INTERIM NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION

 (INEC)

 REPORT

 OF THE

 FIRST NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE

 ON THE

 ELECTORAL PROCESS

 BINTUMANI CONFERENCE CENTRE

 FREETOWN

 15 - 17 AUGUST 1995

 **SPONSORED BY THE UNDP/ODA**

 **Foreword**

 **THE SPIRIT OF BINTUMANI**

In the great drama of human history one remarkable phenomenon stands out: with the passage of time there is a tendency for nations and peoples to forget or minimize dramatic and decisive events in their history. But as we have learned those nations and peoples who forget their history run the risk of being condemned by it. To avert such an outcome great nations and peoples continue to make special effort to commemorate or pass to their future generations those significant historical events that have shaped their political destiny. In this connection it would be almost tragic if Sierra Leoneans fall into the trap of forgetting what was achieved at the First National Consultative Conference on the Electoral Process, which took place at the Bintumani Conference Centre August 15 - 17, 1995.

Let no one doubt the significance of that conference. It was the first post independence convocation of Sierra Leoneans at the elite and grassroots levels when the fate of our country was thoroughly and exhaustively diagnosed and shaped. The circumstances that gave rise to the convening of the conference by the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) were momentous and diverse.

Prior to convening the conference Sierra Leoneans at all levels were divided on the crucial issue as to whether or not democratization should be delayed in favour of vigorous pursuit of the peace process. Those who wished to give more emphasis to peace were uncomfortable with the military regime and opted for what was called a National Unity Government to take over from the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). This option posed some difficulties for those wanting to place greater emphasis on the democratization process. It was not an easy matter to detect any basic difference between a National Unity Government, selected but not elected, with the obvious undemocratic nature of the military regime. The issue before the nation then was how to bridge this obvious gap between two opposing forces.

What was not in doubt was the fact that the war being waged by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) against the people of Sierra Leone concerned the pregnant question as to who should govern the country. The RUF claim was that they were waging war against an illegitimate government that was corrupt. To resolve this issue the electoral process appeared to be the only means to determine the leadership of the country.

Nevertheless, even among those convinced that the electoral process offered the most credible basis for choosing the leadership of the country, there was disagreement as to whether the time was opportune to conduct elections, given the deteriorating security situation in the country. Even friends and supporters of Sierra Leone in the international community were not convinced that the security conditions prevailing in the country would guarantee free and fair elections.

All these weighty questions and issues were to be resolved one way or another by the people of Sierra Leone. In a normal political dispensation elected representatives of the people in parliament would have been asked to deliberate and vote on the matter. But under a military regime and after almost a generation of undemocratic practices in the country it was necessary to devise a new and imaginative arrangement to tackle the issues. It was in this context that the idea of convening a consultative conference representing all levels and sectors of society was born. It is therefore not surprising that there is near consensus that the Bintumani Consultative Conference was the most representative in the history of the country.

The three day conference not only reached decisions on the fundamental issues before the conference, it was also remarkable in another particular sense. Over the past three decades Sierra Leoneans have come to associate political activities with violence, which at times involves killing of political opponents, widespread bribery and corruption and with the unreliability of political parties and its leadership. The spirit of reconciliation, patriotism and seriousness of purpose that prevailed at the conference came as a welcome surprise to all. It was the harbinger of what was to come; for the first time in a generation Sierra Leoneans went through an electoral process without violence among political parties. The violence, when it occurred, came either from the RUF or the military regime.

A conclusive note of the Bintumani Conference was the decisive emergence of the women of Sierra Leone as a political force to be reckoned with. It was the exceptional organizational ability of the women's groups together with their determination to promote the democratization process that galvanized the conference into effective action. The tone was set at Bintumani and the women's groups did not give up until final victory on election day. Certainly it will for ever be difficult to imagine any future political development in Sierra Leone without the involvement of our courageous women.

Indeed the Bintumani Conference represents a watershed in the political history of Sierra Leone. Once the conference resolved to opt for the elections in February, the country as a whole rallied behind that idea. As was said at the time the conference reached not only a consensus but gave INEC a mandate to conduct free and fair elections in February 1996. It was this strong, decisive conclusion of the conference that made it impossible for the military regime to frustrate the wishes of the people to elect their own representatives and president. Significantly the press, which before the conference was sharply divided on the issue of elections, came out of the conference as a strong advocate for elections. Without the persistent advocacy of the press in favour of elections it would have been a much more difficult task to mobilize the people to courageously go to the polls on election day.

Hopefully, the present report, which is a full record of the Consultative Conference, will be seen not only as a memento but as a serious document to be studied and discussed by present and future generations. What would have happened to our country if the Bintumani Conference had not resolved to conduct elections before the end of February 1996? There was always the danger that failure to agree on elections would have resulted in the postponement of elections for an exceedingly long period, with the near certainty that the war would have been prolonged. But even when rejecting indefinite postponement of elections, the Bintumani Conference took a calculated risk. While not minimizing the security risks prevailing in the country, it nevertheless resolved to hold the elections as a lesser of two evils. As became abundantly clear in post conference developments in our country the Bintumani spirit was good for Sierra Leone and its people.

 Dr. James Jonah

 Chairman

 INEC

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**Introduction**

The first National Consultative Conference, convened by the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC), was held at the Bintumani Conference Centre from 15-17 August 1995, with the full endorsement of the NPRC government. Since INEC was established in March 1994, preparations were being made for presidential, parliamentary and local government elections. However it had not held discussions with politicians, civil society groups and other concerned citizens to get views on the electoral process, which would then be incorporated by INEC into its overall plan for returning the country to a democratically elected civilian government.

The main purpose of this conference was to get a national consensus on INEC's proposals for electoral reform. This was especially necessary with respect to the Commission's proposal for the introduction of the system of Proportional Representation (PR) since this system was entirely new to the electorate and was not catered for in the constitution.

INEC therefore proposed a National Consultative Conference where a broad shade of representative opinion would be available on the way forward for the electoral process. On the basis of these views, it would present recommendations to the NPRC government. Although INEC as an independent neutral body had been given clear authority to conduct free and fair elections in an impartial manner, it felt obliged to build this broad consensus in order to ensure a level playing field for all its particpants, especially in the light of varying opinions in the press. In November 1993, the Chairman of the NPRC and Head of State, Captain Valentine Strasser in a speech to the nation had outlined a detailed timetable for the restoration of constitutional rule as follows:

November 1994 - Non partisan district council elections

November 1995 - Presidential elections

Early December 1995 - General elections

Early January 1996 - Swearing in of new president

It was made clear to all those invited to the conference that the objective of the conference was to deliberate on the electoral process. INEC had no mandate to make recommendations on matters outside the electoral process.

**Participants**

Participants at the conference were drawn from a cross section of the society. Out of a total of 80 organisations and groups invited to give policy statements, only the RUF and the Sierra Leone Bar Association turned down the invitation. (See full list of participants in attachment). Apart from the delegates, the conference was attended by observers from international organisations and NGO's in Freetown, the Diplomatic Corps, national organisations, the Commonwealth Secretariat, members of the local and international press. The SLBS/TV also gave extensive coverage throughout the 3 days of the conference.

**Budget**

The conference was funded by the UNDP, and the British Government. Their sponsorship showed their support for Sierra Leone's return to multi party democracy. The total budget amounted to Le 74,139,900.

The Chairman for the three day occasion, Mrs Shirley Gbujama who was at that time, Registrar of the University of Sierra Leone, provided excellent leadership and guided the conference in accommodating the differing views expressed. Delegates were officially welcomed by Prof. H.B.S. Kandeh, Electoral Commissioner for the South and Conference Co-ordinator. This was followed by statements from the INEC Chairman, the Chairman for the National Commission for Democracy, and the UNDP Resident Representative in Sierra Leone, all of whom mentioned the importance of democracy. Captain Valentine Strasser, Chairman of the NPRC and Head of State, in formally opening the conference, reiterated his government's commitment to returning the country to democratic civilian rule.

The conference was divided into three broad segments. In the first segment, delegates were given an opportunity to make brief five minute policy statements of their organisation, group or political party on the issues to be addressed. The second segment gave INEC commissioners an opportunity to set out clearly and succinctly the action it had taken so far relating to the electoral process:-

1 INEC's approach to civic/voter education

2 Preparation of the electoral laws

3 Guidance for registration of voters

4 Involvement of the international community in the electoral process

5 Efforts to enhance INEC's independence and integrity

Delegates then had the opportunity to articulate their reaction to INEC's activities.

In his speech, on the involvement of the international community in the electoral process, Dr James Jonah expressed the inability of INEC, mainly due to financial reasons, to meet the December 1995 date for general elections. He recommended March 1996 as a more realistic date when INEC would have completed all necessary arrangements and would be better equipped to conduct elections. He stressed that this change in the time schedule was not inspired by the government, and that INEC genuinely needed the extra time to raise funds to organise a proper election. However he pledged that if for any reason INEC could not meet the date agreed on by the conference, then the conference would be reconvened.

The third segment saw delegates being divided at random into working groups to discuss at length and to make recommendations on matters which INEC had proposed but upon which no final decision had been taken. The following subjects were covered:

Group A How will the security situation affect, if at all, the timing of the elections?

Group B What should be the appropriate code of conduct for election campaigning leading up to the parliamentary and presidential elections?

Group C What kind of campaign financial regulations should Sierra Leone adopt for political parties?

Group D Should Sierra Leone with a view to maximising efforts towards national unity, adopt for this election the proportional representation system of voting in contrast to the familiar single member constituency based on first past the post principle?

**Recommendation of Working Groups**

**Group A**

Group A had the most crucial issue to debate - security and the electoral timetable. They recommended initially that the original timetable for elections ie December 1995 should be maintained. After careful consideration of the problems of funding that were highlighted, they later recommended that both parliamentary and presidential elections should be held not later than end of February 1996.

On the question of security they recommended that the army should provide the necessary security for the entire electoral process, and that a security action plan should be presented to INEC by the army. Deployment of security forces on polling day should conform with international standards. Every citizen should be vigilant and report to the authorities any potential conflict situation.

**Group B**

A draft code of conduct for political parties had been presented by INEC which Group B endorsed, making slight changes.

**Group C**

The draft campaign finance legislative proposals with regards to setting limits on campaign financing were also accepted by Group C, again with slight changes.

**Group D**

Group D accepted INEC's proposal of using the proportional representation system for the general elections, and 5% of the total votes cast as the threshold.

Agreement on all these recommendations was reached by consensus.

**Conclusion**

From INEC's point of view, this conference which later became know as Bintumani I, was a tremendous success because of the following:

- It came away with a clear and overwhelming mandate to conduct and supervise the elections to be held not later than the end of February 1996, despite the security situation.

- What happened over those three days was historic because matters relating to the future of the country were discussed in a free and frank atmosphere. Policy statements from various groups and organisations, represented the views of Sierra Leoneans across the country.

- Many delegates with opposing views were willing to compromise and come to an agreement in the end. Dr Jonah, in his closing remarks summed up the prevailing attitude at the conference when he said "I witnessed in one of our meetings, two of the delegates who got into a very heated argument. They stood up, looked sternly at each other, then stretched their hands out to each other". The whole atmosphere of these three days, culminating in the decisions arrived at became known as the 'spirit of Bintumani'.

- The fact that the conference was observed by international NGO's, the diplomatic corps and the international press sent a clear message to governments who may have been ambivalent in supporting the election financially.

- The dialogue which was initiated at the conference between INEC and the people of Sierra Leone continued throughout the whole process and became invaluable.

The Bintumani I conference was the first step in the march towards free and fair elections.

 **WELCOME ADDRESS**

 **PROFESSOR H.B.S. KANDEH**

Your Excellency, Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council and Head of State,

Captain Valentine E.M. Strasser

Deputy Chairman and Chief of Defence Staff

Members of the Supreme Council of State

The Chief Secretary of State

Secretaries and Undersecretaries of State

My Lord the Acting Chief Justice

Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen -

On behalf of the Chairman, Commissioners and Staff of the Interim National Electoral Commission, I welcome you to this formal opening of the three day Consultative Conference on the Electoral Process.

We at INEC are very pleased to see all of you.

We particularly welcome the Head of State who graciously accepted our invitation to perform the formal opening ceremony. We are glad that he is here in person and did not offer the "Other State Matters" excuse. This further demonstrates his personal commitment and that of the NPRC government to the democratisation process.

We invited 157 delegates to this Conference. We are happy to report that we received responses from 155 with 154 present here this morning. Only the RUF did not respond.

A further breakdown reveals that there are 5 persons from the NPRC government, 12 Paramount Chiefs, 5 from the Urban Councils, 34 from the seventeen Provisionally Registered Political Parties, 8 from the Internally Displaced Camps, 5 from the Refugee Camps in Guinea and Liberia, 13 from the District Women's Organisations, 24 from National Organisations, 5 from the Armed Forces, 1 from the Police Force and 12 from the Commissions and the Advisory Council. We have Delegates from all over the country (even as we expect other delegates from the Northern Province).

We also have Delegates from the Refugee Camps in Guinea and Liberia and from the Sierra Leonean Communities in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Norway.

This is the year for women with the Beijing Conference only a few weeks away. We are proud that we have so many women attending as Delegates. We are expecting about 30 women Delegates

representing about 20 percent of all Delegates and not up to the 51 percent which they represent in our society. However as you can see from the high table we do have Proportional Representation.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, any conference of this nature requires able leadership especially this afternoon when speakers have to be restricted to five minutes.

At INEC, we have gone a step further and added grace. We have for you as Conference Chairman for the next three days a woman of substance. Mother, Diplomat, Banker, University Secretary and Registrar and Lay Preacher.

I present Mrs. Shirley Gbujama.

 **STATEMENT AND OPENING REMARKS OF THE CHAIRMAN**

 **MRS SHIRLEY YEMA GBUJAMA**

Your Excellency, Chairman of the NPRC and Head of State

Members of the Supreme Council of State

Chief Secretary and Members of the Council of Secretaries of State

Excellencies, the Heads of Diplomatic Missions

Paramount Chiefs

Excellencies, the UN Resident Representative and

UN Secretary-General Special Envoy, Dr. Berhany Dinka

Chairman, Committee of Management

Freetown City Council or her Representative

Chairman, Interim National Electoral Commission

Chairman, National Commission for Democracy

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen -

I say so with great humility, indeed great pleasure, Welcome to this National Consultative Conference.

I confess that this moment is both a sobering experience, as well as a humbling privilege and opportunity for me.

I am sobered by this experience both because it is an awesome as well as a challenging one; and I am humbled by the singular honour, privilege and opportunity it has afforded me to serve you, the people and country that I so dearly love.

