



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENT RATIFIES INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS ON WATERCOURSE PROTECTION

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Tuesday 21/01/2025 debated and unanimously ratified several International Conventions geared towards the protection of and use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

The following conventions were ratified by the Parliament of Sierra Leone:

1. Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, 17th March 1992
2. Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes as amended along with decision v1/3 clarifying the accession procedure dated 17th March, 1992 and
3. Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses, New York, dated 21 May 1997.

Presenting the Agreements prior to ratification by Members of Parliament, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Madam Francesc Algali, elucidated the importance of the conventions towards the protection of the International Watercourses and the Transboundary Watercourses. She encouraged Members of Parliament to expeditiously ratify the agreements adding

that, the conventions would help Sierra Leone to project its Transboundary Watercourses. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation also assured the nation that the agreements would promote regional investment coupled with a quality supply of water management. The Deputy Minister also assured the nation that the conventions when ratified, would help Sierra Leone strengthen its positive bilateral relationship with other international countries around the world.

Hon. Ing. Falla Tengbeh from Kailahun District in his submission, noted that the conventions are non-contentious. "These agreements are good for us," he said and went on to highlight some of the importance of the conventions towards the socio-economic development of the State.

Hon. Shiaka Musa Sama from Pujehun District expressed elation for the ratification of the conventions. The MP lauded the initiative by the Foreign Affairs Ministry for bringing the agreements to Parliament.

Hon. Sama further appreciated the Government of President Julius Maada Bio for the enactment of good laws for the State. On the water agreement, he welcomed the convention and went on to underscore the importance of the convention.

On his part, Hon. Musa Fofona from Kono District said the conventions are on the right trajectory. Appreciating the convention relating to water, the MP from Kono District highlighted challenges that are involved in accessing pure drinking water. He also underscored the huge benefits these conventions would bring to the development of the State.

Rounding up the debate, the Acting opposition Leader, Hon. Daniel Koroma said the conventions before the House are non-controversial and went on to question the delay of the conventions before the House. He said the details of the conventions are very important for the State. The Leader said the water-related agreements could be entered into at the regional level with a lot of benefits.

In concluding the debate, the Acting Leader of Government Business, Hon. Bashiru Silikie, applauded the opposition for supporting the ratification of the conventions. He, however, decried the delay for the ratification of these conventions. The Leader in his submission also highlighted the importance of the conventions. He expressed optimism that more conventions would be brought to the House for ratification. He also called for other regional countries to be on the same page with Sierra Leone for the ratification of the agreements.

In another development, the Parliament of Sierra Leone on Tuesday 21/01/2025, passed into law with some amendments the Bill entitled, "The National Petroleum Regulatory Authority Act, 2025".

The Bill seeks to provide for the continuation of the Petroleum Regulatory Authority which shall now be known as the National cohesion Petroleum Regulatory Authority and shall continue to provide for the regulation of the petroleum downstream industry including the licensing, monitoring, and supervision of refineries, transportation, marketing, and retail activities and to provide for other related matters.

The Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Ibrahim Alpha Sesay piloted the enactment of the Bill.

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