



# PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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## PRESS RELEASE



### PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT HOSTS MoPED FOR 2024 VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW ON SDGs

The Parliamentary Committee on Planning and Economic Development, chaired by Hon. Peter Y. Koroma, on Thursday 04/04/2024 convened a pivotal session at the Administrative Building of Parliament. The meeting focused on a comprehensive briefing on Sierra Leone's forthcoming Voluntary National Review (VNR) regarding the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2024.

The meeting was organized by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED), in collaboration with UNFPA Sierra Leone. The session aimed to prepare Members of Parliament and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) for the upcoming UN High-Level Political Forum in July 2024, where Sierra Leone will present its VNR.

Sierra Leone's VNR aligns with the SDGs Acceleration Roadmap, a national commitment aimed at achieving SDGs targets within the 2030 agenda. This roadmap, embedded within the Medium Term National Development Plan (2024-2030), underscores the nation's dedication to global development benchmarks.

CSO representative Victor Koroma emphasized their historical involvement in development processes, dating back to 2016. He reaffirmed their commitment to amplifying citizens' voices and collaborating with MPs for inclusive policymaking.

Chairman Peter Yamba Koroma lauded MoPED for their support and efforts in ensuring that the Parliamentary Committee on Planning and Economic Development is often consulted and fully involved in vital aspects of the ministry's work. He noted that the 17 SDGs, which are global objectives and whose essence is to end poverty, reduce hunger, and eliminate discrimination, especially against children and women amongst others, have been localized through the country's Medium Term National Development Plans. He also reminded his audience that Sierra Leone is expected to present its report card on its performance in the implementation and achievement of the SDGs. It is for this that he emphasized the importance of the VNR as a stock-taking exercise to self-evaluate Sierra Leone's performance as a nation. He stressed the crucial role of MPs as conduits for development and hence pledged the committee's unwavering dedication to fostering collaborative relationships for the betterment of Sierra Leoneans.

Hon. Unpha G. Koroma, speaking on behalf of the Opposition Leader, emphasized the urgency of SDGs implementation, particularly in addressing poverty and fostering progressive development. He urged the government to translate its manifesto into tangible benefits for the populace.

Echoing similar sentiments, Hon. Musa Fofana, representing the Deputy Leader of Government Business, applauded MoPED's efforts and assured parliamentary support for the SDGs' "Big Five Game Changer" initiative.

While expressing gratitude to all participants, UNFPA representative Nadia Rashid emphasized the global inclusivity of the SDGs agenda and highlighted a concerning finding: a significant percentage of SDGs are off-track. She underscored the critical role of MPs and CSOs, stressing the importance of community engagement to bridge the gap in SDG progress. Rashid lauded Sierra Leone's achievements, particularly in Goal 3 (Gender equality), urging other countries to emulate their successes. She emphasized the need for partnership, inclusivity, and promotion in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process, pledging continued support to the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development.

In her keynote address, Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Madam Kenyeh Barlay, reflected on the country's progress and outlined the objectives of the meeting: sensitizing stakeholders on the SDGs and the 2024 VNR process, and fostering collaboration among parliament, CSOs, and governance institutions. Minister Barclay highlighted the implications of the discussions for policy effectiveness and stressed Sierra Leone's active engagement in SDG reviews since 2015. She emphasized the role of Parliament and partners in supporting the process, linking it to the country's development plan and flagship programs.

The Minister urged collective action and a change of attitude to achieve the SDGs, referencing the upcoming global conference on VNR.

Mr. Joseph Sama's technical presentation linked the VNR to the government's Big Five gamechangers underscoring the interconnectedness of national development priorities with global goals. As Sierra Leone gears up for the global stage at the UN HLPF, stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to realizing the SDGs, marking a pivotal moment in the nation's development trajectory.

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