We meet here today and for the following two days as delegates of the people, nominated by the people, to take certain decisions on behalf of the people, watched by the people of this country, as well as the members of the international community through their representatives.

As you delegates embark on your deliberations, I allow myself to hope that you will cease to be delegates of any particular group and become representatives - that in your capacity as representatives of the people of this country, defending the supreme, paramount and common interest of all the people will become more and more real than apparent - remembering always that the people who are the audience to your deliberations are also the beneficiaries of the outcome of those deliberations.

I see the National Consultative Conference as many things rolled into one; but more especially it is both a referendum and a triumph of reason.

It is referendum on the practice of direct democracy - the participation of the people directly in decision-making on matters of great national importance - of the township meeting-writ large. This is the curtain raiser in the human drama played by modern man in the form of representative democracy - government by the people, and immortalized in Abraham Lincoln's famous formulation as, government for the people.

The National Consultative Conference is a triumph of common sense and open-mindedness over the doctrinaire and rigidity of opinion - the triumph of maturity of judgement over naïvety - the triumph of the purposive over the purposeless - the triumph of decisiveness over indecisiveness - the triumph of courage over foolhardiness - of magnanimity over vanity and above all the triumph of open policy formulation through consultation over secrecy and the imposition of policy however beneficent that policy may be in the interest of the people.

Life is a self-renewing process through action upon the environment. Continuity of life means, continued readaptation of the environment to the needs of living organisms.

The continuity of life in Sierra Leone depends upon, among other things, communication and the transmission of the means of control from generation to generation, through education and the democratic process. No generation, much less an individual could possibly recapitulate the entire history of habits of doing things and feeling that it is legacy of traditions and customs. These things exist in the inter-subjective understanding of human beings interacting with environment. We meet here today not only to perpetuate these existing habits of thought, but also to perpetuate the capacity to generate more flexible, subtle habits of thoughts as the situation elicits them. This process implies change, transition, adaptation and modification. This is the challenge to all who are embarking on this from today and over the next two days.

Institutions are structured arrangements for performing specific social tasks. Universities for instance are institutions for transmitting higher education and training professionals. The financial and judicial departments of government are institutions for administering taxation and justice, respectively. The legal system is a structured system of arrangements, one of whose primary purpose is to provide guidance to various departments of government as well as to people generally concerning what is permitted and what is prohibited. INEC is structured to provide guidance for a free and fair democratic election process, and in safety. We believe that now once established, it must acquire a life of its own, independent of the elements which gave birth to it or created it. We must use its guidance to make our choice of what only can give us life once more.

It has been said that no one sees a society "grow" or "develop" or "decay" or "die". These are all metaphors. Nevertheless, the belief of a people living in a society in a given time, that society is in fact "growing" or "developing" or "decaying" or "dying" is a very real thing.

A very proud nation like ours did begin to see itself decaying and dying - a country either laughed at or pitied. All these, in spite of the sacrifices, the selfless labour and the great natural wealth - all of it has been for naught.

Our pride was hurt, that Sierra Leone was slipping out of the modern world, loss of direction - patriotism that was insulated - all of these were present, and probably worst of all the feeling that nothing seemed to be working.

Somehow in a mysterious way, history, the greatest of all painters, was doing its collective portrait; showing us not just the faces as the photo would, but bringing out the character underlying the features.

Every system develops its type of privileges. For instance, that of being a free man in slave society; the privilege of noble birth in feudal society; the privilege of wealth in a capitalist society. In all three, the privilege cannot be taken away - it is yours - even as an object that can be willed - passed on to your children.

We too in this country are proud human beings today for this privilege of choice where there has not been one in a long time. We can prove our love for democracy and freedom; we can walk tall. There is nothing finer than to have that feeling. Let us use this privilege wisely, for our children, for posterity.

This conference gives the people of this country the power to do whatever may be necessary to save this country, our country. The bottom line is that we now again are learning to believe in ourselves and that is the greatest belief of all - to believe in one's self.

To witness this period in the history of this country is to realize that nothing on this planet of ours can match the strength of a free people. Let us not in our victory, for which we worked and are still willing to work so hard, let us not in our victory, emulate our foes, let them be put on trial, let them enjoy a competent defence, let their crimes be proven, let the law guide us, not retribution. Revenge leads nowhere, but to more bloodshed. Enough - it is time to be human.

More than a generation is needed to make a genuine revolution - revolutions have to be total, that is to say, they should involve not only the creation of new forms of government but also new structures of social and economic relations, new structures of relations between people and the state, new visions for and of the community, new perspectives of history and a new set of universal beliefs and values. To be sure, much of the old must survive and afterwards, even much of the old should be brought back - only the pattern or model must be new.

To change in time is the key to the vitality of any system that confronts irresistible pressure for change. The objective of both the legal and constitutional traditions is order and justice. Order itself is conceived as having a built-in tension between the need for change and the need for stability. Justice also is seen in dialectical terms involving a tension between the right of the individual and the welfare of the community.

It is said that a drowning man may see his own life flash before him. That may be his unconscious efforts to find within his experience, the resources, to extricate himself from the impending doom. In our own periods of crisis, we need a larger vision - a vision not exclusively political, legal, philosophical or moral on the one hand; but one with will and reason. It must also involve the emotion and intuition - it must involve a total social commitment.

There is by no means a perfect symmetry in periods of great historical change like now in our history. Yet there are certain patterns or regularities.

Each marks a fundamental change - a rapid change - a lasting change - in the social system as a whole. Each has sought legitimacy in a fundamental law - remote past, prophetic future with each taking more than a generation to establish roots - very profound and very widespread change which affects all the graphs of social activity. That is what I see resulting from this conference.

For nearly a generation after independence, Sierra Leone had been torpid and peaceful. The Revolutionary United Front and its clones aim to make visible, violence as the permanent consequence of the government of the National Provisional Ruling Council. The NPRC aim is to manage war so as to make it unmemorable. The true war is: How do we make democracy work?

Each citizen and friend is needed to make democracy work in Sierra Leone. That is why you are here, and your presence at this conference is by no means accidental. The Government, Paramount Chiefs, Religious Leaders, Women's groups, Youth, City and Town Councils, Students, University Professors, Refugees returning home, Citizens, Displaced from their homes, Drivers, Political Parties, Members of the 4th Estate, Farmers,

Teachers, Business people, Non-Governmental Organisations, the Police and Army who must ensure our security during the elections, Lawyers - yes the legal luminaries - we must all make it work.

The future of Sierra Leone thirty-four years after independence must testify to the latent vigour and organizing power of ideas in her people.

The aim of a revolution such as the one of April 29, 1992, should be or rather was the transference of effective power from the hand of what has been called an incompetent and corrupt Executive into the hands of the people and their representatives in a Parliament elected on the basis of universal suffrage in a free and fair election.

The question therefore is: Was it pointless and tactless to rehash the history of Executive incompetence and corruption in the various Commissions of Enquiry?

Another question is: Did the rebel war become inevitable? Notions on inevitability are best left to predestinarians. The rebels are like the frogs of Egypt who sop in our cup, dip in our dish and sit by our fire. They have made us go hungry. Many of us are filled with bitterness, we have been given deepest sorrow to drink, we have forgotten what enjoyment is. Some have rolled in ashes and dirt. Whenever we recall how Sierra Leoneans have dealt with Sierra Leoneans, we will bow our heads in utter shame.

But thank God for his compassion and love that never ends. There is a ray of hope. His mercies have kept us from complete destruction and today we are here to discuss and agree on elections to Parliament, by God's grace, as one family, minus the wayward child - The RUF.

Parliament in a constitutional democracy should be the soul of the body politic. The slow, boldly, meandering progress of human liberty has only but one meaning - equals respecting each other's character, compensating each other's defects, and only by combining each other's virtues would the economic well being and moral health of this country be assured and secured. Only this change provides the departure point for our collective meaning here in this conference.

No sacrifice should be too great to preserve it - this conference provides the beginning of our own unique civilization. Every man and every woman is unique and different from all other men and women as each leaf is different from all leaves on the same tree; but all human beings are recognizably human beings.

In their infinite variety, they have common instincts, traits, virtues and weaknesses. They are attracted by more or less similar temptations, capable of the same noble sacrifices, sublime heroism, but also abject cowardice, abominable acts and ruthless cruelties.

The question is therefore: What qualities in any country are most important in a leader?

The ability to choose the right people; to select those who will work with one. What this probably has to do with is a kind of political intuition - a political sixth sense in determining really who supports your vision and who only pretends to. Without that sixth sense, no political leader can hope to succeed. Without that gift or quality no political leader can aspire to play his or her role as the people's choice.

Man's greatness lies in the power of thought. Thoughts are free and are subject to no rule. On them rests the freedom of man. Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth - more than ruin - more even than death. Thought is great and swift and free, the light of the world and chief glory of man so said Bertrand Russell.

The people who ruled this country in the past had everything going for them, including history,

for them. They had absolute and irrefutable knowledge that never had the people of Sierra Leone, except once - a long time ago during the Hut Tax War, opposed authority.

Just as these men had been brought up to fear and to obey, just as these men had been taught that nothing would stand up to the party machine, just as these men would not have dreamed of challenging the powers that be, neither could they imagine anyone else doing that.

Perhaps a few dissidents had broken the tradition - and they ended up hanging but they were the exception to the rule. We dare say they were brave men and we all know that. These men were absolutely right, perhaps, but they were trapped in a time that had yet to come and hence were out of touch with reality.

Governments in this country have not really believed in democracy - the 1991 Constitution for example, was manipulated with cynicism and utter contempt and disrespect of the people of this country.

The Government never accepted the proposition of the pristine wisdom that if you could change the human condition, then you could change what is considered the human character.

We have witnessed changes recently - the people had changed although not all the people, as witnessed by how many looked the other way and refused to be involved.

The green, white and blue - the tricolour of Sierra Leone still fluttering lazily in the rain drenched wind - would Sierra Leone, that wonderful country blessed with such great resources - human and material - a country that has been jumbled up for so long, would it now rediscover itself and put its act together?

Every historic choice involves a challenge as well as opportunity - the right decision for us is going to be to accept the challenge - seize the opportunity.

A generation of Sierra Leoneans grew up upon the diet of the cliché of the One-Party State. There was always a paradox in those who proclaimed a belief in freedom, wanting one person or persons to remain in power forever and ever.

What has deceived us once, we should no longer have reasons to trust; but liberal democracy as a political and moral framework is most conducive to human dignity, freedom and prosperity.

A word of caution -

The new figures in Sierra Leone politics are both men and women, independent, intelligent, adventurous and capable.

Constitutions, political manifestos, electoral formulas are not to be admitted for their philosophical profundity, and their intellectual symmetry. They are to be considered not as words, but as deeds if they effect that which they are intended to effect, they are to be rational, even if they may be contradictory.

Let us guard against a gambler's fallacy. Let us take no chances - that is where clear cut information about the probability of an event is taken into account because people believe that chance is a self-correcting process such that a deviation in one direction will necessarily be followed by a deviation in the opposite direction. For instance, because it rained more than the average the past few months, and therefore it will rain less than the average in the next month - so we decide to take our vacation. This will be an error. Where there is no vision, the people perish.

Most instruments of government in the modern state and even in states where no written instruments exist such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Israel, have opted for adversarial democracy. This means that free play of political forces must stop where any party or faction attempts to remove democracy by democratic means. It has happened in this country before and the story need not be retold here. It is possible to ban political parties which seek to do away with the country's democratic system and nothing short will seek justification. Sierra Leone is not going to be the same again following the events of April 29, 1992. We congratulate the Government of the NPRC for being so reasonable as to phase itself. But, the rebel war still rages. Yes, but in part it is fast becoming a by-word for atavistic political thuggery.

Finally as we embark during the following two days on deliberations on the future of this country, let us resolve not to indulge in the dialogue of the deaf; the deaf speaking to the deaf - let us accept each other's point of view; let us differ in our views with grace, let us present a civilised nation to the world, one that will find time to record its deeds, its words, its art with great dignity, great courage and great good sense. These are three things that don't get together. Let us make them get together. For anyone who wants to change the world like you and I, there is no alternative to politics. This is what has brought us all here today.

**I thank you for your patience.**

 **OPENING SPEECH BY CHAIRMAN, INEC**

 **DR JAMES JONAH**

Distinguished Delegates,

This is a defining moment in the political history of Sierra Leone. During the next three days, you who have assembled here will pass on a message to the people of Sierra Leone, to our sub region, to Africa and to the world community. They will want to know whether we as a people are serious and mature. After all the political turmoil we have gone through in this country, taking into account the cruel rebel war, what have we learnt? Are we going to make a success of this conference? You will be closely watched for what you say and what you do during these three days and you the political party representatives have a lot to account for.

There are many Sierra Leoneans who are asking us what is the value of bringing back political parties to Sierra Leone. In recent days, there have been queries about whether there is a new generation of politicians. What you do and what you say in the next three days will determine whether indeed you are prepared to engage in the new politics. Let me in passing say that the fact that we have seventeen political parties registered is of some concern to Sierra Leoneans. Let us hope that after we have deliberated in this conference, you will find ways to concert among yourselves and present a more realistic picture for a country with a small population.

To those of you who are not party representatives but are part of the grassroots population of Sierra Leone, you too are going to be observed in the next three days. Sierra Leoneans want to know whether you will come under the influence of "money power" as in the past. Are you going to decide about issues freely without coercion, without bribery? Are you going to think only of your country Sierra Leone? This is the challenge that we all face.

We also have to demonstrate in this conference our capacity for democracy. Make no mistake, democracy is not merely going through an election; it encompasses the feeling of tolerance and of trust among people; it is our ability to disagree and then come together in a consensus. You will be challenged in the next three days to determine how prepared we are for democracy.

Now, let me say that there is a question that I know is close to the hearts of many of you. You are asking about the relationship between what we will be doing here in this conference in the next three days and the peace process. I can assure you that we continue to consider the peace process just as important as the democratisation process. It is because INEC believes sincerely in the peace process that I as chairman gladly accepted the invitation of the Head of State to be a member of the National Security Council. I believe all of those who are engaged in public policy, whether they are corespondents, politicians or citizens must always give the true, though stubborn facts to the people. It is important to know who the members of the National Security Council are. They are not only governmental representatives; they are also citizens from all walks of life. I can even tell you that it includes critics of the NPRC.

So let us not confuse the issue. The National Security Council is a body which seeks peace. In fact our peace process emerged from the National Security Council and I am proud to say that I was designated as one of the members of the technical team to follow every lead towards peace in Sierra Leone. We meet regularly and our last meeting was just last Wednesday, when we met with Ambassador Dhinka. So it is clear that we are not abandoning the peace process and concentrating only on elections. I can assure you that both will be pursued simultaneously. We should bear in mind however that unless the RUF is willing to sit across the table, the peace process will be a mirage. That is to say, we will not be able to achieve what we know all of you want.

