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28th October 2020

PRESS RELEASE

PARLIAMENT HONOURS LATE HON. SAMUEL G. PANDA

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Wednesday 28th October 2020 opened the Book of Condolence, blessed by Reverend Julius Cole during the official Laying-out ceremony at the State Hall of Parliament of the late Hon. Samuel Genewai Panda of Constituency 010 in Kailahun District; which sad event took place on Thursday 8th October 2020 at the 34 Military Hospital in Freetown.

The late MP was given a befitting ceremony by several state personalities including the Hon. Vice President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, the Hon. Speaker of Parliament, Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu, the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Segepoh Thomas, the Speaker of ECOWAS Parliament, Hon. Mohamed Sidie Tunis, the Chairman of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), Dr. Prince Alex Harding, the Leader of Government Business, Hon Mathew Sahr Nyuma, the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Chernor R.M. Bah, the Leader of NGC, Hon. Dr. Kandeh Yumkella, Clerk of Parliament, Hon. Paran Umar Tarawally, all Members and Staff of Parliament, family members, the Minister of Internal Affairs, David Panda-Noah, former Chairman and Leader of SLPP, John O. Benjamin among others.

Declaring the purpose of the gathering, Master of Ceremonies and Deputy Director of Public Relations, Sheku Lamin Turay said Hon. Samuel Panda was an effective debater and Member of several Committees in Parliament including Water and Youth Affairs. He also referenced the statement he made on 30th May 2018 during the presidential debate saying "that his constituency is made up of Kono, Kissi and Mende who enjoy mutual respect for each", and called "on the New Direction to provide farm-to-market roads for his people who depend on farming activities", assuring "if you provide us farm-to-market roads, we can provide enough food for the nation", he boasted.

On behalf of the SLPP, Dr. Prince Alex Harding said the late MP's biography had revealed that he was a man of adaptability, peace, religion and political friendliness. "He was always in attendance of party meetings", he pointed out and went on to describe the late MP as a humble person full of perseverance and commitment to duty. "He was a necessary ingredient", he disclosed and informed that the SLPP will miss such a great man who had contributed to the development of the Party and the country.

Delivering his tribute, the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma said they were paying their last respect to the deceased. "I came to know him through the SLPP during the election for Members of Parliament", he said in a sombre mood. He went on to say that the late MP was soft spoken and was a reliable and dependable person who played a major role to foster unity during contentious moments in Parliament, whilst recognizing him as a man of faith.

On behalf of the APC, the Opposition Whip, Hon. Hassan Sesay said he knew the late MP over 40 years ago and buttressed his tribute with a Christian redemption song "What a Friend We Have in Jesus", saying that the late Hon. Panda was very special to him and was a family friend. I will remember him for his compassion and ecotourism in his Constituency and was always hoping for his children to come home and invest in his home town. The Opposition Whip with a heavy heart quoted stanzas from John Donne's Poem, "Death Be Not Proud", whilst speaking on the inevitability of death as a passage one should not fear. He went on to say the deceased would forever be remembered for the good things he had done when he was alive. He used the opportunity to ask all mourners to pray for him for a life well spent.

On his part, Leader of NGC said that the late MP was a symbol of unification in Sierra Leone relative to his parental background. "Paramount Chief from Kailahun and Princess from Bombali gave birth to the late MP", he disclosed. He used the opportunity to encourage all compatriots to be united as the deceased used to unite the people in light of the country's political divide. The Sister who spoke on behalf of the Family, Mrs. Cecilia Greenwood said in tears that the late MP was very passionate about his parliamentary work, his family, and also has unquestionable love for God and his people. She went on to say that the deceased loves to drive especially during visitations to family members. She recalled some religious and lovely messages he wrote on his Facebook wall last year relating to his last birthday celebrations.

On behalf of Kailahun MPs, Hon. Emilia L. Tongi spoke about the late MP and described his demise as "a big gap" left behind related to his generosity. She expressed solemnity over his passing away and alluded to some Christian poems on death.

The singing of the Services Secondary School song was done by Hon. Lahai Marah of APC and Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh of SLPP climaxed the ceremony.

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