



2021 ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT OF PARLIAMENT

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

**2021 Theme:
'Embracing Change'**

OPEN DAY SPEECH ON THE 2021 ANNUAL REPORT OF PARLIAMENT

His Excellency the President

The Right Honourable Speaker of Parliament

Honourable Members of Parliament

Ministers of Government

Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps

Development Partners

Parliamentary Staffers

Civil Society Organizations

Members of the Fourth Estate

Distinguished Citizens of Sierra Leone

On behalf of the Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC), I have the honour and pleasure of reporting on the performance of Parliament for the period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021. This reporting period is the Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

It is important to note that this period is the transition between the immediate past strategic plan of 2016-2019 and our new strategic plan (2021-2025). The theme for the period under review was '**Embracing Change**' and therefore this report addresses key achievements of the following five strategic goals during the transition:

1. Strengthened Institutional Capacity
2. Enhanced Legislative Capacity
3. Strengthened Oversight
4. Strengthened Representation and Relationships with Citizens
5. Resource Mobilization

OVERVIEW OF PARLIAMENT

I will like to start with an overview of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, especially the governance structure of the legislature. The structure is as follows:

1.1 The Parliamentary Service Commission

The Parliamentary Service Commission is a corporate body established by the Parliamentary Service Act of 2007. The Commission is the highest governing authority of Parliament with the mandate of controlling and supervising the Parliamentary Service.

The PSC is comprised of 13 Commissioners (3 female and 10 male) that are exclusively Members of Parliament. Members of the Commission are referred to as Commissioners and they meet as such under the chairmanship of the Speaker of Parliament.

1.2 The Parliamentary Service

The Parliamentary Service is a public office that is autonomous from the Civil Service. It is the organ of Parliament with the responsibility to provide technical and administrative support and advisory services to ensure the effective and efficient execution of the constitutional functions of Parliament.

The Parliamentary Service is headed by the Clerk of Parliament who is appointed by the President under section 82 of Act No. 6 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. The Clerk is responsible for the day-to-day administration of Parliament and the Parliamentary Service.

In the discharge of these duties, the Clerk of Parliament is assisted by a Deputy Clerk and a Director General of Parliament. While the Deputy Clerk assists with procedural matters, the Director-General assists, and deals with corporate affairs of Parliament. Under the office of the Clerk are 14 directorates with responsibilities ranging from administrative duties like human resources, finance, audit and compliance, public relations; to core functions of Parliament such as Hansard, Committee, and Legislative services; to technical areas like information communication and technology, capacity building, research & partnership; through to logistics like procurement, transportation, and security.

1.3 The Directors Board

The Directors Board, which comprises all departmental directors, was established in June 2021 to provide strategic, technical, and administrative recommendations to the Office of The Clerk through the Director-General.

1.4 Management

The management is made up of the Directors and their Deputies responsible for implementing administrative policies and programmes of Parliament.

To enhance the smooth and effective operation of Parliament, a snapshot of our performance in 2021 will suffice:

1.5 Performance Related to Goal 1- Strengthened Institutional Capacity

The PSC prioritized 6 initiatives namely:

- I. Introduction of corporate management culture to our parliamentary administration
- II. Refurbishment & Leveraging the Effective Use of Information & Communication System
- III. Commencement of the Inception Phase of a Housing Project for MPs & Parliamentary Staffers
- IV. Developing our people, and Improving Health and Safety
- V. Reforming the Legal and Operational procedural Tools of Parliament
- VI. Developing Risk Management Plan

The PSC initiated 5 out of 6 planned priorities, which is 83% success and made tremendous achievements of the institutional objectives for the 2021 reporting period. An improved corporate culture has been noted in Parliament, resulting from trained senior management that delivered on indicators for administration, management meetings, and the decision-making process.

