



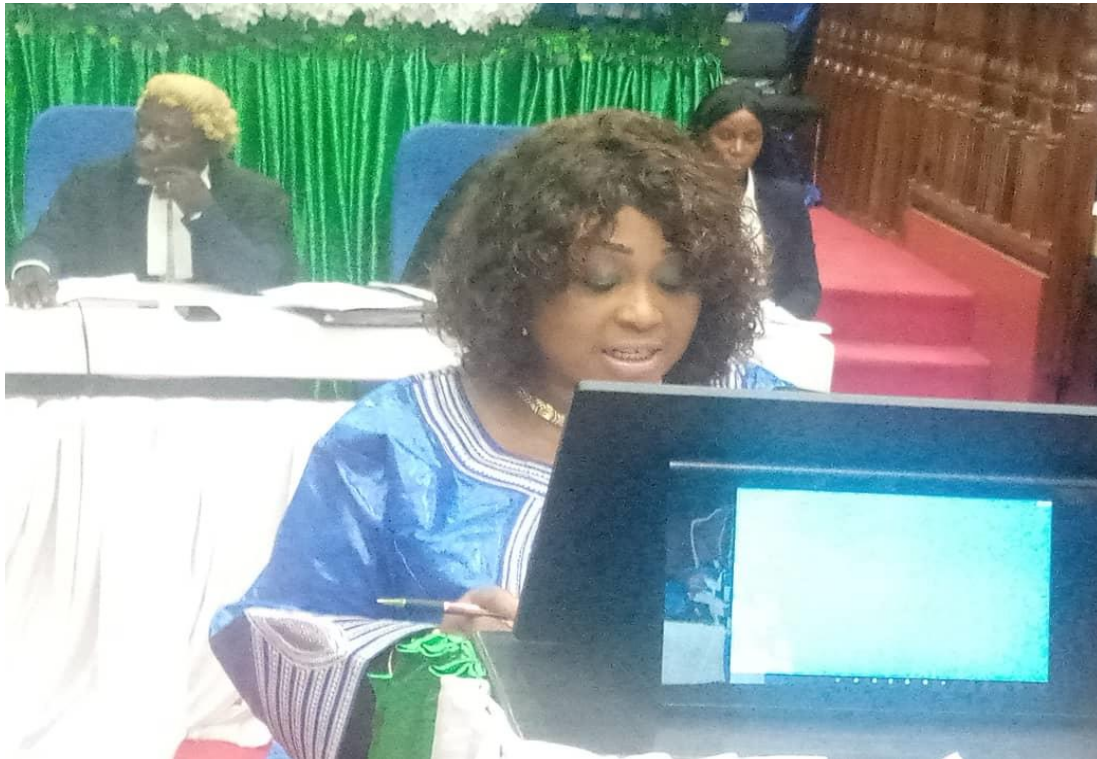
**OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF PARLIAMENT  
PARLIAMENT BUILDING  
OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL  
FREETOWN**



E-mail: [sierraleoneparliament@hotmail.com](mailto:sierraleoneparliament@hotmail.com)/[admin@parliament.gov.sl](mailto:admin@parliament.gov.sl)

9<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 2022

**PRESS RELEASE**



**PARLIAMENT DEBATES THE GENDER EMPOWERMENT ACT, 2021**

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Wednesday 9/11/2022 extensively debated the bill entitled "The Gender Empowerment Act 2021", and committed it to the Legislative Committee for further scrutiny.

The bill seeks to address the gender imbalances by making provision for increased elective positions for women, to provide for the promotion of gender equality in employment and training, to provide for the implementation of gender mainstreaming and budgeting, to provide for financial institutions to prescribe procedures for the improvement of women's access to finance and to provide for other related matters.

Presenting the Bill to Parliament, the Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs Madam Manty Tarawalli said gender inequality is a global issue and went on to bring out statistical data on issues relating to gender-related matters in the country. The minister said the vision of the President's agenda is to empower the development of women in Sierra Leone.

The minister said in November 2020 a policy on gender was addressed by the President and went on to state that the President's commitment was to empower women in Society. Madam minister heaped praises on Parliament for promoting gender issues and other laws relating to gender empowerment. She informed Parliament that, several consultations were held on the bill with stakeholders around the country and went on to highlight the six divisions of the bill.

