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REPRESENTATIVES OF UNOWA & ECOWAS COMMISSION VISIT PARLIAMENT

Representatives from the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and the ECOWAS Commission, on Monday the 28th September 2015, engaged the Leadership of Parliament on information sharing relating to the democratic activities in the country.

Briefing Parliament at the Conference Room, Patrick Buse, the Political Affairs Officer of UNOWA, stated among other things that they were on a fact finding mission to assess the democratic activities in the country, with specific focus on the Constitutional Review Committee, the National Electoral Commission, and Statistics Sierra Leone to do the National Census for the elections in 2018. He also highlighted the roles and functions of UNOWA in the ongoing political activities that would take place in Guinea and Burkina Faso.



Delegation Charting With Officials of Parliament

The Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon Chernor R.M Bah, welcomed and appreciated the team for their visit, and assured them of the support of Parliament during the course of their findings.

On the democratic process in the country, Hon. Bah highlighted the activities of some of the independent institutions that have been created by law to do their work without let or hindrance by Parliament, whilst espousing on the functions and responsibilities of the House. He also noted, that in Parliament both parties are working closely together (a consensus parliament based on consultations) to ensure that the principles of good governance are achieved, despite some dissensions on party lines. However, the Deputy Speaker further highlighted some of the challenges that are being faced by certain institutions in the execution of their duties in the democratic process, such as NEC being dependent on Statistics Sierra Leone for the Census to do boundary delimitations for the forthcoming elections. He ended by saying that they were going to conduct the elections because they are not a “junta regime”, without any intension to steal the people’s mandate.

The Deputy Majority Leader of Parliament, Hon. Leonard Fofanah, also spoke on the roles of Parliament, the National Electoral Commission (NEC), the Constitutional Review Committee, and Statistics Sierra Leone in the upcoming general elections. He further noted that NEC has a calendar of events to carry out during the electioneering process, but could be unable to conduct the general elections without the boundary delimitations (census), which he described as a “sine qua non” for the pending elections in 2018.