



# PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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## PRESS RELEASE



### **SPEAKERS ESTABLISH MANO RIVER UNION PARLIAMENT OUT OF THE MONROVIA DECLARATION**

Born out of the Monrovia Declaration, which was staged on Sunday, the 20th of July 2025, the Speakers of the Four Mano River Union Member States the Rt. Hon. Speaker Segepoh Solomon Thomas of Sierra Leone Parliament, the Rt. Hon. Richard Ngbabe Koon, Speaker of Liberia Parliament, the Rt. Hon Adama Bictogo, Speaker of the Ivory Coast Parliament, and the Rt. Hon. Dr. Dansa Kourouma, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Guinea, converged in Monrovia, Liberia, where they deliberated and unanimously endorsed the establishment of the Mano River Union Parliament.

In his address at the Monrovia Declaration, the Speaker of Sierra Leone Parliament, the Rt. Hon. Speaker Segepoh Solomon Thomas on behalf of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, added his voice to such historic and forward-looking deliberation that speaks to the future of the sub-region, to the shared destiny of their peoples, and to the boundless potential of regional parliamentary collaboration. The Rt. Hon. Speaker Segepoh Solomon Thomas confessed that the proposal to establish a Regional Parliament under the Mano River Union framework is both visionary and timely. He added that the MRU nations-

Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire share not only common borders but common burdens and aspirations: youth unemployment, security fragility, climate vulnerability, cross-border trade barriers, and the pressing need for infrastructure and economic integration.

Speaker Thomas assured all participants that the Mano River Union Regional Parliament offers a structured and accountable platform to address these challenges through harmonized legislation, democratic oversight, policy alignment, and shared commitments.

He said their common challenges demand Collective Solutions, adding that their countries have experienced the devastating effects of conflict, the fragility of post-conflict reconstruction, the threat of pandemics, and the uncertainty of economic volatility. And yet, he said the region had also witnessed the resilience of their people, the value of peacebuilding, and the promise of regional solidarity.

In a world increasingly defined by geopolitical shifts, pandemics, climate vulnerability, and the complexities of globalization, the Rt. Hon. Speaker Segepoh Solomon Thomas noted that their basin could not afford legislative fragmentation. He asserted that the time had come for the region, as neighbouring countries with shared histories and interwoven destinies, to embrace a framework that fosters collaboration, coherence, and common legislative action.

The Rt. Hon. Speaker Segepoh Solomon Thomas highlighted the socio-economic benefits of the Mano River Union Parliament which are: to promote a harmonized legislative frameworks, strengthen democratic accountability, particularly around the implementation of shared policy frameworks and regional treaties, facilitate structured dialogue among national legislators, giving voice to citizens across borders, support youth and gender inclusion, making our integration agenda not only about economic growth but also social equity, advance environmental stewardship, present a united front in global and continental platforms, aligning with ECOWAS, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and Agenda 2063 for Africa's development.

“Your Excellencies, Honourable Members, Distinguished Guests, as Speaker of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, I offer my unwavering endorsement and support for this noble idea. Sierra Leone stands ready, administratively, politically, and legislatively to work with the Republic of Liberia, the Republic of Guinea, and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire to realize this vision”, Speaker Thomas committed.

In his statement, the host Speaker of the Monrovia Declaration, the Rt. Hon. Richard Ngeba Koon, Speaker of the Liberian Parliament, acknowledged that the Mano River Union, comprising Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire, has long been a symbol of regional solidarity. From its establishment in 1973 to today's landmark gathering, he said the Union has endured both triumphs and challenges, yet it has never lose sight of its vision: peace, development, and prosperity for their people.

He assured that the Mano River Union Parliamentary Body which they had launched would serve as a critical institutional bridge, a forum through which their national legislatures could harmonize laws, share best practices, address cross-border challenges, and advance common legislative agendas on trade, security, environmental protection, and human development.

The Rt. Hon. Speaker Koon also assured that the Mano River Union Parliament would address cross-border insecurity, youth unemployment, climate vulnerability, and the movement of people and goods without adequate legal frameworks. He said a functional and well-coordinated parliamentary body allows them to approach these issues not in isolation but with a unified legislative voice, consistent, coherent, and committed to the well-being of all their citizens.

The Speaker of Guinea and Ivory Coast also pledged their indelible support toward the sustainability of the Mano River Union Parliament.

Chapter III of the Mano River Union Parliament talks about the Composition and Membership of the Mano River Union Parliament. Article V(i) depicts that each member state shall be represented within the parliament by five (5) members of its national legislative body (legislature). Each Member State shall be proportionally represented in accordance with the number of seats in its National Parliament, provided no member state shall have not less than five (5) members and not more than fifteen (15) members.

Article V(ii) states that parliamentary delegations shall reflect the political and gender composition of their respective national parliaments.

Article V(iii) says members shall be nominated or elected by National Legislatures in accordance with their constitution and rules of procedures.

Article Vi establishes the tenure and mandate, indicating that each member shall serve for a term of four (4) years, renewable once, unless otherwise decided by their National Parliament.

Article Vii talks about the rights and duties of members, mandating each member to perform the following duties:

- a) Debate, propose, and vote on MRU laws, Oversee Project Implementation, and Represent National and Parliamentary interests
- b) Engage in sub-regional dialogues and forums, advocate in regional or continental bodies, and harmonize national legislation across MRU states
- c) Ensure transparency in MRU initiatives, promote peace, security, democratic norms, report outcomes to national governments, and support elections oversight.

Article Viii talks about Immunities and Privileges, which are:

- a) The members of Parliament enjoy parliamentary immunity for words or writings and acts performed in the exercise of their official functions.
- b) They benefit from the inviolability of their person and protection against arrest, detention, or legal proceedings when they attend the sessions or are in transit, etc.

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