I mention tolerance, I mention the search for truth; it is important that as we deliberate in these meetings - and there will be many issues on which we will never agree initially - that we endeavour to formulate a consensus. Let me suggest to you that even when you disagree with somebody, don't shout invectives. If you cannot say anything good about your colleagues in this conference, then I believe a dignified silence will be better.

The month of August, to all those who follow international events closely, is often a month of tragedy - the guns of August 1914, the dropping of the atomic bomb in 1945 - so many very bad things happened in the month of August. INEC did not intend to have a meeting in August. It has by fate turned out to be August. Let us also recall that August has produced good things. The end of the Pacific war occurred in August 1945 and I believe as a Sierra Leonean that this conference will give you an opportunity to demonstrate that you can have a moratorium on PHD (pull him/her down) during this month of August. During these three days, I wish you to concentrate your minds only on one thing - our country Sierra Leone. If we do, I believe we will succeed.

We as a people and a country are without doubt in deep trouble but we have a reservoir of goodwill in this country. Think of our ancestors, think of the courage of a Bai Bureh, think about the integrity of our past leaders like Mamy Yoko, think of the glorious accomplishments of our leaders like Sir Samuel Lewis, (and I am glad that the City Council held an exhibition of his life and work) and let us draw from this reservoir of men of courage and integrity who have sacrificed for this nation.

In the words of the American Novelist William Faulkner, I am proud to say that I have refused to accept the indictment that Sierra Leoneans will never change. I cannot accept it; but like every one of you who are here today, who are listening to this broadcast, to these proceedings, wherever you are, whether you are fighting against the people, whether you are defending the country, whether you are in your homes. In the words of John Donne "every man's death grieves me because I am involved in humanity" and we should never send the word to ask for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for all of us".

Now befo a sidom, Madam chairperson a wan for rob mot na wan plaba. If anbody kam na dis conference ya say ee kam for kam chakra di conference, a go advise am say jos fom sik en go ome. i izi for pwel oh, i izi for pwel, i difficult fo build. So a dai baig yu ya no kam fo pwel dis conference. Even wei yu disagree, no pwel am, but if you persist say you go pwel dis conference, member wan tin "da pikin wei say in mama no go slip, insef no go slip".

Thank you.

 **STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL**

 **COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY, DR KADI SESAY**

Your Excellency, Captain Valentine Strasser,

Head of State and Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council,

Mr Chairman, Secretaries and Under-Secretaries of State,

Members of the Supreme Council,

Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,

Madam Chairman Committee of Management, Freetown City Council,

Paramount Chiefs, distinguished Ladies and gentlemen.

The National Commission for Democracy (NCD) has as its main aim the formulation and implementation of a Civic Education Programme creating the requisite awareness for the effective realisation of Democracy in Sierra Leone. The NCD therefore supports the democratisation process in preparation for elections.

Elections are not necessarily totally synonymous to democracy but they are an important gateway to it.

The NCD believes that elections are necessary to ensure that the citizens of this country utilize their fundamental right to choose who governs them or even, who misgoverns them. That right must not be by-passed or suppressed for too long a time. The democratic way of utilizing this Civic Right by the citizens is through elections that are FREE and FAIR and FREE from FEAR. The NCD therefore sees elections as a necessity and as one of the basic activities that need to be put in place for sustainable democracy.

The necessity for elections is therefore obvious but an equally important concern is the feasibility of elections - the timing in terms of our current security situation. The NCD believes that for the democratic process to be sustainable there is a need for adequate sensitisation and awareness building of the voters through public civic education. And coupled with the fact that a new Proportional Representation electoral system is being proposed, more time will be needed for public civic education that will enable the citizens of this country to make informed democratic choices.

The NCD believes that the current date of December 1995 for elections and the swearing in of the elected civilian President in January 1996 fall within a non-achievable time frame and therefore recommends that elections be held within the first half of 1996. With the formidable progress the security forces are now making at the war front, the NCD hopes the security situation would have made remarkable improvement to allow the resettlement of more displaced people and to enable the political parties to carry out effective campaigning in the New Year.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The NCD believes that elections should be free and fair and free from intimidation by allowing every registered voter of this country the right to participate in utilising his/her civic right to vote or campaign.

There should pervade an atmosphere of tolerance, with losers learning to accept results and accepting defeat gracefully. And with the opposition in Parliament being able to function effectively as an alternative shadow government. After the establishment and final registration of political parties, the NCD wishes to organise a workshop with key representatives of political parties where we can sit and discuss as Sierra Leoneans belonging to the same Sierra Leonean family without throwing punches at each other.

The NCD therefore supports the Code of Conduct proposed by INEC especially as it emphasises the facilitation of full and equal participation of women in the electoral and political process.

CAMPAIGN FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The NCD supports the view that a limit should be imposed on the amount of money any individual member can donate to a political party to prevent parties being owned or bought over by individuals. The NCD further believes that there should be in place stringent measures to ensure financial proprietary within the workings of political parties as a fore-runner and an example of the required and necessary financial proprietary at the national level so that members of political parties who misappropriate party funds will be exposed to the citizens of this country as people who are likely to do the same if given national political office.

The emphasis should be on issues and programmes even for leadership of political parties. We must not allow parties to belong to money bags. Donations to parties must be published for all members and the general public. And bribery must be discouraged in all its forms and manifestations during elections.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Considering the current security situation, the displacement and the depopulation of many villages, towns and constituencies, the NCD will support INEC's recommendation for proportional representation (PR). The old system of one-member constituency or First-Past-the-Post system, imposed excessive expectations on MPs by their constituents; and those who had the means concentrated more on constituencies rather than national development. It is a system that has encouraged corruption and violence with focus on personalities rather than political party programmes. What we need, at least for now, is a broad-based consensus Government with representation from different parties in Parliament as a result of elections based on proportional representation.

The NCD wishes INEC and the representatives of the people of this country very fruitful deliberations during this three-day consultative conference. The NCD hopes that the national interest will supersede all other interests that each of us may have, so that we can all help to build a peaceful and democratic Sierra Leone through the recommendations of this conference.

 **STATEMENT BY THE UN RESIDENT CO-ORDINATOR**

 **MS ELIZABETH LWANGA**

Mr Chairman, NPRC, and Head of State, Captain V E M Strasser,

Mr Deputy Chairman, NPRC and Chief of Defence Staff

Brigadier Maada Bio,

Members of the Supreme Council of State,

Secretaries of State and Under Secretaries of State,

Paramount Chiefs,

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

This Conference marks an important milestone in Sierra Leone's march towards the restoration of democracy.

It therefore gives me pride and pleasure to be here this morning to present the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations System to wish Sierra Leone good luck and to say take care at this critical stage in the march to democracy.

I would like to start by commending the Government of the National Provisional Ruling Council for having taken the decision to return the country to a civilian democratic system of government and for the continued and unwavering commitment to this decision. It is for this reason that UNDP gives full support to the Government's programme and will continue so to do within the limits of the facilities available to us.

Encouraged by the Government's announcement of a timetable for the restoration of democracy, UNDP, in late 1993 started working with the Government on a plan for a good Governance Programme. This resulted in a national strategy for Governance and Public Administration Reform covering five main areas. The areas covered in this programme include: instituting policy analysis and policy - co-ordination; re-establishing participatory democracy through decentralization of authority and responsibility of government. The programme will also support an on-going civic education programme; and reforms of the Civil Service, the Judiciary, Law Office and Police.

The support given to this programme is also based on our conviction, generated from experiences elsewhere, that lasting democracy rests on a number of principles and that certain features must be present in the process adopted for establishing or restoring democratic government. Some of these features include: a fully debated, people-based constitution; an independent and credible electorate; well-established fora for dissemination of information and public debates; a free and fair process for choosing leaders; and decentralized management including devolution of some political and financial responsibilities from the capital to the rest of the country.

It is well accepted today that unless the people who make up the state - the citizens of the country - are allowed to participate in important political decisions, there cannot be good government. In order for the people to participate meaningfully, they must be informed and aware of their responsibilities and rights as citizens. We therefore welcomed the decision to lift the ban political parties, and the establishment of the National Commission for Democracy. We plan therefore to support the NCD and assist Government in mobilising additional resources for its on-going work. UNDP support has also been provided for the work of the National Advisory Council in Government's objective of re-establishing participatory democracy. It is our hope that the work of the council towards putting into place a fully debated, people-based constitution will be taken into account by the new House of Parliament when it comes into being after the elections.

We note that the ballot, a universally-tested process for choosing leaders is being used in Sierra Leone towards this objective. We have been supporting the Interim National Electoral Commission and will continue to support the commission particularly in mobilising the resources needed for conducting the elections, and in providing technical expertise in monitoring the process.

Another critical element in the democratisation process is the presence of sound institutions for governance. In other words, once the political leaders have been elected, they must have institutions, procedures and processes that allow democratic practices. These institutions require first and foremost to have the confidence of the citizens of the country. This important area will receive support within the national strategy for Governance and Public Administration Reform. The strategy will include the restructuring and reforming of the public service, so as to establish clear lines of responsibility between the public and private sectors, and enable government departments to function effectively and efficiently and be transparent and accountable in their operations. Reforms are also planned to establish a more effective and more efficient judicial, legal and law enforcement system.

We are well aware of the constraints on the road to democracy created especially by the ongoing war which has disrupted the economy and displaced large numbers of the population. We are also conscious of the complications in accomplishing political commitments in a country which has not experienced real democracy for over two decades.

We are confident, however, that despite these serious constraints, the commitment of Government in combination with the determination of INEC and now this grand opportunity of national consensus in this conference on the way forward, will ensure success and the restoration of democracy to this country.

In closing, I wish to acknowledge with gratitude, the support provided by donor governments and multi-lateral agencies and whose continued support we solicit so that in our joint effort, Sierra Leone will be transformed into the enviable position it once occupied immediately after independence as a true democracy in Africa.

I wish to take this opportunity on behalf of the United Nations System to commend the Government once again and INEC in particular and to pledge our continuing support throughout the electoral process.

I thank you for your attention.

 **OPENING ADDRESS**

 **BY**

 **His Excellency Captain Valentine E.M. Strasser**

 **Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council and Head of State**

MADAM CHAIRPERSON

MR CHAIRMAN, INEC.

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES, OBSERVERS AND GUESTS:

When I accepted the Interim National Electoral Commission's invitation to open this conference, many things raced through my mind. How crucial this conference is to our country's political future, the unique opportunity we now have in charting a new course for the Republic, united in our readiness to forgive, reconcile and accommodate.

2. When we assumed the reins in April 1992, the return to pluralism was focal in our policy objectives. A detailed time schedule for the restoration of constitutional rule was unveiled on 26th November, 1993. Increased rebel activities and widespread insecurity led to a slight delay in the implementation of that schedule.

3. Ladies and Gentlemen, the transition towards democratic pluralism largely remains on track. Decree No.1 of 1994 establishes the Interim National Electoral Commission, and the recently Promulgated Political Parties Decree No.7 of 1995, a Decree that has whipped up tremendous controversies within political camps, lifted the ban on Political activities previously imposed by the 1992 Proclamation.

 4. Ladies and Gentlemen, as we convene here, the problems and questions are many, and we need some very quick solutions and answers, if the country must move forward. Burning deep in our minds I guess, is how security can or may affect the elections slated for December this year.

5. Can General and Presidential Elections be conducted, or should they be deferred? Given that the security situation deteriorates or improves, would the voter be secure on polling day? Should the Peace Process be linked with a date for elections? Assuming that the RUF, true to their word, intends disrupting the electoral process, do we still insist on elections without a general cease-fire, and their full participation in the process? If we must have elections regardless of the RUF's threat to disrupt them, how are these elections going to be conducted and what voting system is going to be adopted given the current size of the displaced and refugee population?

6. Past experiences have shown that politicking and electioneering in our country have always been characterized by widespread violence and bloody confrontations. We must have learnt our lessons now, and this time around, political groupings must be prepared to play by the rules. Therefore the setting out of a general code of conduct governing political party activities is also high on this conference's agenda.

7. Campaign financial regulations for political parties forms part also of your agenda. This is needed to ensure that parties are not bought and a level political playing field assured.

8. Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, the ongoing rebellion remains the largest single obstacle to the democratic process. A negotiated settlement to the crisis no doubt would prove more lasting and permanent. The government stands ready to talk, but those talks must be unconditional. We are prepared any day anywhere to sit around the table and begin unconditional talks with the rebel movement about the need for a general cessation of hostilities. In fact, I have been told that seats were even offered to the movement at this conference, why are they not participating?

9. Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, when you consult and deliberate, when you take your tea breaks and luncheons, remember that everyday Sierra Leoneans are being cold bloodedly slaughtered, driven from their homes and dropping dead with starvation. Remember the thousands who have lost their lives, their families, their homes, nothing will be the same again for those people. I convey my deepest sympathy to those ones who have been the most traumatized by the bloodiest four years our beloved country has ever witnessed in its history.

10. Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, my profound pleasure in declaring open this Electoral Consultative Conference. May your deliberations be fruitful.

**I THANK YOU ALL.**

 **STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL, NPRC**

Madam Chairperson, Fellow Delegates, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

When the NPRC assumed power in 1992, one of the priority objectives was to return this country to a democratically elected constitutional Government. To that end, the NPRC Government released a transition programme in November, 1993, in spite of the barriers to peace and progress at that time caused by the rebel war. In pursuance of that objective, our Government has been able to implement major components of the programme as evidenced by the establishment of the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC), and the National Commission for Democracy (NCD). We feel proud today to know that both Commissions are working assiduously, impartially, and independently to achieve this main objective.

Fellow Delegates, as I see it, presently, the one greatest barrier to the democratisation process is the rebel war. Government has and will continue to do everything humanly possible to end the war. We will also continue to pursue both the diplomatic and military options. That was all the more reason why in November 1993 we offered amnesty to all patriotic Sierra Leoneans to lay down their arms and join us in rebuilding our beloved nation. Thereafter, we also appealed to international organisations including the Commonwealth, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations Organisation (UNO) to help us in the peaceful resolution of the conflict so as to achieve a lasting peace in this country.

However, it is a matter of regret that the RUF, despite the frequent appeals, has still continued to prefer violence to peace and confrontation to consultation. We believe, however, that now is the time for peace, a time for reconciliation and a time to put a stop to the killings and destructions. The rebuilding of our nation should now begin by us putting in place structures that will facilitate a truly democratic society.

