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PRESS RELEASE

PAC CONTINUES PUBLIC HEARINGS ON 2019 AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Following its continued public hearings on the Auditor General's Report of 2019, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), chaired by the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Segepho Solomon Thomas has today again Tuesday 13/04/2021 referred a number of audit queries to the ACC for proper investigations and report to the PAC accordingly.

The PAC has adopted an institutional approach by collaborating and partnering with the ACC, a competent body established by law to combat issues related to graft in the country.

Hon. Thomas has warned officials in MDAs and Councils to deduct and pay withholding taxes immediately after close of monthly transactions or risk deductions from their monthly salaries. He also said that the PAC would start to levy fines for late payments and late submissions of documents to Auditors regarding withholding taxes. "Withholding taxes are to be deducted and paid to NRA and receipts kept and properly so filed for audit purposes, he emphasized.

Whilst speaking on the need to follow procurement laws and rules for the purposes of transactions, the PAC has asked ACC to look at two issues on Port Loko District Council relating to an expense of over Le 75 Million without supporting documents and to do its assets verification and report to PAC accordingly.

For Port Loko City Council, having deliberated on failure to maintain a fuel register, and utilization of over Le 140 Million without supporting documents and Le 200 Million spent without supporting documents on another audit query, the PAC has also referred it to the ACC for further investigation and report same to the PAC; constitutionally established and procedurally charged with the responsibility to look into queries raised in the Auditor General's Report and recommend to Parliament for appropriate action. On the same Council, having spoken on the need for marking and coding its assets properly, the PAC has asked ACC to

specifically identify and determine the availability of these items as indicated in the Auditor General's Report of 2019.

On payments of sitting fees and allowances to absentee councillors, the CA of Bombali District Council said they are constrained to act because payments are made directly into the accounts of councillors without recourse to Councils before such payments are disbursed.

A representative from the ACC suggested that the only way to track and prevent such queries on the Councils is to make such payments through the Councils for the purposes of accountability.

The PAC has safely arrived in Bo City to engage the South-Eastern Councils in respect of queries raised in the Auditor General's Report of 2019.

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