**

The British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, His Excellency Peter West today assured the parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Britain's utmost support in combating the Ebola outbreak.

Speaking to a visiting delegation of that Committee, led by its Chair, Hon. Augustine Torto; High Commissioner West disclosed that the UK has committed ten million pounds sterling to be used by DFID in supporting structures for combating the Ebola virus disease. He told Hon. Torto that contrary to his fears, Britain places Sierra Leone high on its international partnership agenda.

Earlier, in introducing members of the delegation, Hon. Torto stated that "we are not operating under normal circumstances" and explained that the size of the delegation was an indication that most Members were out "battling Ebola in their constituencies." Drawing parallels with the Sierra Leone civil war and the UK's role in resolving that conflict, Hon. Torto said "we are at war again; do not abandon us," noting that the British Government and people have always stood by Sierra Leone in difficult times.

Hon. Pateh Bah, a member of the Committee, informed the High Commissioner that the Government is doing its utmost to bring the Ebola war under control, but noted the need for international partnership and support.

Responding further, the High Commissioner cited several privileged engagements with His Excellency the President, saying that he was encouraged by President Koroma's commitment and affirmed that the UK are at the forefront of activities in support of Sierra Leone. In addition, they are also encouraging the UN to strengthen its position in the country. Underscoring the significance of the role of MPs, he said he was delighted to learn that MPs are making it their top priority to engage communities within their constituencies, noting that education is key as everyone should take personal responsibility to avoid contracting the disease.

The British High Commissioner lamented the potentially damaging impact on the economy and its effects on the mining sector which accounts for 10 % of our GDP. The High Commissioner encouraged the Foreign Affairs Committee to explore contacts with counterparts in the sub-region and beyond so as to dialogue a better response to Sierra Leone. For him, Britain is part of the solution for Sierra Leone.

Other members of the delegation included the Clerk of Foreign Affairs Committee, Momodu Lamin Deen-Rogers; Director of Public Relations, Cyril Juxon-Smith and Josephine Bangura, Protocol Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



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L-R: High Commissioner West, Hon. Pateh Bah (Centre), Deen-Rogers and Committee Chair Torto