



# PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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## PRESS RELEASE



### PARLIAMENT, WFD DISCUSS IMPACT OF GENDER ACT

The Parliament of Sierra Leone with support from the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) on Wednesday 19/02/2025 held a one-day consultative meeting at the Foreign Affairs Academy, Tower Hill, Freetown. The event brought together female Members of Parliament (MPs) and key stakeholders to discuss the impact and challenges of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act of 2022.

According to the facilitators, the objective of the Consultative Meeting is to assess the impact of the GEWE Act and the effectiveness of the Parliamentary Female Caucus in advancing women's political participation. Other objectives are to identify gaps and challenges in implementing the 30% representation quota for women, engage women leaders, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the media in developing strategies to sustain and enhance the Act's provisions. Develop position papers for potential amendments to strengthen the legislation is also a very crucial objective.

Delivering her statement, the Director General of Parliament, Mrs. Finda Frazer, highlighted the significance of the consultative meeting in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. She commended the Sierra Leone Parliament for enacting the GEWE Act and emphasized the need for a collaborative approach to ensure its fullest implementation.

Mrs. Isatu Jabbie Kabba, Gender Adviser to the President, described the GEWE Act as a landmark achievement under President Bio's Leadership. She provided statistical insights into women's participation in politics and other sectors, highlighting progress made since the Act was became a law.

Ms. Bendu Massaquo, a representative of UN Women, underscored the critical role of women in decision-making and provided global statistics on female political participation. She reiterated UN Women's commitment to supporting women's empowerment initiatives across the country.

Speaking on behalf of the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay expressed gratitude to the President for his commitment to women's empowerment. She recounted the legislative process that led to the passage of the GEWE Act and urged political parties to support its implementation.

Representing the Opposition Leader in Parliament, Hon. Daniel Brima Koroma reaffirmed their support for gender equality as and reaffirmed that he is a proud advocate of the "HeForShe" movement. He called for comprehensive statistical data on women's empowerment and proposed the establishment of a steering committee to oversee female participation in governance and employment.

From a CSO perspective, Mrs. Marcella Samba Sesay, Executive Director of Campaign for Good Governance and Democracy, emphasized the need for a cultural shift to promote gender equality. She called for increased accountability and also resources allocation for women's empowerment and stressed the importance of tracking the Act's impact.

Hon. Wuyatta Songa, President of the Parliamentary Female Caucus, expressed appreciation for the consultative meeting and acknowledged the Act's significance. She stressed the need for ongoing collaboration to close gender gaps and ensure full implementation of the GEWE Act.

Dr. Kadija Grace Kamara, Deputy Minister of Tourism, applauded efforts to integrate more women into governance. She acknowledged the challenges women face and encouraged greater participation in the tourism sector.

Rev. Diomond Suma, Country Director of WFD, reaffirmed the foundation's commitment to supporting democracy, good governance, and women's empowerment. He highlighted WFD's ongoing efforts in facilitating programs to promote the participation of women in politics and leadership.

Representing the Speaker of Parliament, Mr. Gilbert Bosco Nhabay, Deputy Clerk of Parliament, described the GEWE Act as a progressive piece of legislation. He noted that Sierra Leone ranked second in gender-related legislative reforms after Senegal, surpassing 78 other countries. He also emphasized the need for a capacity-building initiatives for female MPs to ensure that the Act success.

Delivering the keynote presentation on "Assessing the Impact of the GEWE Act and Strategies for Sustainability," Hon. Zainab Catherine Trawally commended the WFD for its role in supporting democratic governance. She emphasized that the true test of the Act lies in its implementation and

called for collective action to ensure its success. She raised concerns about the Act's gazetting process and regulatory framework, urging immediate attention to these issues.

During the interactive session, participants deliberated on critical topics, including:  
Women's leadership in politics: challenges and successes. Networking and media engagement to enhance advocacy efforts.

The event was moderated by Mr. Sheku Lamin Turay, Director of Parliamentary and Public Relations, who highlighted the socio-economic benefits of the GEWE Act.

The consultative meeting concluded with a renewed commitment from all stakeholders to sustain and strengthen the Act's implementation, ensuring that women's empowerment remains a national priority.

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