



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



DEPUTY SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT LAUNCHES NACCED STRATEGIC PLAN AND THE OGP 5TH NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

The Deputy Speaker of the Sierra Leone Parliament Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh on behalf of the Speaker of Parliament has on Friday 31/05/2024 at the State Hall of Parliament officially launched the National Council for Civic Education and Democracy (NACCED) Strategic Plan and the Open Government Initiatives 5th National Action Plan.

Officially launching the strategic Plan slated for 2024-2028, the Deputy Speaker of the Sierra Leone Parliament Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh congratulated the organizers for the promotion of Civic education in light of transparency and accountability. He reiterated Parliamentary strong commitment for the promotion of good governance and democracy and went on to note that under the President Bio administration there have been a lot of developmental trajectories. While underscoring OGP's effort he said, the Parliament of Sierra Leone had enacted several laws for the development of the nation, citing the Gender Act and other

related laws. The Deputy Speaker cited the transformative strides of the administrative structure of the House.

On the repealing of the seditious libel law, he said the government had demonstrated open government and open citizens participation. He said one of the policies in the 5th OGP national action plan is on the commitment in fighting corruption. The Deputy Speaker reassured that as a Chairperson of the Public Account Committee, robust action would be accomplished in scrutinizing the Audit report accordingly.

The Deputy Speaker also highlighted the government openness, relative to transparency and accountability, and went on to underscore transparency Bills that have been enacted by Parliament into law.

In his brief statement as Chairman of the Program, Mr Abdul Fartoma Executive Director, CHARDI said the involvement of citizen participation in governance issues is a true representation of Democracy. He went on to highlight the roles and responsibilities played by NACCED in the area of election, midterm census and the education awareness on the outbreak of COVID-19. He reiterated that only a strong political commitment would enhance political development with citizen's participation.

In her opening remarks and welcome address, the Director General of Parliament Madam Finda Fraser welcomed the initiative and launching of the 5th OGP action Plan. Madam Fraser highlighted OGP's pivotal role in making citizen's participation open, relative to transparency and accountability. Madam DG pinpointed the fundamental principle of good governance and democracy exhibited by NACCED.

She concluded by calling OGP for a better citizen's participation in the governance process of the country.

The Chairman National Council for Civic Education and Development, Kalilu Totangi appreciated the work of citizen's participation into governance and reiterated President Bio's commitment for the establishment of Civic Education. The Chairman went on to highlight the initial challenges of the institution and its role so far in educating the citizens on governance issues. He said the National Council for Civic Education and Democracy has developed its strategic plan (2024 scheduled for 2028) which is guided by experience for over the last five years. He also said that the Open Government Week is a global initiative promoted by the Open Government Partnership (OGP) to raise public awareness on the values of open government in the country.

The Country Representative of Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Rev. Diomand Suma applauded the work of OGP and went on to narrate his visit to Georgia on OGP matters and the impact it created on the work of Civic Education in Sierra Leone. Rev. Suma welcomed and appreciated those who stood tall in making the open government initiatives a reality. He also highlighted the support of Westminster Foundation for Democracy in reshaping the trajectory of civic Education.

The Acting Clerk of Parliament, Mr. Gilbert Bosco Nhabay catalogued the achievements of the OGP in the Parliament of Sierra Leone. He said the index of OGP around the subregion showcased that Sierra Leone scored third position and went on to highlight the importance of Parliament Open Day and other Parliament initiatives in making the House open, transparent and accountable to the people of Sierra Leone. "The Parliament is now opened than before" he concluded.

Head of Civil Service, John Sumaila said the initiative makes a significant milestone in the promotion of transparency and accountability in the governance process of the Country. He pledged his support to the process and went on to acknowledge the objectives of the OGP work.

The Director General of SLBC Josephine Kamara touched on the responsibility, accountability and transparency for the good governance of the State. "Civic education is a healthy way of democracy", she concluded.

In her statement, the Minister of Planning and Economic Development Madam Kenyeh Barlay outlined the roles of his Ministry in the promotion of Civic Education and also promised her Ministry's acknowledgement and commitment in the promotion of citizen's participation in governance.

The Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, Conrad Sackey pledged his Ministry support to the promotion of civic education processes and welcomed the launch of the OGP strategy 2024-2028.

On his part, the Minister of Labour Mr. Mohamed Rador Swarray said since independent the country did not establish a policy on national Civic education and went on to congratulate the NACCED for the establishment of the strategy. He said in order to enhance better Civic Education for the national policy like this has to be implemented. He commended President Bio initiatives in transforming the development of the nation.

The Parliamentary Chairperson of Civic Education Hon. Dr. Unpha Sorie G Koroma said the need for collaboration on OGP matters is very important and went on to welcome the initiative in promoting Civic Education and citizen's participation in governance issues. The MPs applauded the work of Westminster Foundation for Democracy in reshaping and supporting the work of Parliament and went on to promise that Parliament would continue to support in the process of the development of the nation. He officially launched the OGP 5th Action Plan.

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