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PRESS RELEASE
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Parliament Opposes Proposal of Four Elections in 2018

Members of Parliament on Wednesday 21st October 2015 in Committee Room 1 in Parliament were opposed to NEC's proposal for conducting multi-tier elections in 2018, for presidential, parliamentary, and the local government elections. This unanimous decision was taken by Members when NEC (National Electoral Commission) engaged Parliament on the challenges affecting the electoral cycle for 2015 to 2019 and to chart the way forward.

In her contribution to the processes and challenges of NEC, the Minority Leader of Parliament, Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai expressed that it would be unfair to MPs to postpone and hold local council election together with the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2018. Therefore, she concluded to the applause and approval of MPs present that the local government election should be held separately from the presidential and the parliamentary elections. She recalled that in the 2012 multi-tier elections, it was difficult for MPs who carried the councilors on their shoulders. These councilors, she furthered did not do much in the success of those elections, but want to replace them in Parliament after they had helped them to win elections. She noted further that councilors be allowed to win their wards, and MPs their constituencies in separate elections. Separate elections would help political parties to learn and go back to the drawing board and come up with corrective measures for future elections, she said. She also told MPs that the population quota for seats in the Western Area should be different for seats in the rural areas cognizant of the facilities and amenities in the Western Area.

Earlier the Chief Electoral Commissioner, Mr. Mohamed N'fah Alie Conteh appreciated the interactive session with MPs and registered the Commission's commitment to conduct free, fair and credible elections in line with international best practices. Mr. Conteh informed Parliamentarians that due to certain challenges that the Commission is currently faced with, the local council election would not be held in December 2016 as stipulated by law. This he said was as a result of the outcome of the census which had been postponed twice because of the ebola outbreak. The census figures he also said would be used to delimit wards and constituencies for the conduct of elections. The last figures that were used to delimit constituencies and wards were done 8 and 9 years ago. This he said was in contravention of Section 38 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone which provides that constituencies be reviewed or delimited in not less than five years and not more than seven years.

Mr. Abu Bakarr Koroma did a power point presentation on the electoral cycle of NEC spanning 2015-2019, followed by questions and answers.