The PSC was met 3 times in 2021 and made 10 critical resolutions. Seven¹ of these resolutions have been implemented. Management met seven times in 2021 and was able to make fifteen

¹ These include the recruitment of a Director-General, Realignment and upgrading of staff with first degrees to their appropriate grades, Speakers Excellence Award establishment, Open Day be done annually, staff retreat is done every 2 years, develop and implement corporate calendar for parliament, Review PSC Act and Standing Orders

critical recommendations of which eight were completed three are in progress and 4 are pending.

We succeeded also in reviewing our staff data collection tool and expanded our staff data collection to reflect the true staff strength and diversity. As of 31st December 2021, the PSC had 354 members of staff and all of them are full-time staff with 61 % female and 39 % male. The average age of the staff of Parliament is 26 years and we have very high staff retention as only 4 staff (approximately 1%) resigned and two retired.

Out of the 354 staff, 200 staff were appraised. This was an improvement as compared to 2020 when only 147 were appraised. Whereas no decision was taken after the 2020 appraisal, the 2021 appraisals resulted in the re-alignment and promotion of some of the staff that performed satisfactorily.

In a bid to deliver evidence-based training for our MPs and parliamentary staffers, we completed the development and validation of the first curriculum that had 10 professional course areas for the Centre for Research and Parliamentary Studies (CRPS) through partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The PSC has continued to improve the services of the Clinic in Parliament. The Clinic is responsible for providing first aid and minor health services for MPs and staff of Parliament. During the period under review 708 consultations were made. More males engaged in our clinic than females (67% male & 33% female). More staff visit our clinic than the MPs as 96% of the total consultation was from staff. The two most reported cases were malaria and hypertension. Unlike in 2020 when the information is generated only for the consumption of the medical staff, the clinic data is now being discussed at management meetings to inform decisions. Additionally, the Clinic has improved its data generation and reporting.

With the support of our EU partners, we have been able to synchronize, consolidate, connect, and link all our departments into a single platform system thus achieving more collaboration and corporation across departments, the Office of the Clerk, and the Offices of the Leadership of Parliament. We have improved our Chamber operations with the implementation of a live video streaming facility for plenary sessions and have deployed also a video conferencing system in the Speaker's Conference Room that has enhanced the quality of virtual meetings or display of materials for an in-person meeting.

The PSC has provided all Directors with modems to help them access information and do their work from anywhere in Sierra Leone.

The refurbishment of the parliamentary building is almost completed. Significant areas still remain like the lift and the fine-tuning of a few areas like the. Notwithstanding, the work environment of Parliament has significantly improved with the completion of the toilets, most of which are now in use with the installation of a new water reservoir. Also installed is a disability-friendly ramp enabling accessibility for all Members of Parliament, staff, and visitor alike.

We have also been able to provide expanded office space for the leadership of parliament who now have office space and waiting areas for visitors.

The electrical system in Parliament has also been upgraded with a new 500 KVA standby generator. This has helped Parliament to work uninterrupted even when there is a power outage from the national grid.

Significant reforms are also in progress. The PSC has reviewed the Parliamentary Service Act and so also the Human Resource Policy Manual in tandem with the Gender policy, Disability Policy, and the Covid-19 Policy.

MPs & Staff housing project is yet to go past the inception phase and so also the development of our risk management plan.

Performance about Goal 2- Enhanced Legislative Capacity

The PSC in 2021 prioritised the implementation of three critical initiatives toward achieving the objective of enhanced legislative capacity, particularly in the following ways:

- I. Improved Procedural Support in Passing Legislations
- II. Implementing the Bo Declaration
- III. Developing & Implementing a Legislative calendar

The PSC has made tremendous progress in procedural support to legislation and achieved satisfactory performance on the other two initiatives. Parliament held 54 plenary sittings and was able to pass 9 Legislations, 7 Statutory Instruments, Ratified 34 Protocols Conventions and Treaties.

On the Bo Declaration, I am happy to report progress as well as challenges towards the implementation of the Bo Declaration.

