



# PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

Parliament Building - O.A.U Drive, Tower Hill, Freetown | [admin@parliament.gov.sl](mailto:admin@parliament.gov.sl) | [www.parliament.gov.sl](http://www.parliament.gov.sl)

13<sup>th</sup> March, 2025

## PRESS RELEASE



### **PARLIAMENT, WFD, UN WOMEN, AND OTHER PARTNERS COMMEMORATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

The Parliament of Sierra Leone, in collaboration with Westminster Foundation for Democracy, UN WOMEN, PetroJetty, World Vision, Plan International and Orange Sierra Leone, on Thursday 13/3/2025, commemorated International Women's Day themed: "Accelerating Action: Strengthening Women's Leadership and Civic Engagement for Inclusive Governance."

In his opening statement and declaration of purpose, the Deputy Clerk of Parliament, Gilbert Bosco N'habay, expressed happiness for participating in the event and said that the event would serve as a way to addressing issues affecting women. The Deputy Clerk assured the women of Sierra Leone that the Leadership of Parliament is fully in support of promoting gender equality, which has been manifested through the enactment of various legislations.

In her goodwill message, the Vice President of the Sierra Leone Parliamentary Female Caucus, Hon. Rosemarie Bangura said the event was aimed at raising awareness on issues affecting women in Sierra Leone and that the gathering was not only to celebrate women, but a call to action, to address issues faced by women. "As we reflect on the achievements in the gender sector, we must also remind all that the sector is faced with numerous challenges and that these challenges need to be addressed to prevent gender based violence.

In addition to the goodwill message, the Public Relations Officer of the Sierra Leone Parliamentary Female Caucus, Hon. Mariama Zombo emphasised the importance of women in political and other positions. Referencing the GEWE Act, Hon. Zombo said the Government of Sierra Leone needs to be appreciated for giving women high positions in political and other offices of State.

The Country Director for Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Rev. Alusine Diamond-Suma reaffirmed the commitment of WFD to fighting against gender based violence against women and girls in Sierra Leone. He said they have been working towards strengthening the role of legislative activities in Sierra Leone. "WFD has worked in collaboration with the Parliamentary Female Caucus to strengthen the work of the Female Caucus in its activities". Rev. Damond continued that WFD remains steadfast in its partnership with Parliament and other institutions to strengthen and enhance democracy. "Let's show commitment by breaking barriers against gender based violence," he concluded.

The Chairman of NaCCED, Joseph Munda Bindi, emphasized commitment to enhance Democracy and promotion of women's participation in high positions in Sierra Leone. He said the government should engage women in civic education to ensure full participation in democratic activities. He said there is a need to prioritize women in the decision-making processes in society.

The Distinguished Guest of the day, Her Excellency Josephine Gaud, British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, in her goodwill message, spoke on the need for gender equity and that, globally, women's participation continued to be under-represented. She applauded Sierra Leone for the inclusion of women in high political and other positions in the country. She said that Parliament plays an essential role in addressing issues affecting women. "The involvement of women in politics is essential to examine the level of democracy in any country." She went on to encourage the Female Caucus to make their voices louder to drive change in society.

In discussing gender equality, key development partners discussed gender and issues relating to women's empowerment. Representatives from various organizations shared insights on their efforts, successes, and the need for continued support to advancing women's rights.

Hannah Kobe, a representative from Plan International, highlighted the organization's commitment to promoting gender equality. She outlined some of the major successes that have been achieved through their programs, which focused on empowering women and girls, increasing access to education, and creating opportunities for female leadership.

Speaking on behalf of Orange Sierra Leone, Priscilla Okojuku emphasized the importance of supporting women in employment. She cited the company's increasing female workforce as an example of positive change, underscoring the role of the private sector in bridging the gender gap in professional spaces.

Baindu Massaquoi from UN Women played a key role as the moderator for the development partners' discussions on women's rights. The conversation brought together various stakeholders who made commitments to fostering an inclusive environment where women could thrive across different sectors.

Edna Koroma, representing World Vision, addressed the critical issue of sexual harassment in the workplace. She shed light on the challenges faced by women in professional settings and outlined World Vision's efforts to tackle these issues through their operational activities. She emphasized the need for stronger policies and awareness campaigns to ensure safer workplaces for women.

The discussion reinforced the collective commitment of development partners to advancing gender equality in Sierra Leone. Stakeholders agreed that continued collaboration, policy implementation, and community engagements are crucial steps towards achieving lasting change.

A side event discussing economic growth and expectations from female MP was moderated by Rev. Diamond-Suma with representatives from Kids Parliament, Market Women Association, Young Women in Democracy Forum, and the Diocesan Girls Friendly Society of the Anglican Diocese of Freetown as panellists. The interesting conversations shed light on key expectations and challenges faced by women and women's entities in Sierra Leone. These issues the moderator stated would inform a larger framework for female MPs' response at the local level.

In his keynote address, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Hon. Abdul Kargbo said that women and girls are faced with different forms of violence and that violence against women needs to stop. He continued by saying that today's gathering is to stop injustices and violence against women in our society. He also said that Sierra Leone could not develop if the woman continues to face challenges and molestations. He added that Parliament is committed to ensuring women are treated fairly. The opposition leader proceeded by saying gender based violence is not only about the protection of women's rights but also the empowerment of women. He added that women's empowerment would lead to economic growth and that education for girls should be a priority and with strong laws to protect violence against women and girls. "Our women have suffered for too long, and we need to use legislative powers to protect them," he added. He said, Parliament of Sierra Leone would ensure that it lifts the concerns of women in Sierra Leone, that women who desire to contest for political positions should not be intimidated but should be strong and go for what they want.

The Director of Parliamentary and Public Relations Department, Sheku Lamin Turay, who moderated the program, outlined the importance of the nature of the celebration that is geared towards the protection and promotion of women's empowerment in Sierra Leone.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department  
Parliament of Sierra Leone

+23278495023/+23276625960/+23278426851/+23278697776/+23277473804/+2327571  
0747