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**PRESS RELEASE**



**SPEAKER MEETS EU PRE-ELECTION ASSESSMENT TEAM AND CALLS FOR EU ELECTION  
OBSERVATION MISSION TO SIERRA LEONE**

The Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu on Wednesday 01/02/2023, met with an EU Pre-Election Assessment Team in his Chambers at Parliament Building and called on them to field in a full fledged EU Election Observation Mission for the purposes of the June 24 multi-tier elections, that will be conducted by the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone, using the Proportional Representation (District Block) System as provided for by law and recently upheld by the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone.

Accompanied by the Head of European Union Delegation to Sierra Leone, Ambassador Manuel Muller, Head of European Union Delegation on Election Observation, Dr. Julia Ruppel said they were on an assessment mission to ascertain whether the proper conditions existed for the conduct of the June 24 multi-tier elections, and to also know whether the country would want an EU Election Observation Mission given their previous deployment to Sierra Leone starting from nomination, campaigning, voting, counting, tabulation and petitions. The Delegation also

asked questions on the Public Elections Act 2022, Election Regulations, and the Election Petition Rules.

Responding, the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu welcomed the EU Delegation and thanked them for their continued support to Parliament in respect of capacity building. He called on the EU to field an Election Observation Mission to Sierra Leone because it is a democratic country that believes in holding elections according to the principles of democracy and good governance. He also assured the Delegation that Parliament had put mechanisms in place for the conduct of free, fair, transparent and democratic elections that will allow the people to vote and install a government of their choice to run the affairs of the State. He said following a constitutional amendment in 2001, the June 24 2023 multi-tier elections will be only the second time that elections would be conducted on the Proportional Representation (District Block) System and not on the basis of first pass the post or the constituency- based system of election. The application of the PR system had also already been upheld and endorsed by the Supreme Court as lawful. On the passage of the Public Elections Act of 2022, he said out of every 3 candidates, one shall be a woman to attain at least the 30% quota for women to elective positions. He also said that he was going to keep in close touch with the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone to ensure that this prescription of the electoral law was fully respected by all the political parties. He expressed the desire to see the time when such a mandatory provision is elevated to an entrenched law in the Constitution of Sierra Leone.

Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu spoke of the imperative of respecting provisions of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone in terms of all political parties organizing themselves in accordance with democratic principles for their respective internal structures as they are enjoined so to do by Section 35 of the 1991 Constitution. He recalled that the SLPP has had no difficulty in this regard as it has been internally democratic since its cradle. It is not so for the APC which is now struggling to be democratic for the very first time in their history. In this respect it is significant to note that the APC was taken to court to rectify its illegal situation by one of its own and not by a member of another political party. Just imagine what the repercussions would have been for the country's peace and stability had the APC been taken to court by another party?

He said the SLPP already have their flagbearer and executive in place and the APC is now striving to follow suit by democratic means and expressed the fervent wish for them to succeed in this noble venture without further delay and in an atmosphere completely devoid of violence and tension.

On the fracas in Parliament, he said there was no need for such as the law is clear on how any regulations could be peacefully annulled by any member of Parliament before they matured into law. It was most regrettable and unwarranted that the Opposition chose the path of violence in the sacred Well of Parliament instead of following the prescription of the Constitution.

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