We succeeded in:

- a) Rekindling the Business Committee
- b) Increasing cross-party consultation in the selection of membership of Committees. The new practice now is in tandem with the Standing Orders
- c) the Bo declaration called for the review of the PSC Act and we succeeded in reviewing the PSC Act which is now at the Law Officers Department
- d) The Bo Declaration called for the review of the Standing Orders to make it fit for purpose and we have commenced the process.
- e) The Bo declaration also called for reform of the administration and we have succeeded in achieving some critical milestones of the reform. For instance, we have recruited a Director-General, introduced operational planning, and reviewed policies to ensure they stand the test of time.
- f) Two meetings were done with the Bo Declaration support group to enhance continued engagement between and within the parliamentary leadership. We are presently working with WFD & EU/DAI for a comprehensive stocktaking exercise to ensure revitalisation of the momentum.

Though progress has been made in the implementation of the Bo Declaration, we still face challenges, especially regarding the meaning and scope of 'consultation'. The Declaration does not define what constitutes consultation and there continues to be contestation on the level and scope of the consultation.

Despite all these, within the context of a dynamic and politically responsive environment, I confirm that the leaders of all political parties in Parliament remain fully committed to improving cross-party engagement as a key step to making further progress on cooperation to competing demands and changing imperatives of the Hung Parliament that have existed since the elections of 2018.

1.6 Performance Related to Goal 3- Strengthened Oversight Capacity

Holding government to account on behalf of the people of Sierra Leone remains an unalloyed commitment of Parliament. Ladies and Gentlemen, in Parliament, Committees are the engines of the work of Parliament. The PSC, therefore, prioritized the following initiatives to strengthen oversight:

- The review of oversight mechanisms to enhance efficiency;
- Increase strategic committee meetings

- Increase field oversight, reporting, and follow up on oversight recommendations;

The PSC achieved all three initiatives regarding strengthening parliamentary oversight in 2021. In collaboration with the EU Technical Assistance and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the PSC supported the review of oversight tools and trained 90 MPs and 33 Committee Clerks on the use of oversight and budget scrutiny tools. A total of 288 Committee Meetings were held, and 31 Committee reports were produced of which 25 (81%) were laid in Parliament. Follow-up meetings were held with respective Government Ministries regarding the findings of committee reports and recommendations made for the attention of the respective ministries.

The Parliamentary Budget Office was provided with training both in-country and internationally to develop further its expertise to support MPs on financial scrutiny of government bills, revenue, and expenditures. The training for MPs in 2021 resulted in a noticeable improvement in the quality of the contribution by MPs, including female MPs to the annual appropriation process. The appropriation report was therefore completed on time with active input by all oversight committees, compared to the 2020 budget appropriation process.

1.7 Performance Related to Goal 4- Strengthened Representation & Relationship with Citizens

The relationship between citizens and their elected representatives has been a controversial and very sensitive one both to the MPs and to the citizens themselves. The PS is aware of this sensitivity and therefore prioritized the following initiatives:

- Strengthening Representations in International Parliamentary Bodies
- Implementation of Parliamentary Commitment in the 3rd National Action Plan of Sierra Leone.
- Scaling Up Our Civic Education Programme
- Upgrading the Parliamentary App
- Upgrading our Website to be More Interactive
- Commencing the Setting up of Offices for MPs

Your Excellency the President, Mr. Speaker, MPs, Development Partners, Ladies, and Gentlemen. Sierra Leone is an active member of the parliamentary bodies of - ECOWAS, ACP-EU, Pan African Parliament, IPU, and Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The Sierra Parliament was ably represented in all international assignments at these platforms. The Hon Speaker- Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu is the incumbent President of the CPA Africa Region and has represented the Office and the Parliament of Sierra Leone in assignments in Rwanda, Nigeria, and Spain in 2021.

