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**PRESS RELEASE**

**PRE-LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS ON THE NATIONAL LAND COMMISSION ACT 2022 AND THE CUSTOMARY LAND RIGHT ACT, 2022**

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Monday 25/07/2022, through its Pre-Legislative Committee hearings discussed two bills relating to land issues in Sierra Leone.

The following bills were discussed:

1. The National Land Commission Act 2022 and
2. The Customary Land Right Act 2022

The National Land Commission Act 2022, seeks to provide for the establishment of the National Land Commission, and other land administrative bodies to secure effective and holistic land administration and to provide for other related matters, whilst The Customary Land Right Act 2022 seeks to provide for the protection of customary land rights, the elimination of discrimination under customary law, and the management and administration of land subject to customary law and other related provisions.

In his welcome address, the Chairman Legislative Committee Hon. Sulaiman Mary-Conteh said it is a legislative process to scrutinize bills before the House and underscored the important of both bills and their features.

In his statement, the Opposition Leader in Parliament Hon. Chernor RM Bah expressed happiness over the presence of the bills in Parliament and their subsequent deliberations. He underscored that it is the work of MPs to discuss bills in a pre-legislative meeting and said both bills are so technical, citing that "When talking about the land, you talk about life" he stated.

The Leader said since, colonial times land issues had been a challenging issue in Sierra Leone and noted that, they should be addressed, and went to highlight land security, investment, and the environment. He called on all to create solutions to land-right issues and not to create chaos.

In his submission, Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma expressed appreciation for both bills before the House and their related consideration and used the opportunity to read both short titles in the bills and their memoranda, objects, and reasons. The Leader also highlighted the importance of the bills for the development of the state. He said both bills seek reforms on land issues in the country and address grievances.

In his statement, The Minister of Land and Country Planning, Dr. Turad Senise said if we get it right, the issues of land would be addressed. He said if land issues are to be addressed, it would provide sustainable development for the nation. "It is time for us to take a strong decision in shaping our land issues", he concluded

He said Sierra Leone needs four hundred million dollars every year to promote agricultural activities on the vast land in the country and urged for total investment on the land.

In his statement, Hon. PC Joe Kangboi Macovory said land issues have been a challenge and highlighted the pre-colonial issues of land in Sierra Leone and hoped that the bill would address the challenges of land issues all over the country.

Both bills were presented to MPs by Jobo Samba, Director of GIS and Remote Sensing. Ministry of Land and Country Planning and questions, and clarifications form part of the deliberations

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