



## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

### SIERRA LEONE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION REINFORCE POLITICAL RELATIONS

The Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the European Union met on October 29, 2018 for the first Sierra Leone-EU Political Dialogue since the new government was formed.

The dialogue is guided by the principles laid down in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific States, which establishes the platform for regular political dialogue at the highest level between the Government of Sierra Leone and the European Union.

The dialogue was held between Members of the Government of Sierra Leone, led by H.E. President Julius Maada Bio and EU Heads of Mission, led by Ambassador Tom Vens, Head of the EU Delegation to Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone and the EU enjoy a long standing political and cooperation partnership. The dialogue was mainly an opportunity to reinforce this relationship and allowed a constructive engagement on how to improve the business and investment climate in order to maximise sustainable economic growth, diversification, job creation and domestic revenue generation.

Discussions also focused on constitutional reform, the human rights agenda and the possible resumption of consular visa services for selected EU countries.

The EU recognizes the Government of Sierra Leone's effort to further deepen and improve partnership with the EU and other partners and was informed about the development of a new Development Cooperation Framework. Both the Government of Sierra Leone and the EU agreed to engage in regular dialogue to ensure that the partnership between the two becomes stronger.

The Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone highlighted its continued commitment towards free quality education for all, national unity, inclusive growth, food security, effective management of the country's resources, creating the enabling environment for the private sector to thrive, and the fight against corruption, based on the key principles of accountability and transparency.

The EU and the Government of Sierra Leone discussed concrete steps taken to enhance national inclusion and the deepening of public participation in governance. The Government of Sierra Leone highlighted the relatively balanced regional distribution of cabinet positions and the extensive consultations that Government has undertaken in the preparation of its new National Development Plan. Additionally, the EU commended the efforts made by the Government of Sierra Leone to improve macro-economic performance and public finance management.



The EU reconfirmed its support towards the Government's priorities including the Free Quality Education and welcomed the Government's commitment to follow up on the Constitutional review process as well as the EU Electoral Observation Mission recommendations, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.

The Government and EU also discussed prospects for further cooperation.

Other members of the Government of Sierra Leone included Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, Vice President, Professor David Francis, Chief Minister, Jacob Jusu Saffa, Minister of Finance, Nabeela F. Tunis, Minister of Development and Economic Planning, Emma Kowa Jalloh, Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Amb. Foday Yumkella, Minister of Political & Public Affairs, Nimatulai Bah-Chang, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Dr. Robert Tamba Michael Chakanda, Deputy Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Dr. Amara Kallon, Deputy Minister of Political & Public Affairs, while H.E. Catherine Campbell, Ambassador of Ireland, H.E. Guy Warrington, British High Commissioner, H.E. Horst Gruner, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany (all resident) and Lukas Kindle, Deputy Head of Mission of the Czech Republic (non-resident), formed the EU side.