



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON TRADE PROBES INDUSTRIES

The Parliamentary Committee on Trade and Industry, chaired by Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay, who is also the President of the Female Parliamentarians in the ECOWAS and Head of Sierra Leone Parliamentary Delegation to the ECOWAS Parliament, has on Friday 21/06/2024 concluded its oversight activities in the Western Area and the provinces in the Republic of Sierra Leone.

During the oversight visits, the Chairperson categorically stated that the Committee was inquiring into the level of compliance with the agreements Parliament had ratified in favour of the visited entities and to also ascertain the achievements and positive contributions of these entities in the national economy that are impacting the lives of the people.

During the visits, the Committee observed that most of the cement factories that were approved by Parliament have not returned to update the latter on their operations and impacts in the country. "Whenever we approve your entities, we may want you to come back and update us on the promises you made", the Chairperson underscored. Other Members of the Committee raised similar concerns and stressed the need for affordable prices of cement in the country.

Furthermore, the Committee discovered that many industries, especially the cement factories have done infrastructural developments and are producing enough, but the price remains high. The

Committee Members therefore, reminded producers of the commitments they had made during the course of parliamentary approval of their agreements to ensure price reduction of cement to its enhance affordability.

At one of the leading petroleum marketing companies, National Petroleum (NP), the Committee observed that there was rapid infrastructural development including the rehabilitation of the terminal to match with contemporary demand and supply chain of fuel products as well as security and environmental protection. According to the Committee, such developments have influenced price stabilization and availability of gas, fuel and other petroleum products in the market.

The Committee also visited the new entrant in the petroleum marketing in Sierra Leone, Aminata and Sons, at both its facilities at Cline Town and Kissy Dockyard.

Briefing the Committee, the Chief Executive Officer of Aminata and Sons disclosed that the company's presence in the country was to contribute to quality petroleum marketing and compete healthily with others. He went further to disclose that Aminata and Sons, following its construction of large storage facilities at Cline Town and Kissy Dockyard, it has received its first consignment of fuel on 15th March 2024. The CEO of Aminata and Sons assured the Committee that the company is poised to ensure that it competes with other OMCs in the importation of high-quality petroleum products in the country.

At All Petroleum Products (APP) now Eco Energy, the Committee's visit was to ascertain the progress of transition from APP to Eco Energy and the rehabilitation of storage facilities. Reporting the progress of transition, the Chief Executive Officer of Eco Energy, Mr. Albert Gulama, confirmed to the Committee that the transition was at an advanced stage and that the storage facilities which did not require major maintenance had been completed. He assured the Committee that Eco Energy's inaugural vessel of petroleum products will arrive in the country before the end of July, this year.

At Bread Avenue, Wellington, the Committee observed that Sonoco is the parent company and under its purview are nine other companies, including Bread Avenue. It was revealed that Sonoco is a leading Guinean company operating in flour, and other businesses. The company is currently constructing flour mill at Cline Town that would supply four other countries and intends to provide employment for over six hundred people.

The Committee observed that Bread Avenue has restaurant and producing high quality bread. The Avenue, according to Management, would soon expand its operations to the West and Central Freetown. "We are building entrepreneurship in baking, the course is three months with certificate, and six months with a diploma approved by the Ministry of Technical High Education and internationally acclaimed", the Manager disclosed. The Committee gladly noted that the company is empowering young people to be self-reliant and the course is free with the aim to provide skills for the youth in the country.

In Bo City, the Committee, assisted by staff of Petroleum Regulatory Agency (PRA), conducted on-the-spot visits to fuel stations including SKM, Malador, NP, Connex and Leonco with the aim to ascertain compliance. During the said on-the-spot visits, the Committee was impressed with the level of compliance with safety measures especially signs, sand boxes, use of safety gears, locations and covering of fuel tanks. Notwithstanding, the Chairman encouraged the Management of the fuel

stations visited to not involve in the habit of hoarding fuel during time of crises. She furthered that in addition to the stringent administrative measures that PRA will take against culprits, Parliament might be tempted to give additional sanctions to anti-stations or individuals who maybe found wanting.

While in Bo City, the Committee met with a cross section of the Management of Socfin Agricultural Company in which the Committee was informed about the current standing of the company and similar engagement was also done in Kenema City with Goldtree.

The oversight continued at Global Lite Refinery Sierra Leone Limited at Baoma Songa on the Freetown/Bo Highway. The oil refinery industry is under construction and intends to produce palm kernel into crude oil, animal feed, and establish fish farm, poultry, and vegetable garden amongst others. The company's plan for Sierra Leone is to match up with the standards of the international market.

Finally, at Miro Forestry and Timber products at Mile 91, the Committee observed that the company, after many years in planting trees of various species, is now at its production and processing of plywood of international standards. In addition, the company is also producing high quality utility or electricity poles and edge glued board.

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