As a Government, we believe in the principles of democracy. For our part, we will continue to uphold the fundamental human rights, the rule of law and good governance. With the independence of INEC guaranteed by Government, we are confident that the deliberations during this conference will provide meaningful recommendations for the smooth transition to a multi-party democracy in our beloved Sierra Leone.

I must also note with pride that the NPRC Government has always recognised the significant contribution our youths and women of this country can make to this entire process of democratisation. Let us therefore make all efforts to ensure that their full participation is assured at all times.

Fellow Delegates and Observers, I wish to appeal to you that we should all work as a team for the common good of this country. We should look upon one another not as enemies but as partners working together for unity, peace and democracy, irrespective of our different interests at this time. Let us avoid the pitfalls of the past and adopt a positive attitude to ensure sustained growth and sustainable development. We should use this conference as an opportunity to debate major issues relating to the electoral process so as to enable us to arrive at a consensus in the interest of a free and democratic Sierra Leone.

Madam Chairlady, Fellow Delegates, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you

all.

 **STATEMENT BY THE SIERRA LEONE MUSLIM CONGRESS**

Brothers and sisters of the Republic of Sierra Leone, I greet you in the name of Allah, the Most Merciful and the Most Beneficent.

I am directed by the Sierra Leone Muslim Congress to thank the organisers of this august meeting for inviting us to participate. As a religious organisation, our main concern is the welfare of the people of Sierra Leone.

The emphasis on the people referred to above allows us to comment on the provisional agenda as follows:

a) The interpretation of Decree No. 7 would give the impression that the type of democracy that is foreseen in that Decree and Decree No. 8 is politics of exclusion. The conditions for the registration of parties which call for an enormous amount of money in terms of five years lease for every district in the country, would suggest that participation in the democratization process is to be reserved for either the very rich or those who can borrow money from foreigners. The implication of this is that instead of stopping corruption in the country, this may have the effect of encouraging it. The danger inherent in this is that we may end up mortgaging the vital interests of our country to the detriment of the ordinary citizen.

It is in light of this that we in Congress believe that we should adopt politics of inclusion and the removal of some of these road blocks from the planned process so as to enable all those Sierra Leoneans who want to participate to do so.

b) We believe that the much talked about Proportional Representation may be the solution to many of the problems so far identified. But, since the culture of suspicion is so widespread in our country, we believe that the Interim National Electoral Commission should, as a matter of urgency, embark on an aggressive and imaginative programme of education with a view to fully explaining the process to the electorate beforehand.

c) We are also aware of the fact that the adoption of the "winner-takes-all" system that characterised our politics in the past has not been helpful. Where there are people who do not belong to our parties but who can contribute greatly to the progress of this country, they should be offered the opportunity to do so in the interest and developmental progress of our country. This is a sensible way to manage our limited human resources. The time of the elections should be for INEC to decide, in accordance with the Government's time table for a meaningful return to democracy.

d) The Holy Koran has specific and clear provisions about peace. We urge all mosques and Muslim Jamaats and organisations to continue to explain the significance of Peace in Islam and to encourage their congregations to practise it. Without peace there cannot be the much needed investment and development. These are vital for the welfare and progress of the people of this country.

e) It is in this vein of peace that the Muslims will advocate the speedy conclusion of the war, whilst the political process continues. It must by now be obvious to all and sundry that the fighting has been and still is, for power. Useful and meaningful power for the benefit of the nation can, and must, only be tolerated through free and fair elections.

May the Peace and Blessings of Allah guide us in our deliberations. Thank you for your attention.

 **STATEMENT BY PARAMOUNT CHIEFS - SOUTH**

Mr. Chairman, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen -

The Interim National Electoral Commission has called us together to confer and deliberate on the process of Parliamentary Elections considered suitable for our present-day Sierra Leone. As a nation, our success in the struggle for social and economic transformation largely depends on our ability to formulate a stable political system.

Personal liberty, freedom of thought and freedom of speech are familiar to our national system. But it is unwise to take them for granted. Their safeguard lies in representative government. In the power of the body of citizens to express their will through their government and in the use they make of that power.

Time in her flight has brought the country to a state of confusion and disintegration. The menace of the rebel war has destroyed the image of the country. At this stage when we contemplate on a plural democratic system on a free and fair pattern, let us then explore the possibilities of designing an electoral vehicle that will safely take Sierra Leone to a stable, national administration.

 **STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL UNITY MOVEMENT (NUM)**

I present greetings and am privileged to read this policy statement on behalf of the National Unity Movement.

Mr. Chairman - the NUM poses these questions: What are we doing here? Why are we gathered here? What are we here for?

Mr. Chairman as everyone present knows we are gathered here because INEC has invited us to deliberate on the electoral process: if and when to hold elections taking everything into consideration - including the security situation; what kind of electoral process to utilise; and other factors that could assist us to achieve free and fair elections - such as a code of conduct and any necessary legislation.

So far so good. However, Mr. Chairman, we must not lose sight of the fact that all these weighty matters we shall be discussing are calculated to lead to a goal - namely, the completion of the democratisation process on schedule. And that even this worthy goal is not and cannot be an end in itself. It is only and must be seen to be but a necessary step towards our ultimate objective namely - a Sierra Leone without a rebel war - a Sierra Leone at peace whose development matches its human and material resources - where justice prevails - and where real or imagined injustices do not lead us to yet further argued conflicts and more Foday Sankohs.

If we keep our minds focused on the ultimate goal we would take our tasks here more seriously - to put the goal in perspective.

These Mr. Chairman, are the lofty heights our humble deliberations here could assist Sierra Leone to scale.

But exactly how are we to achieve this desirable goal?

In a five minute prescription, a comprehensive answer to this question is a tall order. (The vision, dedication, inspiration, commitment etc., required cannot be sketched in five minutes). But here are a few pointers -

It is our belief that all sections of our community, that of course includes all gathered here, all sections of our community have specific roles to play in bringing about the Sierra Leone we envision.

 **STATEMENT BY**

 **THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN (NOW)**

MADAM CHAIRMAN, ALL PROTOCOLS OBSERVED, FELLOW DELEGATES - ONE and ALL -

I am delighted to bring you greetings from the National Organisation for Women, NOW.

NOW is a coordinating women's organisation comprising a network of member organisations, associations, groups and clubs of various types and levels throughout Sierra Leone.

In conjunction with Sierra Leonean women of all shades of opinions and from many different walks of life, we have held several teaching and learning sessions, consultations and discussions on various elements that are pertinent to the purpose of this conference.

As a result of such process we have come to a united and considered position on these issues and hereby publicly declare on:

1. **ELECTIONS**

That our political system must return to legitimacy through elections under every circumstance. We are inspired by this challenge and seize the space it is providing.

We therefore affirm our commitment to the holdings of ***free and fair*** elections throughout Sierra Leone and call on the N.P.R.C. Government, INEC and the political parties to respect the electoral timetable already published.

2. **SECURITY**

Madam Chairman, Security, we emphasise, is the key and most vital issue at this critical time, in the context of the rebellion in which this electoral process is unfolding. Everything else is hinged on it. We the women are genuinely concerned about the security situation and maintain that its primary and paramount importance cannot be overemphasised. Therefore, we hereby call upon and demand from the N.P.R.C. - our Government whose responsibility it is to assure and ensure the protection and safety of every citizen, to provide the security required for:

a. Registration of all voters;

b. Political campaigning;

c. Voting;

d. Counting of votes;

e. Final declaration of results. (This, we stress must not be delayed. INEC must make a final declaration of results within 24 hours of the close of the polls); and

f. Smooth handing over.

We hold the Government responsible for providing that adequate security required.

Also, we note that it is the binding duty of each and every citizen to be law abiding. We call on and encourage every member of society to observe strict adherence to such arrangements that must be put in place to ensure security and safety. More than anything else, "tolerance" must be everyone's watchword.

3. **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR POLITICAL PARTIES**

We support INEC's proposed Code of Conduct.

We must foster and continue to enable more meaningful participation than hitherto seen in Sierra Leone, and proactive participation of women in the electoral or political process. Therefore, we call on political parties, their leaders, members and supporters to adopt and apply affirmative action, meaning that political parties should genuinely and actively involve themselves in the political development of this country. This we believe is a strategy implied in the draft code under section 5 (ii). It will facilitate the full and equal participation of women in the electoral or political process.

4. **SYSTEM OF VOTING**

That having carefully considered the advantages and disadvantages of both the Majority and Proportional Representation systems, and in the light of the prevailing circumstances of Sierra Leone, particularly in light of the insecurity and displacement engendered by this rebel war, we the women are more inclined to and do accept the INEC proposal that the Proportional Representation system be applied in the forthcoming elections.

We commend INEC highly for its voter and civic education programmes designed to aid our understanding of the system. However, we urge INEC to mount more effective public education campaigns in order to enable the greater majority of voters to make reasonable judgements in applying the system.

We in NOW stand ready to assist INEC in the development and dissemination of relevant educational messages and materials for such purpose.

Finally, Madam Chair, members of this Conference, one and all, having faith and believing in Divine protection and guidance, let us **genuinely** and **fervently** pray in our hearts for peace. **This time**, Sierra Leone will be delivered from all Evils.

 **STATEMENT BY THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN SIERRA LEONE (CCSL)**

1. Mindful of our sacred responsibility to guide and reflect Christian opinion within the nation, the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) welcomes the fact that the transition to democratic constitutional government is in progress and we pray that it will continue uninterrupted.

2. We call for a free and fair election and we propose a monitoring team, which should be broad based. We will offer our resources and services to such a team if requested to do so.

3. In this connection CCSL supports the proposed timetable for the return to constitutional civilian rule.

4. It is the wish of Council that the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) will be impartial and its independence guaranteed.

5. In view of the present circumstance the CCSL fully supports and therefore proposes that Proportional Representation as against "first-past-the-post" system be adopted.

6. As citizens of this country and as a body of churches, we deeply deplore the wanton killing and mutilation of innocent civilians and the indiscriminate destruction perpetrated by the rebels and their collaborators, we therefore ask that the peace process be pursued vigorously so that our conflict can be resolved in a spirit of forgiveness and rational reconciliation.

7. Finally the CCSL will do all in its power to enhance and facilitate a free and fair election.

CCSL will ever pray that God will continue to guide, protect and bless our beloved Sierra Leone.

 **STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL UNION OF SIERRA LEONE STUDENTS (NUSS)**

Madam Chairman, members of the NPRC and the diplomatic corps, commissioners of the Interim National Electoral Commission, representative of the National Commission for Democracy and the United Nations Development Programme, fellow delegates and observers, a very hearty Good Afternoon to you all.

I must first of all thank the Chairman and Commissioners of INEC for inviting participation from the National Union of Students at this all-important conference. Their gesture indicates a clean break from the usual phobia attached to students' participation in national fora.

Madam Chairman, at this point in time when our country is in the throes of traumatic mayhem and carnage, at this dreaded moment when our nation is forced to run the gauntlet of wanton destruction and human debasement, a conference of this nature is, no doubt, extremely imperative. It is only at a forum of this sort that the collective voice of the people can be effectively utilised. In this vein, therefore, the restricted focus of this conference is much cause for concern.

With regard to the war and elections, Madam Chairman, the National Union of Students resolved at the 22nd annual convention held last August that no elections should be conducted while the war rages on. The obvious reason being that there has been much proliferation of arms in the country which has increased the risk of election violence, and, furthermore, would impose severe constraints of time and insecurity on political parties in their campaigns, especially with rebel ambushes on the highways. This resolution was passed with a view to advocating alternative options for achieving peace in our war-torn country. Since then, several peace overtures have been made to the Revolutionary United Front.

Sierra Leoneans have marched for peace; Sierra Leoneans have prayed for peace; Sierra Leoneans have fasted for peace. The government declared a unilateral ceasefire; the international community has cajoled the RUF to cease hostilities and come to the negotiating table. But the RUF has remained unpatriotically intransigent, seeking instead to impose their rule on the people of this country by burning towns and villages, ambushing innocent travellers and making widows of women and orphans of children.

In such mind-shattering circumstances, therefore, we students have resolved not to stand in the way of elections if they prove efficacious in the quest for peace and stability. In this regard, and at this juncture, I wish to make one last appeal to the RUF - that the students of this country are pleading with them to lay down their arms and participate in the political process. As sons and daughters of this land, the RUF fighters should help build it and not destroy it. No sensible bird would destroy its own nest in a fit of anger, for at the end of the day it would need to come home to roost.

Madam Chairman, in so far as the modus operandi for the coming elections is concerned we students wish to register our profound preference for the Proportional Representation over the single-member constituency system. This is because the PR system has a marked propensity for minimizing election violence and eliminating the hazards of constituency campaigning in a war situation. Moreover, it is the only system of election that ensures representation of minorities. As such, it forestalls dissident activities that are characteristic of post single-member constituency elections in budding democracies.

As this country cannot afford an escalation of the existing violence, which would be consequent on election rigging, we students are asking that INEC should not only be impartial, but should be seen to be impartial. In this regard, we are asking that international election monitors be invited to supervise the

elections for purposes of transparency and fair play. If the elections are not free and fair, there would be no claim to legitimacy by the ensuing government and extra-constitutional challenges to such a government would renew hostilities and escalate the conflict.

Finally, the above submissions notwithstanding, should there be a pervading atmosphere of insecurity which proves inhibitive to the safe conduct of elections, we students strongly recommend that in that circumstance the elections be put off and an INTERIM CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT be put in place. It is a mute consensus among us delegates and representatives of the people that no matter what happens, whether we have elections or not, a NEW POLITICAL DISPENSATION is a MUST if peace is to return to our beleaguered country.

VOX POPULI, VOX DEI

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE IS THE VOICE OF GOD!!

 GOD BLESS US ALL!!!

 **STATEMENT BY THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY (PPP)**

Madam Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me, first of all, to congratulate on behalf of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) the organisers and sponsors of this first-ever National Consultative Conference on the Electoral Process.

We welcome this Conference and we shall participate in it fully. If only this Conference had taken place before the promulgation of the Political Parties Decree, Decree No.7 of 1995, the unacceptable features of that Decree could have been avoided. However, it is better late than never.

Consultations between INEC as referee and the political parties as players are an essential condition for the organisation and conduct of democratic elections. Such consultations must always precede the promulgation of any law which concerns the electoral process. The absence of such consultations inevitably leads to misunderstandings, suspicions, misgivings and rumours all of which have a tendency of undermining the integrity of the electoral process itself. We therefore see this process of consultations as a new beginning and we would humbly urge that it is continued.

We joined other political parties in addressing a letter to His Excellency the Head of State and Chairman of the NPRC on July 17. Subsequently, a similar letter was also addressed to INEC. These two letters stated succinctly the principled position adopted by the political parties on Decree No. 7 the repeal of which had been recommended. We want to take this opportunity to reaffirm that position on behalf of our Party. At the very least, the Decree should be substantially amended to remove all its unacceptable and undemocratic features.

