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PRESS RELEASE



HEAD OF EU DELEGATION TO SIERRA LEONE VISITS SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT

The Head of European Union Delegation to Sierra Leone, Ambassador Manuel Muller on Wednesday 11/01/2023, visited the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu in his Chambers at Parliament building in Freetown.

Ambassador Manuel Muller recalled the last meeting Mr. Speaker had with diplomats and said that this time his visit was predicated on EU's assistance to Parliament.

He spoke on the need to determine implementation of the Bo Declaration of 2019, and progress on the reviews of the Standing Orders of Parliament in light of stakeholders inputs to reflect the current realities in Parliament. He also said he wanted to know what are the plans to take the reviews forward and its subsequent adoption by Parliament.

Ambassador Muller spoke about an EU electoral assessment team that will soon come to the country and will meet with all the political actors in the country for the purposes of determining the existence of appropriate conditions for the holding of competitive, democratic, transparent and credible elections that will be generally acceptable by all and sundry. He said the EU advance election assessment team will also measure progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the last EU election observation team to Sierra Leone. He assured of EU's continued support to election and the promotion of democratic competition in the country. He also called on political parties to comply with the rule of law for electoral purposes.

Reacting, the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu said for the Standing Orders, it is a work in progress, and he is waiting for the report on same to determine the next phase of the reviews on the Standing Orders of Parliament. He also said that such a review will generate debate across the aisle and may take into consideration emerging developments.

He also thanked the EU for its continued assistance to Parliament, and expressed dissatisfaction on some of the work done by UNOPS contractor. He said he had set up a Committee regarding same and he is waiting to receive the technical report which he will eventually share with the EU on the status of the implementation of the EU parliamentary renovation project.

He also said that the country is in readiness for the conduct of the 2023 general elections, and called on all political parties fielding candidates for those elections to endeavor to conform with democratic principles as mandatorily enshrined in the national laws of the land . He stressed that democracy and respect for the rule of law are not mutually exclusive and therefore called on all political parties to be democratic within their internal structures as required by law within the stipulated time, so that we will have an election that is peaceful, transparent, democratic and generally accepted by all and sundry.

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