



# PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE



## STATEMENT PRESENTED

By

**HON. CATHERINE ZAINAB TARAWALLY**

**(REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE PARLIAMENT)**

**ON THE REGIONAL AFRICA PARLIAMENTARY WORKSHOP TO  
PROMOTE BIOLOGICAL SECURITY ORGANIZED BY THE PGA IN  
THE DAR - es- SALAM TANZANIA.**

**ON THE**

**9TH AND 10TH MAY 2022**

Distinguished Parliamentarians, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring you greetings and felicitations from the people and government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and equally to express my sincere gratitude for inviting me to participate in to this very important discussion on Parliamentarian for Global Action (PGA) workshop held in Tanzania.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that effective preparation against biological threats requires a combination of effective risk assessment, planning, generic capabilities to respond to crises and prior experience of any given risk. Learning from COVID-19, we will improve our ability to anticipate and respond to biological threats through effective surveillance, improving our national preparedness and readiness across the whole risk lifecycle, and exploit opportunities presented by the risks.

The Convention creates obligations in the context of non-proliferation that broadly translate into two main areas: industry verification and data reporting on the one hand, and promulgation and enforcement of national legislation on the other.

Given the introductory nature of my remarks, I will focus mainly on the importance of national implementation and briefly on the important role of parliamentarians in the context of legislation but also as shapers of opinion in support of upholding and enforcing agreed norms with the singular purpose of ensuring a world free of chemical weapons. Hence, the Sierra Leone Parliament supports, ratifies and implement a wide range of activities and programs which support national implementation. The effectiveness of legislative and other regulatory measures and of the internal structures to administer them is critical to the enforcement of the Convention and the ability to prevent non-State actors from gaining access to materials that could aid in the development of chemical weapons.

The work of parliament is to complement directly the efforts of the United Nations to promote the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions which aims to prevent non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Compliance at the national level with the obligations of the Convention provides an effective means of biological security.

Let me briefly highlight the main issues and challenges encountered in our efforts to promote effective national and global implementation. Drafting, accepting, and approving national legislation is often a painstaking process and impacted by competing legislative priorities. It requires the governments to take action, to prepare a draft bill, submit it for the consideration of Parliament.

Also, the lack of support for Internship Programmes for Legal Drafters and National Authority Representatives is another serious challenge that has affected the commitment of Sierra Leone to domestic the long awaited convention is key. Sierra Leone is one of the first countries within Africa that has signed the BW in 1972 and ratified it in June 1976. As we are very much great full to the Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) for hosting the regional parliamentary workshop to promote the ratification and implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons convention on the 5th April 2017.

On this backdrop, I am on behalf of my country Sierra Leone therefore calling on the stakeholders in the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to provide the requisite support to achieve our dreams in this fight.

While countries might consider other priorities as taking precedence, strong regulatory and enforcement action on our part will ensure that our territories cannot be used for prohibited activities which may harm our own interests or as potential trafficking routed.

A possible significant factor that is obstructing biological security is the non adherence by other States that remain outside the Convention.

As a country, Sierra Leone is committed to the biological security to achieving this global call. Prior to now, as a nation, Parliament has passed the Nuclear Radiation and Safety Act. Being very concern about issues of human security, safety and the environment, parliament went further to have the Bill on Environmental Safety Act. This is considered as a holistic approach towards addressing the threat and issues of safety for our people and the environment. We will continue to strengthen our commitment and use it to the fullest. This is not a responsibility of parliamentarians and diplomats alone. In our complex world, people of goodwill everywhere must play their part individually and collectively through their representative bodies in society.

In this scheme, parliamentarians occupy an extremely important position. Our active participation and collective efforts in the area of international peace and security is critical.

I invite the distinguished Parliamentarians to take the necessary measures, in their respective countries, for a full effective promotion and implementation Biological Security. This can only be achieved through a comprehensive legislation.

Weapons of mass destructions deserve to be tackled as a priority. In view of the complexity of the security environment, in particular the growing terrorist threat, it is primarily in the interest of parliaments in our member countries to ensure the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Thank you