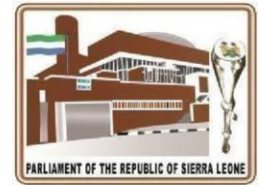




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PRESS RELEASE

**WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY ENGAGES PARLIAMENT CSO'S
NETWORK**

Westminster Foundation for Democracy in Collaboration with the Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Friday 3/3/2023 engaged the Parliament Civil Society Organization's (CSO's) Network at the Parliament Administrative Conference Building. The purpose of engaging CSOs members was to discuss the Lawmaking process, post-legislative scrutiny, and corporative dialogue.

Director DePRep, Mr. Gilbert Nhabay, in his welcome address, said it was a long journey bringing about fifty-two CSOs together to form a network desk in Parliament. He further explained the prospective successes geared towards the establishment of the CSO Desk and also explained what they intend to support them or collaborate.

Mr. Edmond Abu Jr. Executive Director of Native Consortium, appreciated his colleagues for allowing him to serve as co-chairman of the program. He called out CSO representatives in ParlCSONet and gave a brief description of their work. He talked about how difficult it would be, if someone doesn't know how to lobby around Parliament. He described who CSOs are and went further to do comparative analysis between other countries Parliament and CSOs and how their relationship has eased better coordination in the law-making process and dialogue.

Adam Fusheni, Key Expert - Parliament, EU Governance Programme, described the engagement as a solidarity statement and indicated the need to work with Parliament. He said CSOs coming together to work with Parliament is important,

because it would help citizens to understand Parliament; thus, helping to make better laws and informed judgments. He said the EU Governance program is committed to working with them, noting the importance of the theme of the workshop.

Speaking from London, the Country Director, of Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Rev. Alusine Diamond Suma; congratulated Parliament for keeping to its promise of working with CSOs. He encouraged the CSO to take the opportunity to constructively engage with Parliament and contribute to support its work.

in her keynote address Madam Finda Frazer, Director General of Parliament, said it was a great pleasure for being part of the program that focused on deepening the understanding of CSOs on their entry point of accessing Parliament, and its members and staff. Madam Frazer said, as an institution, they believed in strengthening representation with citizens which is provided for in goal four of the strategic plan of Parliament

Director General expressed that for Parliament to be more effective and efficient in achieving that goal they need to work with nonstate actors in order to support the work of Parliamentarians through data, and credible information, in order to hold them to account.

Director General said the training would support capacity building approaches, purposely that would position those key nonstate actors on expertise and resource of knowledge and solution to parliamentary CSOs engagement. She added that the CSOs would continue to educate parliamentary constituencies in real time on bills, laws, instruments, policies, and programs discussed, approved, or rejected by Parliament. She noted that the CSOs were going to have a full understanding of how they would be invited to pre-legislative meetings as experts and witnesses.

Madam DG said at the end of the engagement it would be expected that their knowledge would improve law-making, legislative review, corporative dialogue, and post-legislative work that would inform increase engagement in Parliament.

She also expressed hope that it would be expected of the network for legislative review and scrutiny as well as improve the capacity of the members to collaborate and advocate on behalf of the citizens of Sierra Leone.

Madam Fraser concluded by commending the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and the European Union for their continued support to Parliament and thanked other partners including staff of Parliament.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department

Parliament of Sierra Leone

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