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PRESS RELEASE



SIERRA LEONE HOSTS 52nd COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) African Region has on Monday 6th June 2022 officially commenced the 52nd Conference at the Freetown International Conference Center, Aberdeen, Sierra Leone on the theme "The role of African Parliaments in Building Inclusive Society to Counter Growing Insecurity in Africa".

The international conference attracted most CPA Members and their speakers as well as Members of Parliament to discuss and chart the interest connecting to the CPA Africa Region.

Over fifteen Speakers from CPA Members' Countries and several delegates were part of the conference.

Secretary-General of CPA Mr. Stephen Twigg, while welcoming the delegates, thanked the Speaker of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, Rt. Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu and heaped praises on President Bio for initiating the Free Quality Education. He spoke about the future development of the CPA and other efforts including working towards the full legal status. The Secretary-General also assured the delegates on other related aspects and planned activities.

Acting Chairperson of CPA International Executive Committee Ian Liddell-Grainger expressed appreciation for being part of the conference and lauded the work of CPA . He insisted that Sierra Leone had been an active member of the CPA. He spoke about efforts geared toward the future development of CPA . He encouraged CPA Members to collaborate and give support.

Hon. Dr. Makali Malu, Senior Regional Representative East Africa Region, who spoke on behalf of the CPA Chairperson CPA Africa Region Executive Committee and Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya, Rt Hon. Justin B.N. Muturi, EGH, MP, thanked delegates and informed that, he was very pleased with the Sierra Leone Speaker of Parliament. He gave the composition, activities, and other related characteristic, of the CPA in light of the future agenda.

In his welcome address, the Speaker of Sierra Leone Parliament, Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu who also doubles as President of CPA Africa Region commended all the delegates and others for participating in the conference. He Spoke about the vision, mission, and core values of the Commonwealth, in light of democracy, human rights, gender equality amongst others. He thanked CPA Members for their support to his current position as well as for hosting the 52nd CPA conference in Sierra Leone. The Speaker spoke about the history of his country and other related benchmarks.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we heartily welcome you to this land of freedom" he reiterated and lauded Sierra Leone for religious tolerance and asked others to emulate. The Speaker also explained the political will of President Bio towards education and went on to recall the historical attainment of education that was declined by the ravages of the war and being regained by the Leadership of President Bio.

The Speaker expressed delight over the conduct of the conference in Sierra Leone and shared the experience of his Parliament with the delegates, in light of democracy, good governance and amendment in the legislation framework that predicated on international best practices.

In his Keynote address, the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio said the city of Freetown is a replica of history and went on to speak about the country's cultural heritage, with touristic attractions. He thanked the Royal Family in England and commended the commonwealth's support to Sierra Leone's development. According to him, the common vision had kept the commonwealth together and spoke about the country's resilience. He thanked the Honourable Members of Sierra Leone Parliament for their remarkable efforts and spoke about their service deliveries. He informed that, the theme of the conference is very pertinent, in light of promoting governance.

He used the opportunity to speak about the global effects on state parties and heaped praises on the National Parliaments for supporting and promoting governance. He expressed hope for a fruitful deliberation, in light of building an inclusive society.

The Speaker of Zambia Hon. Nellye Butete Kashumba Mutti, while delivering the vote of thanks on behalf of the delegates, expressed appreciation to the people of Sierra Leone for their warm hospitality.

The ceremony was climaxed by the presentations of gift to President Bio by the Leadership of Parliament for the latter's support to Parliament.

The Mission of the CPA African Region is to promote and protect the interests and perspectives of CPA Africa Regional Parliaments and countries, in the Commonwealth and beyond, and to promote gender equality, the emancipation of women, and respect for human rights, freedoms, democracy, and good governance.

The African Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association comprises 63 national and subnational legislatures.

The CPA Africa Region is governed by a Coordinating Committee and Executive Committee which is made up of representatives from across the region. There is also a Regional Representatives Committee that reports to the Executive Committee

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