The PPP position on the date of the presidential and parliamentary elections is that they must be held on the same date. Secondly, that single date should be within the month of December 1995 as scheduled by the Transition Programme unveiled by the Chairman of the NPRC on November 26, 1993.

The elections must be free and fair. To this end the playing field must be level. Elections are the business of civilians. If anyone who is not a civilian wants to get into the political arena, it should be made an essential condition that he should civilianise himself first to be eligible to take part in the elections.

Madam Chairman,

Our Party is a democratic party. We believe there is no alternative to the restoration of democracy in Sierra Leone. And this should be done without further delay, for we believe that a democratised Sierra Leone could galvanise and catalyse a negotiated settlement of our crisis more speedily than otherwise.

The PPP believes that the independence and integrity of INEC constitute an essential condition for the building of public confidence in its impartiality. Sierra Leoneans generally have not known free and fair elections since 1967. Naturally, therefore, they are suspicious. We therefore call on INEC to assert its independence and integrity to the satisfaction of the public. This is all the more necessary in the absence of a representative parliament.

The freedom to campaign must be assured. Therefore, we call for the immediate amendment of the provisions of the Public Order Act 1965 which impose certain restrictions and impediments on political parties in this regard.

The entire electoral process should be extensively and strictly observed by international observers drawn from the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the OAU and friendly governments. Local NGOs and professional associations should also be encouraged to take appropriate action to monitor and observe the electoral process. While outsiders may have the advantage of greater detachment, they can never adequately compensate for the lack of background knowledge and "feel" of the local situation that local observers can generate.

With these few remarks, I want to thank INEC once again for organising this Consultative Conference.

I thank you.

 **STATEMENT BY THE UNIVERSITY SENATE**

Madam Chairman, All Protocols observed:

May I start by offering you my heartiest congratulations on your selection as Chairman of the first National Consultative Conference in the history of our country, and to pledge the cooperation of the University of Sierra Leone in the performance of this function.

We are grateful to the Government of the NPRC for their sincerity of purpose in their promise to return this country to civilian rule within a given time; and in this connection we recognise and appreciate the invaluable role currently being played by INEC under the able chairmanship of Dr James Jonah.

The ills of the past in this country are many and varied and the University views this Consultative Conference as the beginning of a long, healing process which has to be participatory in nature. The University is on board in this difficult task. Our goals should be the promotion of tolerance, peace and stability in this nation.

In pursuing these goals, we must take the path of truth. The working document produced by INEC makes very interesting reading and we must commend this institution for its efforts.

The University therefore wishes to propose the following:

 i. Since tolerance, peace and stability are our ultimate goals, the proportional representation voting system is appropriate at this point in our history. However, caution must be taken against excluding any particular group or individuals from participation in the electoral process. There must be "respect for all" and "participation by all."

 ii. The "preferential list" system of proportional representation is most welcome but the names of party candidates and their photographs should be made public.

iii. Elections for the Presidency and to Parliament should run simultaneously in order to forestall any dramatic swing of votes to the party of the President-elect of the party that may win majority seats in the House.

Let us hope that this Consultative Conference will not concentrate on our past mistakes or in identifying those we feel are responsible for such mistakes, but let us all work together to build a new image of our beloved Sierra Leone.

The University holds the view that all Sierra Leoneans must feel responsible for the ultimate destiny of our nation.

Finally, Madam Chairman, we would like to suggest that delegates discuss a way of determining the psychological profile of all candidates aspiring to the Presidency.

I thank you all for your attention.

  **STATEMENT BY BO DISTRICT**

1. BO DISTRICT is of the opinion that Elections should be held as stipulated by the N.P.R.C. and not to be deferred for any reason.

2. BO DISTRICT is convinced that all Registered Parties should abide by the Code of Conduct as stipulated by INEC i.e., fundamental right of a free and fair election and to respect the right of freedom of all other parties to campaign without fear.

3. BO DISTRICT is in total agreement with No. 5 under Code of Conduct for Political Parties except No. 5(iv) which reads that all Political Parties shall refrain from offering any inducement or rewards to persons to obtain their support.

Instead we recommend that this rule should be tailored and clarified to suit our own traditions which have always been mentioned i.e., what the Mendes call "Jalele" or the Temnes call "M'bora" and the Creoles call "Col Wata".

4. Under the Draft Campaign Finance Legislative Proposals, Bo District believes that because of the time involved, the Parties should be allowed more time to enable them to satisfy the demands of INEC since along the line campaigning will be in progress. Otherwise the other Political Parties who are weak may capitalize on this and thus seek the disqualification of other Parties.

5. BO DISTRICT is in total support with the principle of Proportional Representation as a system of voting for the forthcoming Elections. However, should this process be accepted, mass education should continue.

6. Finally, the people of Bo wish that by the time we go to Elections, this senseless and unprovoked war would have been concluded by the N.P.R.C. Government and considered past.

  **STATEMENT BY THE FREETOWN CITY COUNCIL**

Madam Chairman, Commissioners of the Interim National Electoral Commission and Fellow Citizens of our beloved country, Sierra Leone:

I bring you warm greetings and fraternal felicitations from the Chairman and members of the Committee of Management, the Freetown Chapter for Women and Children and the entire citizenry of the Municipality of Freetown.

We hope and pray that our contribution during these three days of discussions will add meaningfully to the ideas which we and our compatriots will be putting forward in the reconstruction of the route we shall follow in re-establishing sustainable democracy for our peoples of blessed Sierra Leone.

Madam Chairman, fellow architects of democratisation, permit me to congratulate the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) which, through the obvious instrumentality of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) has painstakingly and fearlessly completed the first major lap of a marathon endeavour. INEC and our brothers and sisters of Sierra Leone are hereby assured of Council's full and unflinching support of the ideals and virtues of democratisation which is *sine qua non* and the only realistic and dependable foundation on which Sierra Leone can hope to build a lasting structure for the development, peace, unity and happiness of its peoples.

Permit me also to remind you that Sierra Leone has gone through a number of political and constitutional changes. From 1961 to date we have had a multi-party system of government, a one-party government and the military type of government. We have been transformed from a monarchical system to our present status as an independent republic.

All of these we have tried and in some cases we have endured the vicissitudes of their governance. Today, we are called to be architects of our own providence - or fate - depending on whether we choose to be loyal to our country or charitable only to ourselves.

That is why we in the City Council of Freetown are proud to be part of this history-making occasion when we are called upon to tell this nation and determine for it the political process we truly believe will bring about good governance of the state of Sierra Leone and a lasting happiness for its people.

We in the Council support in principle the electoral option of the list system of Proportional Representation (PR) given the prevailing circumstances of our country. We are inclined to accept the arguments advanced in favour of the proposed system and feel it is a system worth trying. However, we take notice of the weakness inherent in it judging by what we see of it in some of the countries where it is in operation. We hope that as with all kinds of experiments it will be subject to review within a reasonable period of time.

We shall propose for consideration of this conference that the minimum overall votes that should entitle a political party to a seat should be raised from 5% to 10%. This hopefully can help control proliferation of political parties thus reducing the likely incidence of stalemate in parliament.

We would also like to suggest some slight but significant amendment to the Electoral Rules 5 (ii) to emphasise the ensuring, in addition to facilitating, the full and equal participation of women in the electoral and political process.

It is widely felt that Decree No. 7 needs some reviewing. In some quarters, its repeal is what is suggested. We note with concern the controversy over the application of the Decree. For example, the proposed Campaign Financial Legislation will have to require INEC to produce a ceiling amount based on realistic estimates which in its view will represent an average maximum expenditure to be incurred by each political party.

We will also be proposing that some adjustment will have to be considered in order to provide for continuity in Local Government Councils from the end of the term of office of Council Members to the election and assumption of office of the new members of the Councils.

Madam Chairman, SALUS CIVIS SUPREMA LEX EST i.e. The Welfare of the People is the Supreme law is the motto of the City Council of Freetown. It is also the guiding principle by which we operate your Council. We sincerely hope that this Conference will allow itself to be guided by this great philosophy throughout its deliberations.

Madam Chairman and Commissioners of INEC, fellow delegates, observers, and my fellow citizens of this Republic, I wish ourselves a fruitful and successful meeting.

GOD BLESS YOU AND THANK YOU!

 **STATEMENT BY THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT FOR PEACE**

We, the members of the Women's Movement For Peace having held consultations and discussions with Sierra Leonean women of all shades of opinion and from all walks of life declare our united and considered position to be as follows:

1. We want a FREE and FAIR election with free participation of all those eligible as soon as possible.

For all of us to be able to exercise our Human Rights without fear. There should be no visible armed personnel in military uniform forming the core of the security on the election day.

2. We emphasize that security is of primary and paramount importance and call on the Government to provide the security required throughout the whole electoral process and put in place a process that will ensure smooth handing over to the elected government.

3. It is everybody's Constitutional responsibility to ensure that elections are carried out in a safe and secure environment. In pursuance of this the Women's Movement for Peace is calling on all of us the entire citizenry of Sierra Leone to make a genuine commitment to the entire electoral process by being peaceful ourselves and educating our family, immediate relatives, and community on peaceful coexistence and bringing to the notice of appropriate authorities any suspected potential conflict situation.

4. Further to the draft code of conduct for political parties which advocates for full and equal participation of women in the electoral process which is their Human Right, we the Women's Movement for Peace state that in order to ensure women's representation in the highest decision making structures i.e Parliament and Cabinet, legislation must be put in place for at least 30% representation of women to reflect the relative percentage of women in the electorate. It is to be noted that 55% of our population consists of women many of them heads of households.

5. We would like to commend INEC for its hard work, enthusiasm, tolerance, and professionalism shown so far. However, we feel their method of selection of representation to this Conference could have been more democratic.

6. We the members of the Women's Movement for Peace would like to pledge to work with all those committed to the democratic process to enable all our people to make informed democratic choices.

7. We would like to appeal to every SIERRA LEONEAN and friends of Sierra Leone to do everything in their power to bring back peace to our beloved nation - we are committed to this.

We wish all of us peaceful, fruitful and successful deliberations.

 **STATEMENT BY DISPLACED CAMPS IN THE SOUTHERN PROVINCE**

Madam Chairman, fellow delegates, observers, ladies and gentlemen, it is my place to render my appreciation and thanks to the organizers of this very important Conference for giving space to the displaced camps in the South to which I now represent.

The most important or recognized camps are placed in and around Bo. These are namely: Taiama, 32 miles off the Bo-Freetown Highway; Gondama, 7 miles off the Pujehun-Bo Highway on the Sewa River; Jerehun Camp, 12 miles off the Bo-Kenema Highway; and finally in Bo Township 3 main ones, regardless of the numerous ones in the bushes around towns and villages which in Mende are called "Sokoihun". All these migrations or displacements are caused by the existing rebel war which forces people to run away for security. This type of grouping of people painfully results in starvation and high rates of death due to spread of diseases e.g. cholera, measles, colds etc. At Gondama Camp the death rate is from 12-20 everyday due to lack of food.

The people in the Camps highly appreciate Government's efforts in their welfare but would crave for maximum security in the Camps especially during the time of elections. When the exercise is done we also hope and pray that Government will embark speedily on rehabilitation programmes so as to enable people to go back to an improved standard of living.

I thank you all.

 **STATEMENT BY THE REFUGEES IN GUINEA**

Madam Chairperson, the Chairman of INEC, fellow delegates, observers, ladies and gentlemen, I stand before you this afternoon to speak the voice of refugees in Guinea with the total population of about 300,000 not including those in the Forekaria area and those unregistered with the UNHCR Guinea covering 154 camps. Please the entire refugees over there asked to be remembered. Before going any further, I must waste no time to deliver the message from my fellow refugees for the attention of the NPRC in this august gathering here today. And that is that we are now very seriously homesick. The untold sufferings on us in refugee camps are too great. Psychological defects, starvation and many others to mention a few.

It is in this vein that we wholeheartedly welcome free and fair elections at this point in time as a solution to end the savagery and destructive Rebel War because if warring factions of any type agree to form political parties, that goes a long way to enable them to pay more attention on how and what to do to gain popular support by constitutional means rather than through the bullets if they should be good patriots. We are only sad that we cannot see the representation of the RUF or Mr Foday Sankoh at this conference. We are only concerned with the security aspect of the game. While it is our civic right to vote and be voted for, I must also make it abundantly clear that we live in a foreign land. Please take note. On the question of the code of conduct, we highly endorse the proposals made by INEC. To ensure the success of any democratic organisation, there must be some good rules for campaign financial regulations for political parties. "Good vine, they say, needs no bush". We therefore endorse the guidelines in the available manual prepared by INEC.

The question of Proportional Representation is in our favour as refugees, because constituency boundaries, especially in the Kailahun District, hold no more, coupled with our unavoidable absence from our various constituency areas. It is therefore highly welcome.

Finally on behalf of the entire refugees residing in Guinea, and on my own personal behalf, I want to appeal to all and sundry that we should not relent in our goal to democracy.

Thank you and God bless.

 **STATEMENT BY THE PEOPLES' NATIONAL CONVENTION (PNC)**

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, please give me the opportunity to extend appreciation to the N.P.R.C. Government, Interim Electoral Commission and the various international organisations which have made this consultative conference possible. Mr. Chairman, the position of our political party, The People's National Convention (P.N.C.) is clear and irrevocable and that is the P.N.C. party fully endorses the holding of elections in the democratization process of state governance in accordance with the electoral timetable.

Ladies and gentlemen, after more than three decades of independence, it is quite clear that throughout this period, most aspects of state governance had gone terribly wrong, otherwise we would not be seated here today to rethink about how to introduce a fair and lasting electoral process.

Mr. Chairman, apart from the fact that the People's National Convention Party (P.N.C.) wholeheartedly supports the conduct of the elections and the reintroduction of multi-party politics. I hasten to add that we also fully endorse the proposed Proportional Representation system of voting as suggested by INEC.

We at the People's National Convention Party (P.N.C.) pray and yearn for the introduction of lasting and civilized political practice, so that national leadership is actually to be seen to be determined by the will of the people of this country.