Regarding relationships with citizens, the PSC in collaboration with WFD succeeded in implementing 81% of its commitment to the Open Government Partnership third National Action Plan of Sierra Leone. Key among the initiatives of Parliament commitments in the 3rd National Action Plan was the development of a Service Charter for Parliament, setting and making the OGP Parliamentary Steering Committee functional, and making Parliament accessible to people living with disabilities. We also upgraded the parliamentary app to target more young people and think tanks, and researchers to access Parliament through mobile phones.

The opening up of Parliament to the public has taken further impetus during the year under review. The e-Parliament initiative has been rolled out, following the overhaul of the Parliament's website under the EU Governance sector support partnership with the Government of Sierra Leone. The parliamentary website is accessible to citizens through live chats, video streaming, and other social media handles like Facebook and Twitter.

In the process of improving the relationship between Parliament and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the Leadership of Parliament signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2021 with 52 CSOs in Sierra Leone to reduce confrontation and improve collaboration in strengthening parliamentary democracy in Sierra Leone.

Resource constraints however have not allowed the commencement of setting up of offices for Members of Parliament and in their constituencies. The provision of office space and constituency office remains the goal for Parliament to support the work of MPs, especially in their engagement with citizens.

1.8 Performance Related to Goal 5- Resource Mobilization.

His Excellency, Mr. Speaker, MPs, distinguished Ladies, and Gentlemen, though we continued to be proud of our achievements in 2021, we must state that Parliament continued to be constrained by inadequate financial resources to implement its programmes. We continue to look forward to more donor partners that can work with us to effectively implement our new strategic plan.

1.9 Our Financial Performance

EXPENDITURE TYPE	FY 2021				
	APPROVED BUDGET (Le. Bn)	RELEASED AMOUNT (Le. Bn)	AMOUNT SPENT (Le. Bn)	BUDGET PERFORMANCE (%)	RELEASE PERFORMANCE (%)
NON-WAGE	49.30	45.25	45.95	93.2%	101.1%
TOTAL					

The above table illustrates Budget Performance for the FY 2021 of both the divisions of the Parliamentary Service and Parliamentary Service Commission. The Approved Budget for Parliament in 2021 was Le 49.3Bn following consultations and engagement with the Leadership of the Parliament and the Ministry of Finance but only Le 45.25Bn was actually released for the period under review, which resulted to a budget performance of 93.2%. We further note that the remaining unreleased amounts were later disbursed in FY 2022 to augment current year activities.

Actual expenditure were Le 45.95Bn which was slightly above the released amount of Le 45.25Bn which resulted in a Release Performance of 101.1% which is as a result of utilised funds carried forward from the previous year-FY 2020.

1.10 Unfinished Business of 2021

While we are delighted with the results achieved in 2021, some areas remained unfinished:

- Completion of the risk management plan
- We completed our strategic plan and communication strategy but were unable to launch them in 2021
- Even though we succeeded in accessing the equipment, curriculum, and staffing for the Centre for Parliamentary Studies we couldn't complete our manuals to make our Centre Operational in 2021.
- Fast track the inception process of the housing project
- Setting up offices for Members of Parliament to enhance effectiveness
- Stocktaking exercise of the Bo Declaration

Let me thank the Speaker and Leadership of Parliament for their tremendous support and guidance; thanks to our distinguished Members of Parliament A for working together with us to provide you the required support in doing your job. Thanks to our parliamentary staffers for their commitments and dedication to providing services to Parliament. Let me ask us all to put our hands together to our traditional partners – UNDP, WFD, EU/DAI for being there with us through thick and thin in 2021. I want to thank our international parliamentary platforms- the Commonwealth, ECOWAS, ACP-EU, IPU, and the Pan-African Parliament.

A very big thank you to our Excellency, the President- Dr. Julius Maada Bio for giving us the privilege to be here but most importantly for the work that Parliament and the Executive have been able to achieve in legislation, oversight scrutiny, and the implementation and scrutiny of services to the citizens of Sierra Leone. Thanks to members of the diplomatic and consular corps and the thank you to YOU- the gem of our democracy- the citizens of Sierra Leone