



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

Parliament Building - O.A.U Drive, Tower Hill, Freetown | admin@parliament.gov.sl | www.parliament.gov.sl

12th December, 2024

PRESS RELEASE



DEPUTY SPEAKER OPENS A TWO-DAY LEADERSHIP CROSS-PARTY DIALOGUE AND MEDIATION SEMINAR

The Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh has today 12/12/2024 at the New Brookfields Hotel opened a two-day seminar for the Leadership of Parliament in respect of cross-party dialogue and mediation.

Submitting a keynote address on behalf of the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh acknowledged the benefits of cross-party dialogue and mediation, given the facts that difficult conversations are ahead for the current Parliament assembled. He praised the Leadership of Parliament for nurturing and fostering peace, unity and dialogue in Parliament. He also spoke about traditional and multimedia networks that are running commentaries and reporting on the proceedings of Parliament, and putting into context the meaning of consultation in the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. Speaking on the roles and responsibilities of Members of Parliament, he emphasized that MPs do not only advocate for the people, but they make laws for the peace, security and good governance of the State. He ended by alluding to the popular lyrics of a reggae songster, Lucky Dube that "different colours, one people".

Speaking on behalf of the Commission for Peace and National Cohesion, the Deputy Director of Research, Adikalie Sheku Kamara said he was pleased that Parliament was discussing cross-party

dialogue and mediation in light of peace and cohesion in the country, whilst speaking on the mandate of the Commission including conflict prevention and resolution in the country.

The Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma said he believes in statistical analysis than perceptions, given the progress report on the Bo Declaration.

He said he is a man of conscience and faith and believed in dialogue, effective consultation and sincerity of purpose. He said currently there is unity and decorum in Parliament because of dialogue, consultation and mediation without recourse to voting strength in Parliament. He said working with every structure in Parliament including respect for Paramount Chief MPs, Members of Parliament and Staff are central to enhancing peace and decorum in Parliament. He emphasized that himself and the Leader of the Opposition have vowed to maintain decorum in the House, whilst speaking on the need to improve the conditions of service for Members of Parliament. He also spoke on increased female representation in the current Parliament assembled totaling 42.

Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Abdul Kargbo said that Parliament has a great role to play in cross-party dialogue and unity, whilst speaking on the expectations of government and opposition benches both in and out of Parliament. He also said that dialogue and consultation are crucial to the enhancement of parliamentary decorum. He said Parliament is the medium through which political parties interact, whilst speaking on majority and minority in Parliament. Moreover, he said dialogue and mediation are central to getting everyone involved in decision making. He noted that over reliance on majority vote in Parliament is inimical to progress and decorum in Parliament. He recognized and commended the Leadership of the Sixth Parliament for being highly consultative and cooperative, assuring that with such major feat, the Sixth Parliament would achieve more. He also noted that a united Parliament is stronger than the executive, citing the power to remove the president from office through impeachment, adding MPs are difficult to be removed from office. Speaking on protection and confidence of MPs, he said he was looking forward to more consultations, and encouraged MPs to avoid division which has the propensity to affect the operations of Parliament.

Norah Babic of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in an online address said among other things that mediation requires an open, inclusive and comprehensive approach, with a view to getting and reflecting the majority views of the population including women for purposes of dialogue and consultation. She also noted that Parliament was a space that accommodate agreement and disagreement, thus the need for dialogue and mediation.

Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay, President of ECOWAS Female Parliamentarians said that women are central to peace building and bridging the gap in society. She also noted that the people do not appreciate Members of Parliament in spite of the difficulties they are being faced with. She recognized the need for a united Parliament and spoke on increased female representation in the current Parliament assembled through the reintroduction of the Proportional System of representation accounting for 42 women in Parliament. In this vein, she thanked all the MPs in the Fifth Parliament who voted in favour of the Public Elections Act, 2022. She also spoke about female MPs now holding leadership positions in Parliament.

Director General, Finda Fraser welcomed participants and the Director of Parliamentary Commission Secretariat's Office, Nancy O. Jalloh explained the purpose of the two days seminar, and Sheku L. Turay was moderating the sessions.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department
Parliament of Sierra Leone
+23278495023/+23278426851/+23278697776