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, our party is fully aware of the security problems faced by this country, and we are not oblivious of the fact that the NPRC is determined and committed to bring the war to an end, but we find it incumbent to add a word or two on the war itself and the proposed electoral process.

a) We want to take this opportunity to plead with the R.U.F. and any other feuding factions to yield to the local and international call to accept the idea of a peaceful resolution to the conflict that has ushered in untold suffering on the people of this country.

b) We also ask the government to continue to declare an amnesty to all people involved in the conflict so that such people can be free to participate in the democratic process.

c) Mr. Chairman, an effective electoral process and lasting democracy also largely depends on the strengthening and the overhauling of state institutions such as the armed forces. The Police, the Army, the Naval Force, the Judiciary and the Civil Service for the purpose of promoting democracy, must be seen to be non-political. The Judiciary must not only be independent but must also be seen to be so. We suggest both for now and in the future, that the judiciary must not be coerced or influenced or both, by any government.

The Interim National Electoral Commission should continue to play its independent role and no member of a political party or a government functionary should be allowed to interfere with its activities and decisions. The People's National Convention Party (P.N.C.) also suggests the setting up of a separate and independent constitutional court that can speedily handle matters relating to the interpretation of the Constitution, as there is the great possibility that crucial constitutional issues might arise during the electoral process, including Election Petitions.

Mr. Chairman, we at the People's National Convention Party (P.N.C.) are of the view that both presidential and parliamentary elections be held simultaneously for fear that a legislative or executive gap can create serious political and administrative problems. In this regard, the People's National Convention Party (P.N.C.) further suggests that the results of the elections be made public within forty-eight hours and the president-elect assumes office immediately.

Mr. Chairman, the people of this country for many years even in the midst of vast potential wealth, have been subjected to abject poverty, and that has been caused by the fact that the people of this country have always been neglected when it comes to taking vital national decisions. We want, this time round Mr. Chairman, the people to be given a fair chance in determining their own future through a transparent and violent free electoral process.

However, the people must also demonstrate a sense of patriotic responsibility by making sure that they stand up for their rights. And this is why, we as a party, we will encourage the freedom of expression, the freedom of the press, freedom of association and to ensure that labour unions including civic societies play their roles within the ambit of the law.

In conclusion, it must be stated that not only must all the political parties work towards the common goal of democratic peaceful elections, but also the ordinary citizens both male and female citizens must be empowered to take part in the electoral process without fear or favour.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, it is the view of the People's National Convention Party (P.N.C.) that the women of this country have been marginalized far too long and it is now time for them to assume their rightful places in the socio-economic and political activities of the nation. The People's National Convention Party (P.N.C.) will therefore work towards the enhancement of women's participation in all aspects of public life.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, the People's National Convention Party (P.N.C.) is compelled to make a statement on state governance, for our party is of the opinion that decentralization of the administrative machinery will give an opportunity to both the people of the Western area and the provinces to develop rapidly without having to recourse to excessive bureaucratic and political bottlenecks.

The electoral process must not be undermined by unnecessary party to party confrontation, nor should a situation be created whereby people resort to character assassination, for this can only undermine the rights of the people to take effective part in the electoral process that seeks to bring back sanity into the body politic.

The People's National Convention Party (P.N.C.) has implicit confidence in the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) to discharge their onerous duty and we assure the Chairman and his Commissioners that the People's National Convention Party (P.N.C.) is committed to playing the political game according to the laid down rules. We hope and pray that the other political parties will do the same.

And above all we expect a healthy state of cooperation between the parties and the N.P.R.C. Government.

May God bless us all.

Long live Sierra Leone.

Thank you.

 **STATEMENT BY THE UNITED INDIGENOUSCOMMERCIAL**

 **AND PETTY TRADERS CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION**

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Personalities

Our once peace loving country has been degenerated to a HOVEL of violence, hatred, destruction and drug abuse. Thousands of our innocent brothers and sisters have lost their lives, countless town and villages destroyed. Properties of the civilian population looted with impunity. The economic, social and political spheres strangled beyond every imagination. This has necessitated our being here today and the following two days to chart on a new electoral process capable of holding the test of the present situation in the country. May God help and guide these deliberations.

In my humble submission, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen on issues we consider crucial and needing our very immediate attention are:-

1. The Security and Protection of voters and the civilian population in the various towns and villages where voting will take place, poses very serious threat. Voters are bound to avoid polling and counting stations unless first class security is assured.

2. In the past, compilation of voters registers was inclusive of fictitious names purposely for supporters of candidates to vote more than necessary and to give the impression that a particular ward or constituency needed re-limitation.

3. The transportation of ballot boxes from one polling station to a counting station after polling carries the greatest of risks of replacing the ballot boxes with another. The transformation of a polling station to a counting station should not be ruled out.

4. The provision of financial tokens, the traditional hand- shakes, food and drinks to electors before, during and after polling, in no way induces such persons treated to support a candidate or political party.

5. Campaign Financial Regulations for political parties and Decree No. 7 discriminate against political parties with meagre financial resources and a ploy to prevent political parties which could be favourable to the masses from participating in the political process and thereby defeats the real meaning of PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

6. Proportional Representation allows for personalities of political parties instead of favourites of the electorates dominating Parliament. It gives credence to the formation of political parties on tribal lines and minority tribes under the percentage and list system forced to join or merge with large tribal groups. The list and percentage system should be given very close re-examination as the 1991 Constitution deliberated extensively on this all important question of Parliamentary Representation.

7. Delegates of this Conference have come from different backgrounds and are of diverse opinions here. It will be prudent therefore if voting on issues will be by secret ballot.

 **STATEMENT BY BONTHE DISTRICT**

Madam Chairman, Distinguished delegates-

The people of Bonthe District would like to, first of all, congratulate the NPRC Government on the bold steps taken to re-introduce multi-party democratic elections in Sierra Leone.

Our political situation in this country is unique in many respects and requires, for a solution, a consensus that would engender the total and unreserved commitment of all concerned to peace, security and national salvation.

While we agree that democratic elections be held now in this country which painfully continues to bleed from the fatal wound inflicted by rebels and other unpatriotic people, we wish to appeal to the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC), not only to draw on the experiences gained from the conduct of general elections in other `crisis states' in Africa, but also to fully ensure that extra-precautionary strategies are employed to make the electoral exercise genuinely free and fair.

The proposed electoral system of Proportional Representation

is acceptable to the Bonthe District because it promises, among other thing, to:

i) discourage the total elimination of minority opinion from Parliament;

ii) promote an equitable distribution of political power and influence; and

iii) cushion the impact of the utter disappointment that sometimes follows the outcome of elections based on the Single-Member Constituency System.

Madam Chairperson, it is our hope that the whole electoral exercise will culminate in the restoration of national stability, which is vital to economic prosperity and development. But hope alone may not be enough; we therefore invoke Divine grace to save Sierra Leone.

Thank you all for your attention.

 **STATEMENT BY WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS - WESTERN AREA**

Madam Chairperson, fellow delegates, observers all -

I bring you greetings from the Western Area WOMEN's Organisations. Having had consultations with our sister organisations we emphasize that free and fair elections can only take place in an atmosphere of general security, and of paramount importance we further emphasize that INEC must demonstrate:

1. Its neutrality and independence; therefore

2. We call on the United Nations through INEC and the NPRC Government to monitor the elections.

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE**

3. We believe that our scarce national resources should be utilised first and foremost for national development and we therefore demand that a limit be placed on the election campaign. Having said that we do not accept that INEC or any other body is entitled to interfere in the financial affairs that do not relate to the election campaign of any political party.

**P.R. SYSTEM**

4. Taking the realities of our present day Sierra Leone into account we accept the INEC proposal that the forthcoming election be held using the PR System. We emphasize that in order for all Sierra Leoneans to exercise their rights, it is essential for all voters to understand the voting system. We therefore call upon INEC to immediately embark upon intensive and effective mass education programmes on the P.R. system for which funding must be secured. The suitability of the P.R. system must be reviewed and evaluated. We therefore call upon INEC and all political parties to give an undertaking to hold a national referendum to decide on the best voting system for Sierra Leone within the first Parliament and in any event before the next elections.

5. To ensure that elections are free and fair we believe that a national timetable should be provided for campaigning in all safe areas of the country.

6. In view of their democratic human rights, we emphasize further that every Sierra Leonean is free to participate in the forthcoming elections.

7. In order to demonstrate true democracy all political parties must involve women and allow them to participate equally as men in the entire political process.

8. We believe that INEC must be totally independent and neutral. We therefore suggest that in future all policy coming from INEC and the Government must be done with the approval of all political parties of the Western Area. We call upon all civic groups to seize this opportunity of determining the destiny of this our beloved nation.

I thank you all.

 **STATEMENT BY DISPLACED CAMPS IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCE**

Mr Chairman, Members of INEC, the NGOs, Government Representatives, Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen -

On behalf of the displaced camps in the North, I thank you for giving me the permission to outline some of the problems of the displaced camps in the North.

To begin with, we are on exodus. We have no homes, all our houses are burnt and our fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters are killed and also our properties are being looted by the rebels.

Sir, we support that elections should be held and maybe we shall have a chance to return to our homes.

Our pressing problems in the camps are outlined thus:-

(a) Additional food supplies in all the camps;

(b) Proper medical care of major cases like operations;

(c) Lack of proper toilet facilities;

(d) Water Wells; and

(e) Assistance for our children's education. Last year we encountered a lot of fire accidents due to lack of proper bedroom hurricane lamps.

We therefore beg the WFP, NGOs, donor agencies, and all authorities to please consider all the camps and to add to our food ration and assist greatly for protein and all the above requests.

The Red Cross is very active to give food but if food is not given to them on time, there must be a delay in supplying us. Please see to this also.

Sir, we hope you will consider our request and make an approval to assist us.

 **STATEMENT BY MOYAMBA DISTRICT**

Madam Chairperson, Your Excellencies, Secretaries and Under Secretaries of State,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Paramount Chiefs, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are pleased to precede our remarks with words of greetings and appreciation from the Paramount Chiefs and people of Moyamba District to His Excellency the Chairman and Members of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) for realistically tackling the problems of this nation and for their firm resolve to return this nation to civilian rule.

Our thanks also go to the Chairman and officials of the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the organisation of this august assembly - The Consultative Conference - scheduled for August, starting today the 15th, 1995. We are convinced that this Consultative Conference will be a new opportunity to give momentum to ending petty jealousies, tribalism, nepotism and sycophancy for the true realisation of a new Sierra Leone.

On behalf of the Moyamba District, we wish to commend and pay special tribute to the ceaseless efforts exerted by our loyal gallant soldiers, local hunters and vigilantes in the defence of their motherland against Foday Sankoh's bandits. Their heroic achievement and their loyalty to this nation will go down in history and would be endorsed by the Conference through its resolve to genuinely provide the solutions to our present problems.

In pursuance of the desire to settle the gigantic task of returning this country to a true democracy, we the people of Moyamba District hereby resolve that:

i) The NPRC hands over only to a democratically elected government;

ii) In the light of the situation on the ground, we are appealing to INEC to ensure that elections are devoid of all forms of electoral malpractice and violence; and

iii) No one political party be given the sole monopoly over the use of the national radio - SLBS and F.M. Station.

 **STATEMENT BY THE ALL PEOPLES CONGRESS (APC)**

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Delegates and Observers, Distinguished Members of the Fourth Estate present here, Ladies and Gentlemen-

Today marks yet another milestone in our march toward the political development of our beloved country Sierra Leone. We are entering a new era which demands the positive participation of Sierra Leoneans not only to facilitate a genuine transition but also to influence a decent and civilized democratisation process. On this historic occasion, I wish, on behalf of the entire membership of the All People's Congress (APC) party to take this opportunity to congratulate I.N.E.C. for conceiving the idea of a National Consultative Conference and the N.P.R.C. Government for their astuteness in making this assembly a reality.

If there is any time that our country need consultation amongst ourselves, that time is now. If there is any time when our country needs peace that time is now.

If there is any time when our country needs forgiveness and reconciliation, that time is now. (For he that cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass, if he would ever reach heaven; for everyone has need to be forgiven).

Mr Chairman, fellow delegates, given an enabling environment the development of any country by and large depends on the attitude of its people.

Therefore, peace, stability and national security coupled with positive attitudes are necessary conditions for the development of any country and the happiness of its peoples. I have no doubt that everyone in this hall and indeed, in this country, will agree with me, that for a long time, as a result of the Sierra Leonean attitude, peace, stability and progress have eluded our nation.

If that is so, then in the words of Shakespeare, as modified, "The fault dear country men, is not in our stars, but in ourselves". Aware of the foibles of humanity, we must not allow by our attitudes the mistakes and disappointments we have all made and contributed to in one way or the other, to act as a stumbling block to the hopes and aspirations of the future of our country for which we are all gathered here today. We must not allow any scope for disintegrating forces to decoy us into a situation where we will have to point accusing fingers at our fellow man, whilst we claim to be without blemish.

Mr Chairman, as I stand before this august assembly of national dignitaries, I am painfully aware that the APC party which I represent here, has for the past three (3) years or so been a victim of severe political castigation and vilification. According to St. Paul in II Cor. 10:12, "It is unwise to compare ourselves among ourselves". A fact which I believe is also contained in the Holy Koran. Although the N.P.R.C. Proclamation of 4th May 1992 states among other things that, the A.P.C. has caused untold suffering to the people of Sierra Leone, by unnecessarily prolonging the rebel war. Indeed a very serious indictment; but the indisputable fact was the rebel war was far behind the Sewa River, we all know the facts then and as they are today, which is a different case. We however, acknowledge the patriotic efforts of our forces and that of the foreign troops from our sister countries, in the prosecution of the war. We further appreciate with thanks the concern so far shown by the various international organisations all in an effort to end this unprovoked war, and restore peace to our beloved country.

Now that we have been offered the opportunity once again to express our political rights democratically, we must do so with the spirit that our nation, our country comes first before self. We have therefore come with open minds determined to find solutions to our national problems.

First, we consider the on-going national debate on whether or not we should hold a general election now, or wait till the end of the war before we hold one as very necessary and valuable.

The APC holds the view that holding an election now and installing a civilian government is an inevitable first step toward the solution of our national problems including the rebel war. We want elections now. No one in this country, I believe will deny that as of now, our country is in a state of anarchy. If a civilian government that is democratically elected by the people of this country is put in place, then a peace time state of preparedness for unity and stability would have been set and the modalities and machinery for amnesty and reconciliation, will be set in motion.

The All Peoples Congress party (APC) therefore strongly believes that we should hold the elections now to install the next civilian government and therefore recommends this view to this conference for its consideration. We ask that Decrees Nos. 7 and 8 be repealed to ensure free and fair elections ushering a democratic civilian government.

The APC has also considered the issue of a government of national unity, but submit that a government in which the political parties are represented in the same proportion as their performance at a general election will in fact be national in character. If we decide on an elected parliament as the basis of our next democratic civilian government, then the stage is set to address the second phase of our transition programme which is how to conduct the election.

In this respect, section 38 of the 1991 constitution presents an immediate problem. This section provides for the division of the country into constituencies and each constituency returning one member of parliament.