Making her submission on the bill, the President of the Parliamentary Female Caucus, Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay implored on the House to sing the women's National Anthem which is recognized by the Commonwealth and went on to praise God Almighty for the support of the Gender empowerment Bill. She commended President Bio for supporting the empowerment of women in society and the vision for the inclusion of women into politics. She also commended the First Lady of Sierra Leone, officials of the Gender Ministry, and also past female politicians who had championed the cause of women's empowerment. The MP also referred to the bill as non-controversial and went further to highlight the importance of the bill towards the development of the State. She called on all political parties to support the bill.

Hon. Rosy Kanu Deputy Chairperson of the Gender and Children Affairs Committee in Parliament commended the Minister of Gender for championing women's issues and went on to underscore the low statistics data of women in politics. She talked about gender stereotyping of women in politics, "We want men and women to work together in making the society better" she maintained.

Hon.PC.Bintu M Kajue Koroma conveyed a message from all Female Paramount Chiefs in the country, that they are in support of the bill. She highlighted the importance of the bill for the development of the State.

Hon. Saa Emerson Lamina, Leader of C4C said empowering women in politics can reduce corruption in offices and went on to commend past Presidents of Sierra Leone for championing women's participation. He also heaped praises on President Bio for helping women to achieve their objectives in society. He went on to highlight statistical data of women's empowerment around the world and also touched on the merit of the current bill before the House.

Hon.Dr.Mark Mahmoud Kaloko commended all those organizations that had supported the process of the gender empowerment bill. He said biblically and biologically women are very important in society. He pledged his support toward the enactment of the bill.

Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh said 52% of women are currently in Sierra Leone and that only 19 Female MPs are representing women percentage in the Parliament of Sierra Leone. He

supported the enactment of the passage of the bill and called on political parties to address their manifesto by giving women access to the 30% quota in politics. He praised President Bio for supporting women and the girl child in the development of women's empowerment.

Hon. Neneh Lebbie said for too long she had been supporting the enactment of the gender empowerment bill and went further to commend President Bio for supporting women's empowerment. She said the enactment of the bill into law, would make women safe in society and reiterated that strong policy would make strong laws.

Hon. Lolloh Emilia Tongi said women should be allowed to serve and commended President Bio's leadership quality for supporting women's empowerment.

Hon. Lahai Marrah said he wanted to see a bill that is supportive of all women "Let us don't create jobs for the few". He said the bill is not for all women, but just for the educated. He urged the government to consider the exclusivity of rural women in the representation and called for the amendment of the Local Government Act in order to allow women to participate in chieftaincy elections and went further to criticize women for not supporting women's agenda.

Hon. Massay N. Aruna said the bill is not discriminatory and non-controversial. The MP went on to commend President Bio for supporting women's empowerment.

Hon. Foday Mario Kamara said the bill is not sufficient for the support of women and urged for more women's participation and empowerment.

Hon. PC Alhaji Badara Sheriff said history has been made in the empowerment of women, commended God Almighty for supporting women in society, and went on to accentuate its importance

Hon. PC Sahr Youngai K. Nbriwa said the bill is progressive and it would motivate women's empowerment and went further to state that, it is unfair for women to be given 30%, whilst they represent 52% of the population of the country

Hon. Kadie Davies commended the progressiveness of the gender empowerment bill and reiterated that, the 30% quota is very small for women's representation. She said although they are advocating for women's empowerment, but asked for their security to be upheld.

In rounding up the debate, the Acting Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Hassan Sesay said in a meeting held in New York, he was decorated as a female champion, and went on to support the enactment of the bill. He emphasized that, the rural poor must be included in the reforms. "Let us protect women at all costs", he stated. and went on to state that, the bill should not just be for the educated female elites, but for all women.

In concluding the debate, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma, Leader of Government Business said this government wanted to correct the mistakes made in the past for not recognizing women and went on to apologize to women for discriminating against them. In light of that, he commended MPs for their contributions to the debate and went on to heap praises on President Bio for championing the gender empowerment bill.

Hon. Nyuma went on to highlight President Bio's speeches on women's empowerment and women's education. "Let us empower women for better governance", he stated and further urged the Ministry of Gender to monitor the implementation process, when the bill has been enacted into law. He said the bill needed additional inputs to empower women in society and went on to state that policies affecting women should be reviewed.

Responding to MPs, the Minister said all that had been accentuated would be considered positively.

Several Women's civil society organizations observed the Parliamentary proceeding.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department  
Parliament of Sierra Leone  
+23278495023/+23276625960/+23278426851/+23278697776