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PRESS RELEASE
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PROVISIONAL CENSUS RESULT FOR 2015 GIVES PARLIAMENT ADDITIONAL EIGHT (8) SEATS

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) on Thursday 23rd June 2016 updated Members of Parliament, in Committee Room One on the work they had done so far with the provisional figures of the latest 2015 Population and Housing Census Result, regarding the delimitation process and the allocation of seats in constituencies and wards across the country.

In responding to some of the questions and concerns raised by MPs, officials of NEC said that “they are using the latest census provisional data because of no court injunction and to expedite the process of meeting its electoral calendar slated for February 2018 elections, and that any alteration that will adversely affect the delimitation of boundaries regarding constituencies and wards between April-December 2016, subject to the approval of Parliament may constrain NEC from conducting elections in 2018, because the process is long, arduous, and critically important for the holding of the next general elections”.

Director of Research, Monitoring and Evaluation of NEC, Mr. Raymond George said among other things whilst doing a presentation that “boundary delimitation involves the sharing of seats, that is characterized with a lot of controversies, and time consuming”. He also said that laws passed by Parliament, “such as provisions in the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, the Local Government Act, 2004, other constitutional instruments, and the Public Elections Act, 2012 are being used to determine the allocation of seats in constituencies and wards”.

He also said that “in the process of determining seats for constituencies and wards, NEC uses the current population census result, including District, Chiefdom, Enumeration Areas, other facilities, demarcation of electoral boundaries for the preparation of maps for the meets and bounds, stakeholders and public consultation, and subject to the approval of Parliament, noting that the process should be transparent, non-partisan and acceptable to all”. He furthered that the “formulae used by NEC per constituency is 53,600 or the highest remainder of 64,000 population quota, given a total of 132 seats for Parliament provisionally (currently 124 seats) and 28,000 population quota per seat in ward, given a total of 475 seats for councils across the country provisionally”. He also said that “based on the calculations used, provisionally there are increase in seats in areas like Kailahun, Kenema, Kono etc., which has resulted in eight (8) additional seats for Parliament.

The questions and concerns from MPs were bordered on areas with less population having more seats than areas with larger population, the reasons why some areas do not record additional seats despite population increase, to submit the full presentation with tables to MPs, described it as a very good presentation, but why is NEC using a provisional census data for the delimitation of constituencies and wards, decried the absence of officials from Statistics Sierra Leone, whilst recalling the President’s Speech to Parliament where he spoke on de-amalgamation and the possible creation of new Districts in the country.

Hon. Majority Leader of the House, Ibrahim Bundu who chaired the meeting thanked officials from NEC for educating MPs on the current status of the boundary delimitation regarding the allocation of seats to constituencies and wards in the country.