



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

Parliament Building - O.A.U Drive, Tower Hill, Freetown | admin@parliament.gov.sl | www.parliament.gov.sl

10th June, 2024

PRESS RELEASE



THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE RECOMMENCES HEARINGS ON THE AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT OF 2022

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in the Parliament of Sierra Leone, chaired by the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh has on Monday 10/06/2024 recommenced hearings on the Auditor General's Report of 2022.

In his opening statement, the Chairman of PAC, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh said the public hearings were a continuation of those exercises that started some time ago by his predecessor, the current Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas.

He said that the recommendations made by the Auditor General on issues raised in the Report were not criminal, and were also not intended to undermine the various positions held by the Auditees. "We are not going out of the law and we are guided by the law", he said.

He told MDAs not be afraid of the public hearings and encouraged them to come forward and make submissions in respect of queries raised in the said Report. "If we summon you and you do not come we have other instruments and those instruments include some powers of the high court to enforce and compel the production of witnesses and documents", he stated.

The Chairman reminded heads of agencies and Permanent Secretaries of their sacred responsibilities and asked them to do the needful in respect of prudent financial management. The Chairman alluded to the fact that heads of MDAs must deliver in light of the President's agenda by delivering goods and services to enhance development programmes in the country. He used the occasion to remind MDAs that 75% of the last Commission of Inquiry came from the Auditor General's Reports. "The Auditor's Reports formed 75% of the evidence that gives rise to the formation a commission of inquiry and whatever we do we should take note of the facts that a precedence had been set, adding these documents are serious", he affirmed.

He concluded by commending the Auditor General for the exemplary work he had done by helping to shape the financial management architecture in the country.

First to appear before the Committee was the Ministry of Finance. The Audit Reports captured that actual expenditure exceeded budgetary expenditure including assets management, information technology (IT) and audit of the integrated financial management information systems.

The Committee, however was tough on issues related to queries raised in the Auditor General's Report of 2022. The Chairman noted that the Ministry of Finance breached the 1991 Constitution by exceeding their total budgetary allocation approved to by Parliament. After a longer deliberation on the subject matter, the Committee Members were not happy with the gravity of the offences.

"The Ministry of Finance has over spent their budget and also violated the Constitution, and the Public Financial Management (PFM) Act and other regulations", the Chairman remarked.

On NRA, the Auditor General observed that assets were not coded. For assets in offices, the Committee observed that all coded assets needed to be verified by the PAC in the future. On matters connected to wrong inputting of GST as claimed by taxpayers and were not supported by either the Accountant General or NRA, the Committee ordered that letters be submitted to all business entities listed that are owing NRA so that all monies be paid to required bank accounts immediately.

On the other audit queries, the Committee Members were not happy with issues relating to withholding taxes and they recommended that all withholding taxes be paid forthwith.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department

Parliament of Sierra Leone

+23278495023/+23278032986/+23278426851/+23278697776