Fellow delegates, you will all agree with me that this situation is impracticable under our present circumstance. The APC further believes that this fact, by itself alone, is not enough to prevent the electoral process from going on if the national good-will exists. We ask that adequate security measures be implemented with the help of the international community to avail this country the opportunity to conduct elections on schedule.

If public statements by NARECOM and other NGO's are anything to go by, then we know that 1.5 million displaced people are resident in the Western Area and about 700,000 more are in refuges camps both within and outside Sierra Leone. This means that all together we have about 2.2 million people that are not living in their constituencies, but are living in places accessible to INEC.

On the basis of an estimated population of 4 million, we have 2.2 million which is 55% who cannot vote in their constituencies, but can certainly vote freely either in the Western Area or in the refugee camps. Added to this, people living in the Provincial Capitals and other large towns can freely exercise their franchise. Under the circumstances, the APC proposes that Section 38 of the 1991 Constitution be suspended as a demonstration of our nation's resolve to make the transitional process work, and the necessary legal instrument put in place to allow INEC to conduct elections wherever it is possible and safe to do so. This way about 80% of the population of Sierra Leone will be able to exercise their franchise without hinderance. The only prerequisite to make this proposal work effectively is political goodwill. Having done that, Section 74 of the 1991 Constitution can then be read with the necessary modifications to bring it in conformity with the spirit of the transition programme. The NPRC transition programme must remain on course.

The third stage of the transition programme involves a decision as to whether voting will be for individual candidates by constituency or for political parties nationally.

Consistent with the suspension of Section 38 of the Constitution, voting for individual candidates by constituencies will become impracticable. The APC therefore proposes that this time round, we deviate from our usual practice of voting for individuals by constituencies and vote for political parties on a national scale. This time round, Sierra Leone becomes one constituency only.

In order to make this novel method work with a reasonable degree of success, the APC proposes the following approach:-

i) All registered political parties should submit a List of their presidential and parliamentary candidates to INEC, duly authenticated by the Leader/Chairman and Secretary General and a Member of the party;

ii) The APC is of the view that under our present circumstance (economic, political and security) it will not be to the best advantage of the nation to conduct two separate elections - one presidential and one parliamentary. Therefore, the APC proposes the suspension of Section 42 of the 1991 Constitution which provides for a separate presidential election. The Presidential Candidate of the political party with the highest votes cast during this crucial period of our country's history, can be appointed and sworn in as the President of the Republic;

The third and final stage in this transition programme will be the establishment of a transitional cabinet. For this, the APC supports the provisions of Section 56 of the 1991 Constitution in its entirety with the provision that any political party that secures 5% of the valid votes cast at the National Election will be entitled to seats in Cabinet in the same proportion as those secured by the party at the General Election.

Madam Chairperson, fellow delegates, it is clear in the mind of the APC that with political goodwill, tolerance and understanding, all round, we in Sierra Leone can demonstrate to the rest of the world that small, though we are, we have the maturity and capacity to put our political differences aside in times of national crisis and save our nation from impending calamity.

Fellow delegates, Sierra Leone needs peace, unity, stability and security. We should at this momentous occasion think deeply about the future of our country so that history will record what part we have played during the crucial period of our country's history.

The future of our country lies in democracy and the earlier we move forward to return this country to an elected civilian government, the better for the country and all of us.

Long Live the Republic of Sierra Leone

Long Live peace and unity

God bless us all.

 **STATEMENT BY THE ARMED FORCES**

Mr Chairman, Delegates, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Four years ago the RUF waged war on the people of Sierra Leone. The excuse given was the inability of the populace to change the seated government by the electoral process. Since then the war has been directed at the people themselves bringing in untold suffering and death.

Bad selfish politics breeds war and most politicians have their fair share of the blame for the atrocities committed today. Since 1991 the Armed Forces have against great odds and sometimes even against misguided public opinion, laid their lives on the line for the freedom, peace and prosperity of this nation.

As we speak, soldiers die doing their constitutional jobs protecting the welfare of the people of this nation. We do this job gloriously for the sake of the future of the people and the land we love so well.

The problem of the war is here and a section of the very electorate whose support parties want to canvass are the ones causing this carnage. The Armed Forces are going to continue to defend this nation to the best of their ability.

It is thus left to the people to decide whether they will allow a group of bandits to deny them their right to vote.

Politics in the past has been marred with the same violence we witness. Even as early back as 1977 there were incidents of political violence. Parties should learn to live with the ideological and personality differences of the others.

Violence meted out in a violent situation breeds carnage. If we are sincere about the future of this nation let us support the Armed Forces' efforts to prosecute this war by closing ranks against the common enemy of peace and prosperity - Foday Sankoh. This should be done against the back drop that we shall have elections. If you want elections we are all going to have to fight together to get it. Democracy is the only way out and the Armed Forces support fully the idea of handing over governance to a fairly elected civilian regime.

If the whole nation closes rank to fight the common enemy we can achieve the objective of peace and elections. If we are half- hearted and selfish and looking for scapegoats the situation will be with us much longer than we might wish to think.

The Armed Forces shall continue to pursue the offensive operations it has started to knock the rebels into submission or talks. As we try to do our job, you do yours or we shall have ourselves to blame for failing the nation.

I thank you all.

 **STATEMENT BY THE SIERRA LEONE LABOUR CONGRESS**

Madam Chairperson, Fellow Citizens and Diplomats-

As the most representative organisation of workers in this country, the Sierra Leone Labour Congress fully endorse the decision taken by the NPRC government to return this country to Civilian Democratic Rule. We heartily congratulate them for this bold move. While we do appreciate the invitation extended to us, we are nevertheless disturbed by the allocation of one delegate made to Congress, precisely because we consider ourselves justifiably more qualified than other organisations which have been allocated far more delegates.

**THE ELECTORAL PROCESS**

i) We fully support the call for elections and the time- table set should be strictly observed.

ii) For far too long, there has been so much bitterness in the party politics of Sierra Leone. Now the country has been torn apart as a result of the rebel war. We have also seen the multiplicity of registered political parties in recent days. Our country therefore needs, now more than ever, the greatest unity and stability among the various ethnic groups. We therefore endorse the proportional representation of voting.

iii) In order to keep our potential parliamentarians in check, we strongly recommend that all candidates registered to contest elections should declare their assets.

iv) In the case of candidates for the Presidency, in addition to the above as well as the provisions set out in the 1991 Constitution, such candidates should:

i) Be thoroughly screened so that the smallest iota of his or her character should be highlighted for public knowledge;

ii) Submit themselves to public debate organised by INEC and pressure groups; and

iii) Be prepared to face a panel of interviewers at different times on the National Radio and T.V.

**MONITORING OF ELECTIONS**

To give the political parties and the electorate an assurance of free and fair elections, we suggest the invitation of observers from appropriate international organisations to monitor the elections.

**SECURITY**

In order to allow voters to cast their votes unhindered, the presence of a very strong security force should be maintained in and around every polling station all over the country.

**CIVIC EDUCATION**

i) We congratulate the INEC and the National Commission for Democracy (NCD) for embarking on a very effective Civic Education Programme in the electoral process. This regrettably is however limited to the Western Area for the time being. Congress therefore calls on INEC and NCD as a matter of urgency to extend these programmes to various parts of the Provinces through the local F.M. radio services and other forms of information media e.g. public rallies, panel discussions, debates, symposia, drama groups etc.

ii) The State mass media, both print and electronic, be at the disposal of all political parties on an agreed equal and rotational basis so that they can educate the electorate about their manifesto and programmes. We very much appreciate the donation of a shortwave radio transmitter by the European Union which if used properly will make a significant contribution to the electoral process.

iii) We stress the need for press freedom and call upon members of the press to show a high sense of national duty and commitment and so make a worthwhile contribution to the success of the electoral process.

**REVISION OF VOTERS LIST**

The forthcoming election is very crucial and as elections are the only type of participation in the political process available to the masses, we consider it essential that the voters list be revised so that every one qualified to vote can do so.

**GENERAL STATEMENT ON PEACE**

We also strongly recommend that no effort should be spared in continuing to make contacts with rebel leader Foday Sankoh by whatever means through whatever source so that he and his likes can be convinced to participate in the elections. We support all efforts to persuade the rebel groups to call a halt to their hostilities and begin negotiations without any preconditions.

**POLITICAL EDUCATION OF PARTY LEADERS**

In conclusion we strongly recommend that there should be a proper political education programme for party leaders so that they become aware of the dangers inherent in the multiplicity of political parties particularly so in the proposed system of proportional representation.

 **STATEMENT BY PUJEHUN DISTRICT**

1. There are 12 imaginary chiefdoms making up an imaginary district called Pujehun.

a) Imaginary because the approximately 125,000 people who lived in Pujehun prior to 1991 were actually forced out of the district with threats of death if they refused to get out.

b) Many were massacred, and all their homes destroyed.

c) Gondama displaced camp, home of the vast majority of those driven out, used to have a population of 70,000. Since the attack by rebels on the camp on December 24, 1994, the population now stands at 51,000 - the difference cannot be easily accounted for.

d) Since the intensified ambushes on the Freetown/Bo highway two months ago, no relief food has got to the residents of Gondama camp. Subsequently an alarmingly high number of them have died of starvation and related causes such as cholera - 1,500 over the past two months.

e) The people have sought refuge from starvation by packing their bundles and returning to Pujehun to face any dangers there. But the army has sent them back, demanding that they obtain authorization from their Paramount Chiefs first.

f) I have been sent to tell INEC that they would surely like to exercise their voting rights, but they doubt whether dead men can; since, the way events are occurring, most if not all of them would be dead before election day. Already, most of them are too weak from hunger and cholera to listen to campaign speeches.

g) They have therefore asked me to appeal to INEC, the UN, our Government and the whole civilized world to save their souls so they too can live to participate in this apparently exciting new political dispensation.

2. Pujehun wants a true democracy with an equitable distribution of wealth and misery. We appeal to INEC to educate Freetown that the colonial policy of indirect rule inherited post independence must be scrapped now. We must decentralize our government institutions in order to develop. But Freetown should not fool the nation and world by merely going through the motion of decentralization. An example is the National Health Action Plan of 1994. This document is a bad joke, a sham, and clearly showed that Freetown never really ever wants to get off the backs of the provinces.

3. Pujehun wants INEC and NPRC to seriously reconsider Decree No. 7. Our people have never acquired enough business education to live off their commercial activities. We educated our children to be professionals in government. Hence Decree No.7 would only further marginalize us by barring the only people who can effectively represent us from participation in the electoral process.

4. We want the world to know that Pujehun as a district and as a people have been marginalized by this government for far too long. We are the only district which from its inception has had no representation in this Government. We even attribute most of our present problems to this marginalization. For example, when our people decided to return home and resettle and defend themselves they were sent back marching to Bo 48 miles away. In spite of all our protests no cognisance was given by this Government simply because we have no representation. Much as we welcome the present electoral process we believe that a lot more attention needs to be paid to our present plight, being the district worst hit by the rebel war.

We feel elections in the midst of crises will be meaningless to the suffering masses of Pujehun District.

 **STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Introduction**

The Advisory Council has considered the agenda for this conference and would like, at this stage, to comment on two items within the limited time. The Council's comment on the other items on the agenda will be articulated in the working groups.

**Security Situation and the Electoral Timetable**

In February this year, following an escalation in the rebel war, which met with appropriate military responses by Government, including the possibility of a negotiated settlement, the Advisory Council once again for the second time within two years, discussed the policy options for peace available to Government. Council then recommended the advisability that the Government should take steps to implement its own Transition Programme on schedule where that possibility existed, or failing that, make a statement as a matter of honour and credibility, assuring the public and the international community of the Government's determination and commitment to its statement in November, 1993, in which the Transition Timetable was released.

Considerations of these matters were naturally going to lead to a rescheduling of the Timetable; but what was of importance was winning the public over into believing that the government could be trusted in its commitment and determination to return the country to civilian rule.

**Proportional Representation (PR)**

The electoral formula of proportional representation had very early on featured in the Council's agenda during its deliberations on the many issues making up the several parts of the democratic process and in working out the modalities of a return to multi-party democracy in accordance with the Council's terms of reference in Decree No. 7 of 1992 as amended.

Proportional representation no doubt has its merit. Its justice, the guaranteeing at a national level of better minority representation, the equitable representation of the country's political forces in Parliament and ensuring greater proportionality than earlier majority methods had produced, cannot be over-emphasized.

The Council, after a full and frank discussion and without prejudice to the great merit of the formula, stopped short of recommending its adoption as an electoral formula for Sierra Leone, partly because of the formula's complexity. This complexity can however be obviated by an imaginative programme of education that would allow our people to understand such a system; especially as the electors have always associated their votes with personalities.

The element of linking elector and elected would appear to be absent in certain variations of proportional representation, more so, the Party List System will remove the voter from the elected.

Now that the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) is recommending the proportional representation for the next multi-party elections for this country; the Advisory Council believes that with adequate safe-guards, including the education of the voter in the operation of the system, reasonable accommodation can be reached both on the demands of the freedom and fairness of the electoral process which would result not only in the acceptance of the outcome, but above all, infuse confidence in the system.

There is a broad agreement among electoral system experts that the electoral formula is not only the most important dimension of electoral systems, but also a major index in the democratic process.

**Presidential Election**

It goes without saying, that a free and fair election can only take place in an atmosphere of general security, that is to say, the absence of the fear of death, or the threat of physical harm or injury, or the threat of life or physical harm or injury, resulting from such state of general insecurity.

Given the fact that the Interim Electoral Commission lacks the capability and capacity to provide or ensure security, INEC might have to rely on the Government's ability to provide such security. This state of affairs could have implications for the impartiality and independence of the Commission.

I thank you for your kind attention and for allowing me to make this intervention on behalf of the Advisory Council.

 **STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

 **FOR PEACE (NCCP)**

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Fellow Compatriots -

It should be recalled that since the inception of the National Coordinating Committee for Peace (NCCP), we have steadfastly pursued the peaceful option to the resolution of our current fratricidal war.

However, there are some who due to lack of confidence in themselves hence in Sierra Leoneans in general, went out of their way to make believe that the People's Coalition, the NCCP is a political party. Some went to the extreme of saying that the International Alert, an international non-governmental London based organisation which has been assisting us in our effort to contact the R.U.F. has been sponsoring the NCCP with a view of registering a political party. Today we are proud to say to this august gathering, to the people of Sierra Leone and the international community that though INEC had almost registered all the potential political parties, yet there is still no mention of the NCCP as a political party on their list.

