

National News

By Hassan Y Koroma

The Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Chernor R.M Bah, yesterday on behalf of the Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament, officially declared open a two-day regional Africa workshop in Parliament, organized by Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) with the view of promoting, ratifying and implementing the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC).

Hon. Bah welcomed delegates to Sierra Leone, saying that the PGA had existed in the Parliament of Sierra Leone (PoSL) for over 15-years now. He recalled the cherished roles that had been played under the chairmanship of Hon. Ibrahim Sorie, Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai and President Koroma, who in 2011 received a PGA award as "defender of democracy".

He described the proliferation of weapons as a threat to humanity in spite of natural disasters. He furthered that the threat was not only limited to conventional weapons, but that when they fall in the wrong hands; terrorists would use biological and chemical weapons to further their murderous activities against defenseless people.

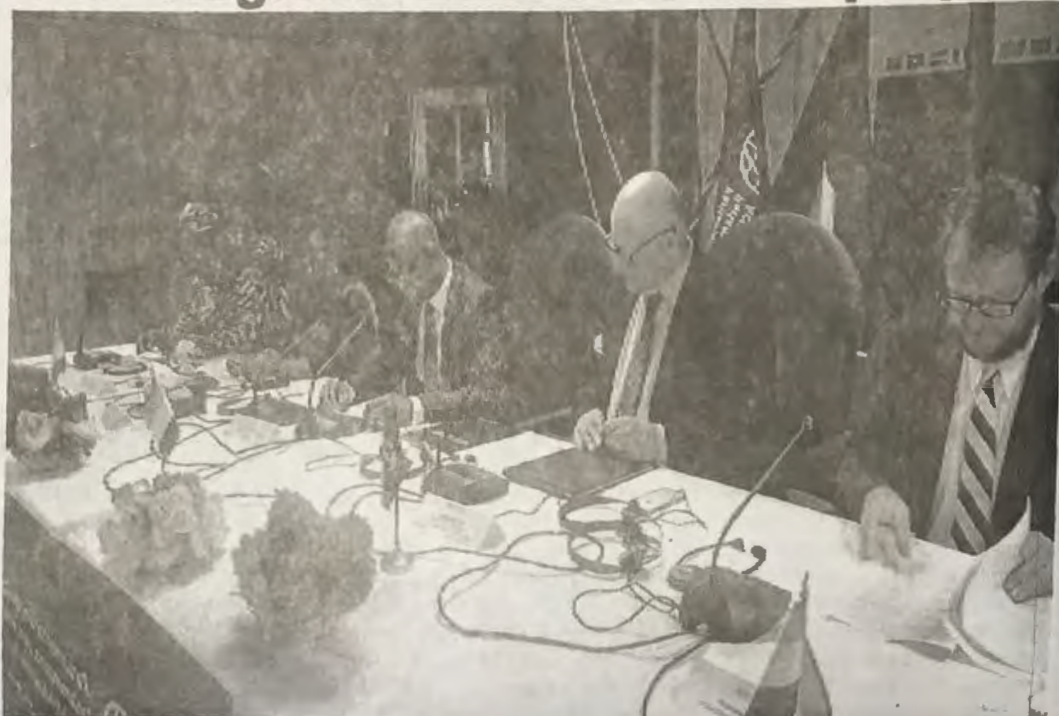
Hon. Bah also said that Sierra Leone signed the Convention in 1972 and ratified it in 1976. He called on other countries to sign and ratify the Convention with the aim of reviewing their national laws to address existential threats relating to biological and chemical weapons.

Hon. Dr Bernadette Lahai, a member and former chair of PGA Sierra Leone Chapter said that the Convention was older than the current membership of the PGA. She averred that in Africa after the conduct of general elections, there was usually a high rate of attrition.

She described the Convention as very important for conflict ridden areas, whilst calling for the creation of new institutions and domestication of the Convention regarding its text, capacity building and continued sensitization to be rolled out in their constituencies, with support from the UN Resident Coordinator in Sierra Leone.

Sunil Saigal, UN Resident Coordinator in Sierra Leone thanked the PoSL for hosting the workshop, whilst saying that without peace and democracy, including the observance and adherence to human rights, there will be no development. He expressed the commitment of the UN towards the ratification and implementation of the

Deputy Speaker Declares Two-Day PGA Regional Africa Workshop Open



Convention, whilst noting that "Sierra Leone continues to maintain peace, democracy and human rights to uphold its growth and develop-

ment". A total of 27-Delegates are in attendance including 10 from Sierra Leone and 17 from Nigeria, Somalia, Chad, Liberia, Namibia

and the Republic of Guinea.

The workshop holds from the 27-28 March 2017, with the adoption of the Freetown Communiqué.

ACC Dialogues MDAs In Kenema District On PNB Report

In a bid to update the public on the first quarter report of the Pay No Bribe (PNB) campaign, the Managements and the Integrity Management Committees (IMCs) of the pilot entities on Thursday held fruitful deliberations at the ACC Kenema office on the reports received and responses from MDAs. Speaking to the report the Public Education Officer, Sylvanus M. Blake, revealed that Kenema District recorded the highest number of reports which would be attributed to the robust public sensitization drive by the ACC, through radio, customized and the community outreach meetings. He urged all Heads present to take the reports in good faith as the data represent the public experiences with the sectors when accessing basic social services. Mr Blake informed listeners that when the Sierra Leone Police recorded the highest number of reports in the district and nationwide, it triggered the Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) Alfred Karrow Kamara to summon an emergency meeting on 28 December 2016 with his officers to immediately respond to the various concerns raised in the reports. It was resolved in that meeting that all ungazetted/illegal checkpoints be removed immediately, and robust monitoring of checkpoints and sensitizations, which has resulted



Questions and answers session formed part of the meeting

into not only the reduction in the number of checkpoints, but incidences of bribery in the district.

Elaborating on the how the reports would be treated the Public Education Officer, Sam P. Gogra, spoke on the establishment of Integrity Management Committees (IMCs) in MDAs including the five pilot. He furthered that the IMCs now had an additional responsibility of addressing issues in the reports as they relate to their institutions.

He emphasized the holding of regular meetings by IMCs to help internally address integrity issues in the MDAs. The IMCs, Mr Gogra continued, should

also ensure that their agencies produce and publish service charters for the benefit of the general public.

Earlier in his welcome statement the Regional Manager, Keifala Koi, expressed gratitude and appreciation to the participants for the appreciative turn out at the meeting and said that the Commission requires more support and collaboration with partners if the fight is to be won.

He stated that corrupt individuals accrue a lot of proceeds illegally and so would want to make the campaign very difficult hence ACC alone cannot win the fight.