



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING FOR FEMALE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

The Sierra Leone Female Parliamentary Caucus (SLeFPaC), led by Hon. Bernadette Wuyata Songa on Wednesday 29/05/2024 commenced a two-day capacity building and training workshop at the Freetown City Council Conference Center.

The workshop is intended to enhance the understanding of the female MPs on the Gender Equality and Women's Employment (GEWE) Act, gender sensitive oversight methodologies, effective advocacy strategies, gender base violence, women's rights and legislative processes.

In her welcome address, the Deputy Director, Department for Programs, Research and Partnership (DePReP), Mary Koroma in her welcome address used the opportunity to stressed on the importance and existence of Female Caucus in light of promoting the agenda of women. She explained the purpose of the workshop and reiterated that building knowledge and

understanding of the MPs were essential. The Deputy Director also acknowledged UNDP support towards the workshop.

In her declaration of purpose, the Director General of Parliament, Mrs. Finda F. Fraser thanked all for their participation. She underscored the role played by the government of Sierra Leone in the improvement of women's rights and leadership. The Director General informed all that the workshop would build the understanding and knowledge of the female MPs to effectively deliver in that aspect.

She assured MPs that through collaboration and capacity building, participants would make an inroad in advocacy for women's empowerment and expressed hope that the outcome of the workshop would create an impact.

In her statement, the President of SLeFPaC expressed happiness over the conduct of the workshop and went on to thank her predecessor and other Members for their tremendous efforts. She also acknowledged the effort of UNDP support for supporting them in that direction. The MP said it was timely to enrich, build, and empower their capacity for onwards empowerment of other women to change the situation. She recalled the passage of laws relating to women and girls' rights.

For the purpose of the workshop, she said it was prudent to use the opportunity to implement the GEWE Act and called on all and sundry to support women's leadership. "As we are here, let us make use of the opportunity," she maintained and asked participants to be attentive.

The Deputy Leader 2 of Government Business Hon. Emerson Saa Lamina said that until women's issues are taken above politics otherwise it would be difficult for them to achieve more than what they have. The MP stressed on female MPs' understanding of the GEWE and the country accolades for implementing same law. He recalled and decried traditional and customary practices that were discriminating against women. He heaped praises on former leaders and commended President Bio in that direction. The MP did comparative analysis internationally on women's in politics and asked women not to be arrogant in order to achieve more than what they have now. He also asked them to properly understand the GEWE Act and the Public Elections Act in line with President Bio agenda and continue the advocacy.

The Leader of Government Business, Hon. Sahr Mathew Nyuma thanked all the participants and staff members. He used the opportunity to speak about challenges faced by women through emancipation. The leader used the opportunity to urge women to unite and underscored their effort in that direction. He advised women to follow the trend and reiterated that their commitment was important in the fight. He asked females to promote and believe in the agenda and recalled the passage of the GEWE and other acts. The leader informed participants that some people were against them during the passage of the same act. He condemned all forms of discrimination against women and assured them that he would always continue to fight for women and has demonstrated it. He advised women to stand up and fight all odds relating to women. "Irrespective of our political differences, let us always fight for the interest of women," he informed and went on to state that women hardly support their colleagues in such fight.

Earlier in his keynote address, the Acting Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh alluded women capacity building and underscored the critical legislative geared towards women's empowerment. He reiterated that women's empowerment should not be limited to just those in politics and positions of trust. He advised the participants that for the purpose of the workshop, it was timely to focus on women in all walks of life. He asked the Caucus to look into matters relating to economic challenges and agriculture and alluded to the tremendous role of women in taking care of children and domestic jobs. The acting speaker reiterated that time has gone for women to remain as housewives and advised the Caucus to conduct research on certain activities of women in light of their challenges. The acting speaker said that the Caucus should be able to raise their voices on womenhood, values, and work in line with the President agenda

He advised the female MPs to unite and work together. "Keep the spirit of woman to achieve your 50 percent," he maintained.

The workshop is being moderated by the Director of Parliamentary and Public Relations Department Sheku Lamain Turay

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