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AFRICA'S VOICE VITAL FOR UN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA SPEAKER TELLS REGIONAL PARLIAMENT

Press Release

Freetown, 26th May, 2015

Speaker of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, Honourable S.B.B. Dumbuya, has told the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Third Pan African Parliament (PAP) in South Africa that Africa's voice in the processes that will shape the UN Development Agenda beyond 2015 is of vital importance. Delivering a statement at the opening of the Session, the Hon. Speaker told the august body that they have a critical role to play in mapping out Africa's position in this "crucial global debate."

On the need for enhancing a democratic culture, Speaker Dumbuya, himself a former Member and Leader of Sierra Leone's Delegation to the PAP, encouraged the continental body to assume a more proactive role in conflict resolution aimed at curbing coups and wars in Africa. Noting that Sierra Leone is one of 17 African countries to have completed the African Peer Review assessment process, he told the Parliament that Sierra Leone has opened up the political space for citizens' participation. He also commended the African Union for adopting the protocol transforming the PAP into the legislative body of the AU.

On Ebola, he gladly informed the House that Sierra Leone has begun registering zero cases for days, while a post Ebola response strategy is being worked out at both national and sub-regional levels.

Sierra Leone's Speaker made a passionate appeal for African women to be involved in all aspects of the political administration of the continent, drawing sustained applause from the august audience. "If we are to forge ahead as a continent, we must prioritize the empowerment of women," he emphasised,



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adding that women of substance have to be part and parcel of state administration.

The Speaker paid tribute to the President of the Pan African Parliament, HE Hon. Bethel Amadi from Nigeria, highlighting several of his notable accomplishments for the PAP.

Highlights of the opening ceremony included the swearing in of new Pan African Parliamentarians, one of whom was the Chief Whip of the Sierra Leone Parliament. Statements and messages of solidarity, including that of Sierra Leone's Speaker were followed by the address of HE Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya, as Guest of Honour.

In Sierra Leone's delegation are the Minority Leader, Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai, Hon. Isata Kabia, Hon. Sulaiman Mulku Sesay, Hon. Claude Kamanda, Hon. Paramount Chief Bai Kurr Kanagbaro Sanka III and Hon. Ajibola Manly-Spaine as a special delegate. They were joined by the Clerk of Parliament, Ibrahim Sesay, Director of Official Reports, Samuel Songa and Rita Sesay of the Speaker's Office.

The Sixth Ordinary Session ends on 29th May, when the House will consider resolutions and recommendations of its current sittings.



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L-R: Mr. Speaker, Dr. B. Lahai & Hon. Manly-Spaine; Dir. Songa, The Clerk, Ibrahim Sesay, CW Kamanda & Hon. Isata Kabia