

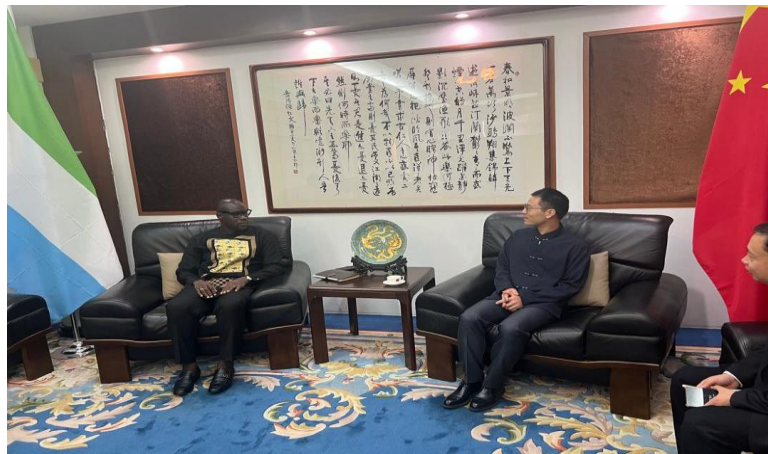


PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



DEPUTY SPEAKER ENGAGES CHINESE AMBASSADOR

The Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh on Wednesday, 15/05/2024 engaged His Excellency the Chinese Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Wang Qing in his office at the Chinese Embassy, Spur Loop in Freetown.

The purpose of the engagement was to solicit and seek bilateral assistance that is geared towards infrastructural development and to enhance transportation facilities for purposes of oversight activities by the Parliament of Sierra Leone.

It could be recalled that, the meeting was a follow -up in respect of previous discussions to assist the latter.

Welcoming the Deputy Speaker, the Ambassador said that China and Sierra Leone had strong bilateral relations which he described as "best". "We have been supporting each other through economic and political cooperation", he affirmed and went on to underscore the importance of China-Africa solidarity.

The Ambassador said during the last visit of President Bio to China, eight (8) agreements were signed by both countries on economic cooperation. The Ambassador reiterated the commitment of China towards the implementation of those agreements.

The Ambassador also said that he was looking forward to working with the Parliament of Sierra Leone and promised to work with the Government and the people of Sierra Leone in terms of development. Ambassador Qing recalled his previous engagements with the former Speaker of Parliament and reaffirmed the need for office spaces for Members of Parliament and staff was pivotal.

In his submission, the Deputy Speaker narrated the long outstanding diplomatic relationship between China and Sierra Leone and continued to elaborate on the support given to Sierra Leone by China through infrastructural development and economic cooperation. "The work of China in Sierra Leone is visible, you supported us during the outbreak of the Ebola outbreak, the construction of the Diplomatic Academy, the rehabilitation of the National Stadium, the building of the Foreign Affairs Ministry and more", he highlighted.

The Deputy Speaker said that on the bilateral relationship with China, the Sierra Leone Parliament had played a pivotal role in debating and ratifying agreements into law for the development of the two countries.

On the infrastructural development of Parliament, the Deputy Speaker briefed the Ambassador on the historical overview of the House and went on to request for the construction of office spaces for Members of Parliament and also staff. He said at present, MPs were challenged with executing their functions due to lack of office spaces.

The Deputy Speaker reiterated that, there was a proposal for the construction of a hall for Parliament by the Chinese Government that can accommodate three hundred people. The Deputy Speaker also requested that if the proposal was to materialize, let it be divided into two so that office spaces will be provided for Members of Parliament and staff.

The Deputy Speaker also requested the Ambassador to provide transportation (Bus) to facilitate oversight activities for Members of Parliament.

Concluding, the Deputy Speaker appreciated the previous Chinese Ambassador for supporting the construction of a market for the people of Lumley.

In his response to the request made by the Deputy Speaker, the Chinese Ambassador said there was an engagement by the former Speaker of Parliament on the subject matter, and went on to note that the construction of that hall needed time, money and planning. The Ambassador said for immediate planning, the Embassy would see the need to support mobile offices for MPs and staff in the interim before a permanent structure is designed and constructed.

The Ambassador also called for exchange visit between the two countries, adding "your ideas and inputs will uphold the bilateral relationship between the two nations", he concluded.

The Deputy Speaker also assured for the formation of a Parliamentary Committee on China-Sierra Leone Friendship.

The Deputy Speaker was accompanied by the Acting Clerk of Parliament, a Protocol Officer and a Public Relations Officer of the Parliament of Sierra Leone.

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