



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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10th August, 2024

PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENT INTERACTS WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Under the esteemed Leadership of the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas on Saturday, 10/08/2024 hosted a unique dinner at the Bintunani Hotel at Aberdeen in Freetown. The event, which brought together Members of Parliament and the business community, was a powerful testament to the value Parliament places on their contributions and the pivotal role this community plays in nation building.

In his statement, the Rt. Hon. Speaker assured guests at the annual gathering of dinner, adding that interacting with the business community will deepen strong relationship with sector players. Speaker Thomas stressed the importance for Members of Parliament to sometimes move away from the formal environment of Parliament and come to interact with one another. Speaker Thomas noted that most of the laws they make, especially those geared towards Sierra Leone's development, mostly affect the Business Community.

The Speaker of Parliament acknowledged that the gap between Parliament and the Business Community had been great which was one reason Parliament chose to have an interactive dinner with them. Speaker Thomas expressed thanks and appreciation to the Business Community for gracing the occasion. He disclosed that the House of Parliament had decided to interact with its friends outside of Parliament, which was why they staged such an august dinner.

“A man who calls his kinsmen to feast does not do so to save them from starvation. They all have good food in their homes. It is not because of the moon that we gather together in the evening at the village ground, because we are all capable of seeing the moon from our compound. We come together because it is a good thing to do. So this dinner is meant to interact with our friends”, Speaker Thomas quoted from popular Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.

Speaker Thomas emphasized and contextualized the above quote from Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, that Parliament had decided to go informal. He said before this time, or most of the time, people thought that one had to be summoned to interact with Members of Parliament. He assured that the Sixth Parliament is now making moves to interact with the people and citizens of Sierra Leone. He reiterated that it was the reason they decided to bring the Business Community to a dinner, a novelty from a traditional institution like Parliament. He concluded by reassuring that Parliament would expand invitations to its visitors to its dinner and do follow-up on same.

In his welcome address, the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh, expressed his warmest welcome to distinguished guests to what he described as an epoch-making event. The Deputy Speaker categorically stated that it was not just meant for Mr. Speaker to hobnob and dance with Members of Parliament and the Business Community. Still, it was an event meant to appreciate all those who had contributed to the success of the Parliament of Sierra Leone. Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh continued that the Parliament of Sierra Leone's cognizance of the valuable contributions by the Business Community to the Nation and considering that the House of Parliament has contributed significantly prompted the decision by Mr. Speaker to celebrate such successes with the Business Community.

The Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Abdul Kargbo, confessed that the dinner was a blessing and privilege, especially responding to a toast proposed by one of the members of the Business Community. He acknowledged that a successful Business Man or Woman is trustworthy. He added that without trust, nobody would do business with such an individual. The Opposition Leader noted that it was the reason Mr. Speaker, in his wisdom, chose the Business Community for such a dinner to deepen their relationship further. He recalled that this is the first in the history of Sierra Leone for Parliament to have a youthful Leadership including the Speaker of Parliament, the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, the Leader of Government Business, the Deputy Leader of Government Business, Leader of Opposition and the Deputy Leader of Opposition. The Opposition Leader assured the Business Community that the Sixth Parliament would continue to provide investors with a Legislative Business Friendly Environment. He concluded by commending the young Leadership of Parliament for enforcing discipline among Parliamentary Staffers. He said this new Parliament had ensured that 8:30 AM meets staffers in their offices.

Elucidating the achievements of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, the Deputy Clerk of Parliament, Gilbert Bosco Nhabay, intimated the gathering that the House of Parliament, especially the Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, had done remarkably well in terms of progressive legislations. The Deputy Clerk acknowledged the tremendous work of Parliament and Members of Parliament, adding that they deserve the celebration, which has precipitated the staging of such an interactive dinner. Gilbert Bosco Nhabay reiterated the importance of celebrating the achievements of Parliament and mapping out a clear vision for the House of Parliament going forward. He said staging a dinner for Members of Parliament with the business community was a novelty in light of celebrating its achievements that had never happened in the history of Parliament.

In her vote of thanks, the Director General of Parliament, Madam Finda Findosia Fraser, with immeasurable elation, expressed thanks and appreciation to all Members of the Business Community for honouring Parliament's invitation to its dinner. She also thanked the Speaker of

Parliament for spearheading such a remarkable dinner. She said the visionary Leadership of Mr. Speaker and his unwavering commitment to the betterment of Sierra Leone are truly inspiring. She added that the ability of Mr. Speaker to mobilize such distinguished individuals is a testament to his exceptional standing in the Business Community.

Some members from the Business Community and Hon. Members of Parliament present from all the 16 electoral districts of Sierra Leone made concrete pledges for the construction of offices for Members of Parliament within the precincts of the House and to provide buses to enhance oversight engagements for purposes of development in the Republic of Sierra Leone.

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