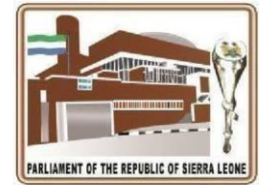




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E-mail: [sierraleoneparliament@hotmail.com](mailto:sierraleoneparliament@hotmail.com)/[admin@parliament.gov.sl](mailto:admin@parliament.gov.sl)

4<sup>th</sup> July, 2022

**PRESS RELEASE**

**PRE LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2021**

Pre-legislative hearing on the bill, entitled "The Local Government Act 2021" has on Monday 04/07/2022 held at the Committee Room One, Parliament Building, Tower Hill, in Freetown.

The event attracted several personalities including Paramount Chiefs, councils' chairmen, mayors, councillors, Ministers of Local Government and Rural Development and staff members, Members of Parliament and other members of the public.

The bill seeks to provide for the continuation of local councils, the decentralization and devolution of functions, powers and services to the local councils and to repeal and replace the Local Government Act 2004.

In his opening statement, the Chairman Legislative Committee, Hon. Sulaiman Marray-Conteh said the Local Government bill is very important in local governance and therefore required utmost significance. He expressed hope for a good deliberations.

On his part, the Chairman of the Local Government and Rural Development Committee, Hon. Aaron Aruna Koroma said the day was historical and recalled the establishment and purpose as well as the existential of the parent act of the bill, Local Government Act 2004. He highlighted the importance of local governance and other relative aspects. He underscored the lawmaking role of Parliament and the necessity of various contributions that would add relevance to the bill.

The Leader of C4C, Hon. Saa Emerson Lamina recalled how obsolete the Local Government Act 2004 had been adding that, it was timely to modernize the law. He informed that, there were several grey areas in the act, in light of the negative impact on staff of councils and people of Sierra Leone.

Leader of the Opposition, Hon Chernor R.M. Bah said the pre-legislative hearing is an essential part of law-making and commended various stakeholders and colleagues MPs for their participation. According to him, when laws are made, they always look perfect, but as time went on grey areas start to show.

Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma welcomed all including traditional authorities, the partners, councils, and the ministry.

He informed that, laws are made to stand the test of time and thanked all including the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development for their nationwide consultation. He advised all to make inputs and went on to say, they as Parliament will make laws that will be reflective of the people.

He gave a round of applause to all those, who left their busy schedules to patriotically contribute to the law making. The Leader of Government Business emphasized on inclusivity of all in the lawmaking process.

The Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Tamba Lamina expressed happiness over the process and went on to recall how it started. He spoke about the parent act and its purpose and went on to say, the document outlived its time. The Minister spoke about the inconsistencies in the parent act. He emphasized on the inclusivity clause of the bill and the democratic nature.

According to the minister, the bill would create the appropriateness for citizenship participation in governance, in light of enhancing unanimous development. According to him, the bill would champion the democratic governance of the council and the ministry. "This bill is a commitment to improving the lives of our people" he started

He commended the government and donors for their various supports towards the process as well as Members of Parliament.

The European Union Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Manuel Muller in his statement stressed the importance of service delivery to citizens and communities, more so for those remote communities away from the capital as testament that they are part of the the national community of Sierra Leone and urged MPs to review the Bill with that in mind as the service Parliament to citizens

He expressed hope that the new law would improve the lives of the local people and reiterated that, EU will continue to support Parliament through the next Multi-annual Indicative Program with Sierra Leone from 2024-2027, so that the Parliament can consolidate its capacity and deepen its crucial role in the democracy of the country. He also commended the participation of all in the pre-legislative process, describing it the best in the West Africa sub-region. The Ambassador supported the call by Leaders of Parliament for timely availability of information on Bills to enable public participation.

The Chairman National Council of Paramount Chiefs, Hon. Paramount Chief Sheku Amadu Tejan Fasuluku Sonsiama III used the opportunity to ask Paramount Chiefs Representative in Parliament to protect their interest in the process.

The President Local Councils of Sierra Leone (LoCASL), Joseph Munda Bindi who also doubles as Chairman of Bo District expressed happiness over their inclusion, but informed that, there are still lot of grey areas. According to him, the have proffered suggestions and contributions, which he said need to be considered. He emphasized on the change of nomenclature of "chairman" as according to him, the name is very common.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department

Parliament of Sierra Leone

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