



**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)

20<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2023

**PRESS RELEASE**



**PARLIAMENT LAUNCHES IPU GENDER IN POLITICS PROGRAMME**

On behalf of the Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament, the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma has on Monday 20/03/2023, launched the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Gender in Politics Programme including a Self-Assessment in light of a gender-sensitive parliament at the Freetown City Council Auditorium in Freetown.

In his keynote address, the Leader of Government Business acknowledged the partnership efforts between the Parliament of Sierra Leone and the IPU that are geared towards capacity building and the promotion of gender equality in Parliament. He said IPU had supported the Parliament of Sierra Leone in many areas including institutional strengthening and capacity building for both MPs and Staff of Parliament. Speaking on the need for continued support by IPU, he called on civil society organizations to popularize and hold political parties to account to fully implement laws passed by Parliament, to increase women's participation in politics at national and local levels of the entire governance structures in the country.

The Leader disclosed to the audience that they skillfully brought again the Proportional Representation as provided by law to promote women's participation and representation in politics by passing the relevant electoral laws to that effect, and recalled the role they played before the GEWE Bill was enacted by Parliament.

Speaking on the importance of creating a platform for civil society organizations in Parliament, the Leader pointed out that it was timely to support women to achieve their dreams in order to participate in all walks of life. He said awareness raising was an important tool that would reduce violence and intimidation against women in politics and referred to grave and stiffer penalties against those who will indulge in perpetrating any form of violence against women, with a view to deterring their political ambition.

The Leader also spoke on the need for capacity building, availability of credible data, quality representation and to narrow the gender gaps by taking affirmative action to promote gender parity and women's empowerment in the country.

Earlier in her welcome address, the Director General of Parliament, Mrs. Finda Findosia Fraser expressed happiness over the official launch of the gender in politics programme. She said the project would provide capacity building for men and women, especially in the Sierra Leone Parliament. She informed that several activities would be conducted and went on to say that the current Parliament is doing well in gender mainstreaming. She recalled efforts made by Parliament in that direction and spoke about the identification of Female Emerging Leaders and the need for building their capacities to take leadership positions in the future. She categorically emphasized on their commitment to achieving gender parity in Parliament.

Giving an overview of the project implementation, the Director of Partnership, Research and Programmes, Gilbert N'habay outlined the objectives of the project and its commitments aimed at attaining gender parity in Parliament. "Gender Programmes fall under priority 2 of the Parliament of Sierra Leone Operational Plan for 2023", he stated and went on to state that Gender Equality would address inequality and the strategic goal and objectives are aimed at organizing study, equipping Members of Parliament and Staff in that direction. He further said that there is need for Parliament to streamline Gender in all its activities including systems and processes in light of achieving gender parity in Parliament. He also spoke about specific beneficiaries including MDAs, the Parliamentary Female Caucus among others. He reiterated that, closing disparities in the country through the implementation of the GEWE Act would yield positive dividends.

The Director disclosed that the life span of the Programme's implementation is one year and six months. The programme he said has a model and will be supported by IPU and with funds from Global Affairs Canada.

While expressing gratitude for attending the ceremony, IPU's Project Officer, Gender Equity in Politics Programme Graca Sanchez said that the IPU main intervention areas are linked to strengthening the role of Parliaments across the world. In light of the implementation of the

project, she said the project's implementation will be focusing on three main objectives including increasing women's representation in Parliament, supporting women in Parliament and transforming Parliament into a gender-sensitive one including the promotion of human rights. She highlighted the importance of the project and their commitments toward its full implementation in Parliament.

The IPU Project Officer spoke about the good working relationships with Sierra Leone and also mentioned other countries where they are implementing similar projects in the same vein. She assured participants that IPU would continue to commit itself to working collaboratively and strengthening its relationships with the Sierra Leone Parliament with a view to empowering women and to promoting gender equality in politics.

In his statement, the Clerk of Parliament, Hon. Paran Umar Tarawally said the implementation of the GEWE Act is revealing that the Sierra Leone Parliament is transformative and a gender-sensitive institution of governance. He informed all that the participation of women in politics is very crucial and equal participation will make government more credible, accountable and effective. He highlighted the positive objectives of the project in tandem with the Sierra Leone's Parliament Strategic Plan.

The Clerk of Parliament reaffirmed Parliament's commitment towards the promotion of Gender Equality and used the occasion to categorically state that he was the first male member of Female Parliamentary Caucus.

The Hon. Clerk recalled Parliament's working relationships with IPU regarding capacity building. "Parliament of Sierra Leone is a pace-setter when it comes to Gender Equality," he stated and informed the audience that 69% of his staff members are female. He renewed his commitments to improving Parliament more gender-sensitive to the admiration of Africa at large and for benchmarking purposes. He used the platform to thank partners for their support towards a progressive Parliament.

Speaking on behalf of the President of the Parliamentary Female Caucus, Hon. Rebecca Y. Kamara expressed gratitude to the Leadership of Parliament and made special thanks to Clerk of Parliament for including their activities into the National Budget. She also heaped praises on IPU for their support to the Female Caucus in Parliament. She highlighted the Female Caucus activities relative to lawmaking, and the promotion of gender activities among others.

Whiles acknowledging President Bio's efforts in light of the political will to promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, the MP outlined several gains made by Parliament and Government toward the passage of progressive laws and the adoption of UN's Resolution 1325 aimed at protecting women and children in conflict situations. She informed the audience that, women lack digital knowledge and described it as a major issue that needs to be addressed urgently. She Spoke about Gender Based Violence, lack of knowledge on gender related laws and the need for women to come forward and participate in politics. The MP also lamented on women's lack of education on climate and categorically stated that female MPs are not serving

in Leadership positions in Parliament. She appealed to IPU to conduct more capacity trainings for Clerks of Committees to support the workings of Members of Parliament.

Partners including Westminster Foundation for Democracy(WFD), Plan International and UN WOMEN also made positive statements that are geared towards the implementation of the project and their commitments to promoting gender equality and the realization of women's participation in politics.

Presentation by the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs on the journey before enactment of the GEWE Act and an interlude by Female Emerging Leaders appealing for gender equality formed part of the ceremony.

The Director of Parliamentary and Public Department Relations Department in Parliament of Sierra Leone, Sheku Lamin Turay served as Master of Ceremony.

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