In effect, there are still some Sierra Leoneans whose words can be justified in their actions. Hence, the NCCP will continue to advocate for a genuine and lasting peace for the people of Sierra Leone and will never be used as a partisan political platform and or a political propaganda machine.

To return to the issue of the conference proper, it should be noted that the NCCP called for a National Sovereign Conference for peace and democracy where it was envisaged that the complexities of our current war situation would have been resolved to the satisfaction of all the parties to the on-going armed conflict. But it would appear that the NPRC will not surrender to any government that is not elected by universal suffrage.

As a result, since the National Coordinating Committee for Peace seeks and will continue to demand lasting peace, any measure that is conceived to be a possible path to the attainment of peace or a step towards the resolution of the current armed conflict is welcomed.

Therefore, the NCCP supports the call for elections and a strict adherence to the timetable for the return to a democratic civilian government. This has been the decision of our people whose interest we are here to articulate and safeguard.

The NCCP has accepted the alternative of an election only as a step to resolving the current armed conflict. In this regard, the NCCP supports the proportional representation system of elections as against the simple majority or "first past the post" elections system.

We support the former i.e. the PR System because we believe that though it will not realise our objective of a government of National Unity due to the abstinence of the R.U.F. it will at least serve as a source of reconciliation for the parties contesting the elections. Hence, a step in the right direction.

The NCCP supports the call of our people for elections with the hope that the succeeding democratically elected government will genuinely see the need to talk peace with the other side to the conflict on the assumption of power.

We hope such a government will make peace a cornerstone policy programme to ensure that we finally put this sad chapter in our history behind us.

While our people favour elections now, the NCCP will not fail to express their fears for free and fair elections - free from violence rigging, intimidation etc. etc. by any or all of the parties to the elections.

In this regard therefore, we call on INEC to ensure that the supervision and monitoring of the elections be carried out by the United Nations. That with the exception of presently assigned foreign troops to Sierra Leone, our national troops including the special security division (SSD) be confined to areas of the country not directly affected by the elections and should have nothing to do with the elections process up to the stage of counting.

The onus now lies on INEC especially Dr. James Jonah to ascertain that the elections are conducted freely and fairly with the same zeal that INEC has demonstrated in convincing our people about the elections being an alternative to any other prescription for now.

In that vein, we call on Dr. Jonah and his INEC team not only to be impartial, neutral, independent and non-partisan but rather be seen to be.

However, while NCCP wishes all the political parties that will be contesting the pending elections good luck, it continues to say that elections or not, peace should always be of very serious concern to us all. In light of the above, the NCCP will continue to advocate for a peace colloquium and conference so as to ensure lasting and genuine peace for all in the short and long term.

May God bless us all. Thank you.

 **STATEMENT BY THE POLICE FORCE**

Mr Chairman, Secretaries of State, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen. The Police Force feel delighted and highly honoured not only for witnessing the first National Consultative Conference on the Electoral Process, but also to be given the privilege to make a brief policy statement at this most auspicious occasion in the history of Sierra Leone.

May I take this opportunity to inform this conference that the Sierra Leone Police are keenly aware that if the democratic process must succeed and prosper, all of us here will have to co-operate without compromising our rights, our duties or our oaths of office. This is to say, our inter-action and friendship must not be bought at the expense of subordinating one arm to the other. Each arm must retain its independence, performing its role thoroughly without fear or favour, and to the best of its ability, the functions conferred on it by the constitution.

It is our sacred responsibility to preserve the constitution of the Republic of Sierra Leone. The duties of the Police are many and varied, and have far reaching effects on the community. These duties are fully spelt-out in the constitution which embodied the Police Act, and various laws of the land.

Briefly stated, the duties are essentially the prevention and detection of crime, apprehension and prosecution of offenders, the protection of lives and property, the preservation of law and order. It is the responsibility of the Police Force to uphold all laws that are validly made.

In any democratic society, it is the successful execution of these duties by the Police that makes it possible for the ordinary citizen to go about his lawful business without fear of molestation by lawless individuals, it also ensures that there is a peaceful atmosphere which enables government to plan and execute development projects for the benefit of all citizens.

It is also our sacred responsibility to see to it that no arm of any organisation, Department, or group of people will be allowed to unduly interfere with the power, privileges, and functions of the other. The Police, in particular, being the watch-dog of the people's rights and liberty will not hesitate to call to order any body, institution or groups of people however influential, that threatens to destroy, disfigure or otherwise undermine the corporate existence of this great Nation, which we have all sworn to serve, preserve, defend and protect. As a Force we stand committed to our charge without fear or favour.

We therefore appeal to all and sundry especially to Party Leaders to co-operate with us to maintain discipline during canvassing and on election day. The world will be watching us all.

Ladies and Gentlemen, today demands the attention of every true Sierra Leonean. The struggles, pains, patience and destructions in both lives and properties we suffered. These are the phases we have passed through to get to this day. Today is an emotional one for many of us. It is my hope that the emotions we feel here today will melt ignorance into knowledge, give passion to persuasion.

 **STATEMENT BY PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP-*(Sorbeh)*)**

Madam Chairperson, Fellow Delegates

Greetings from *Sorbeh*.

As we make yet another attempt at liberal democracy, we take cognisance of the fact that both the Military and Diplomatic options have failed to achieve tangible results in our quest for a lasting peace to the on-going strife in this country.

We are hopeful that democratisation as another policy option, might convince all of us to come together and rationalise our problems with a view to finding lasting solutions.

The idea of conducting elections under the prevailing conditions is a seeming paradox to many people. This is so because the majority of our people are *au fait* only with the Westminster type of elections, usually referred to as **"First Past the Post", "Winner Takes all"** or **"Rule or Ruin"** elections.

As we emphasise the need for peace, national unity, reconciliation, the building of mutual trust, respect and consent in the quest for a lasting peace, the People's Democratic Party *(Sorbeh)*, endorses the view that we should try the Proportional Representation system of elections recommended by INEC.

In view of the vicissitudes of the present security situation and the fact that elections in the past were characterised by violence, thuggery, and other malpractice, the PDP makes the following recommendations:

A. On the democratisation process and elections

 i. We urge government and INEC to ensure that the transition and election timetable are strictly adhered to.

ii. We endorse the Proportional Representation system of the LIST variety as recommended by INEC with a suitably low threshold to ensure that all shades of opinion have a stake in the governance of the state.

iii. We recommend that Presidential and Parliamentary elections be held simultaneously to cut down on costs.

iv. We recommend that a National Unity Government be formed after elections to consolidate the envisaged atmosphere of peace and reconciliation.

B. Civic voter education

i. We recommend that a massive and intensive civic voter education be embarked upon nation-wide by both INEC, NCD, political parties *etc.,* to inculcate in the electorate, the need to transcend the thinking of the past, and learn how to share power, to be tolerant of each other's views and to put the interest of the nation first.

ii. That we thank the European Union (EU) for providing INEC with a powerful short-wave transmitter and to urge that the Government print and electronic media be made equally available on a rotational basis to all registered political parties.

C. The security situation and elections

i. That the Government ensures that adequate security arrangements are made for all aspects of the democratisation process, including registration of voters, campaigning, voting, collection of ballot boxes and counting of votes.

ii. That foreign observers be encouraged to take part in all aspects of the democratisation process.

iii. That an X-ray detectable finger printing security system be used during elections to safeguard against malpractice.

iv. That the counting of votes be done at the polling stations, especially in far flung provincial areas.

D. Funding of political parties

i. The PDP endorses the view that the funding of political parties must be regulated to ensure financial prudence and to limit campaign contributions by interest or lobby groups. We however, recommend that the laws and regulations proposed by INEC be further reviewed by the Conference to reflect our local reality.

ii. Our supporters are willing to put their monies where their mouths are, in support of their parties.

E. The Code of Conduct

i. Urges INEC to ensure that the political playing field is even and that strict laws should be recommended by the Conference to govern the conduct of political parties, leaders and supporters. To this end, the PDP endorses the recommendations suggested by INEC on this issue.

ii. That Government considers the setting up of an elections tribunal to speedily expedite matters pertaining to the electoral process.

Finally, we urge that even in the diversity of our various political groupings, all must be united for ***Mother Sierra Leone's*** sake.

I thank you very much, Madam Chair Lady, and wish all delegates very fruitful deliberations.

May God bless us all.

  **STATEMENT BY THE SIERRA LEONE TEACHERS UNION**

Fellow Sierra Leoneans, many aspects of our national situation including the problems of the on-going armed conflict, the unprecedented economic crisis and the return to constitutional civilian rule are issues that are today in the focus of attention of the majority of well meaning Sierra Leoneans and the international community.

No doubt, we are attending this Conference to preoccupy our minds mainly with the question of how our country will be returned to democratic rule after several bitter years of one-party totalitarianism and military rule.

Naturally, we are aware that this is a difficult but not an unfeasible task. Fortunately, the NPRC has lifted the ban on multi-party politics and has also pledged to hand over state governance to a constitutionally elected body by January 1996.

Fellow Sierra Leoneans, a coherent political culture requires that political values exist, that they be widely recognized and that they serve as a yardstick for measuring the politics and policies of government.

Where each individual cannot personally represent his or her own interests, it has been argued, democratic government should at least reflect the configuration of interests and opinions within the larger society. Of particular importance in this scheme is the national legislature, because it is usually the most representative branch of government.

Against this background, the Sierra Leone Teachers Union being an instrument that upholds the fundamental principles of democracy does hereby wholehearted welcome and endorse the NPRC's initiative of returning Sierra Leone to constitutional civilian rule by January 1996. To this end the Sierra Leone Teachers Union would like to make the following submissions:

A. **ELECTORAL PROCESS**

1. Everything humanly possible be done to ensure the holding of free and fair elections.

2. In the light of the on-going armed conflict that has rendered a considerable part of the country uninviting for normal social, economic, cultural and political intercourse, we endorse the application of the proportional representation electoral system for the conduct of the forthcoming elections. However, we strongly recommend that the form of proportional representation to be adopted be decided by this Conference.

3. The time-frame stipulated by the NPRC for the entire democratic transition be strictly adhered to and all necessary activities regarding the electoral process be tailored to fit into the said timetable.

4. Failure on the part of the Interim National Electoral Commission to conduct free and fair elections within the transitional democratic timetable as stipulated by NPRC government, we further strongly submit that an Interim Government Assembly representing all shades of opinion, ideas and interests, as against January 1996 being the date pronounced for handing over of state power to a civilian administration by the NPRC.

B. **SECURITY**

5. In addition to the INEC Draft Code of Conduct for political parties to be discussed and agreed upon at this conference, we wish to resolve that:

a) invitations be extended to the United Nations and the Jimmy Carter Foundation to send observer teams to monitor the elections;

b) special appeal be made to the OAU, Commonwealth and United Nations to provide an effective independent security body to oversee the entire democratic transitional process;

c) one ballot box and one ballot paper methodology be used for voting in the elections.

C. **CIVIC VOTER EDUCATION AND PRESS FREEDOM**

6. The NCD and INEC - Civic and Voter Education programmes be intensified, diversified (through public rallies, debates, symposia, panel discussions, radio and TV programmes etc.) and be extended nationwide as well as in all educational institutions for the benefit of the wider majority of the citizens.

7. The state mass media, both print and electronic, be accessible and available to all political parties on an agreed equal and rotational basis to enable them to educate the general public about their manifestos and programmes. To this end, we would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the European Union for donating the shortwave radio transmitter which, if well utilized and maintained will in no small way contribute to the educational and political development of this country.

8. Above all, we advocate for press freedom and at the same time call on the members of the fourth-estate to display a high sense of professional journalism to ensure our success in this new political dispensation.

D. **INDEPENDENCE AND NEUTRALITY OF INEC**

9. In order to allay the fears of the members of the Sierra Leone Civil Society regarding the independence and or neutrality of INEC *vis-à-vis* NPRC Decrees Numbers 7 and 8, we resolved that these Decrees be reviewed to give a democratic flavour expressing tolerance and readiness to the NPRC to return the country to democratic rule and that future policies coming from the NPRC and INEC on the transitional democratic process meet the approval of all registered political parties.

E. **PEACE OPTION**

10. We are firmly convinced of the need to seek a peaceful solution of the on-going armed conflict which is taking such a dreadful toll on the lives of the people of this land. We support all efforts to persuade the belligerent to call a halt to their hostilities and begin negotiations without any preconditions. Hence we hope the peace option will be discussed by this gathering of great minds. The war may end today but without comprehensive peace the hostilities may continue. We therefore call on all political parties and Sierra Leoneans to adopt a peace agenda from this Conference.

F. **APPEAL TO CIVIC GROUPS AND TEACHERS**

11. We would like to sincerely appeal to all civic groups, including the Sierra Leone Bar Association, to seize this unique opportunity to effectively and meaningfully contribute towards the shaping of the political future of our beloved country. We the teachers of Sierra Leone would like to assure this nation of our firm commitment to the execution and success of the democratisation process.

G. **CONCLUSION**

12. In conclusion, we would like to express the hope that we may at this Conference, either in the form of a press communiqué or a Bintumani declaration, identify the points upon which our opinions converge as a prophecy of good hope as we prefer the dreams of the future to the sad history of the past.

We hope this conference (to quote from the first inaugural address of Thomas Jefferson) will lay the solid foundation for "a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of labour and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labour the bread it has earned."

 **STATEMENT BY KENEMA AND KAILAHUN DISTRICTS, THE KENEMA TOWN COUNCIL**

 **AND THE DISPLACED CAMPS EASTERN PROVINCE**

We are anxiously looking forward to the forthcoming General Elections. We give our wholehearted approval and support to the list system of proportional representation as proposed by INEC. For once, it affords us the opportunity to treat our political opponents as partners in progress and not as enemies in combat as had been the practice under the system where the winning party grabbed and ran away with it all.

We appeal to the Government to ensure that the security situation is conducive to the holding of a free and fair election. We believe that our Government can do it. In that regard we hasten to suggest that we need the co-ordinated efforts of our army, police, kamajors and last but by no means the least, our brotherly forces from other countries, to whom we give our immeasurable thanks for their help so far and hope they will continue to stand by us in this time of dire need.

We believe that the elections can, and should be held in accordance with the current electoral timetable. Any adjustment of it, that has the effect of postponing or prolonging the elections, will, we respectfully submit, only perpetuate the current obnoxious, abominable and diabolical atrocities on a larger scale, which are by their nature bloody, smoky, irreparable and cannot be compensated for. The NPRC Government should ensure an equitable and free use of the mass media i.e. radio and TV in particular, by all political parties. In that regard we appeal to the Government to take immediate steps to improve the SLBS which is sadly out of the reach of people in most parts of the provinces; it is virtually a capital radio. We further appeal to the Government to install the FM transmitter which was donated by the Government and people of France to the people of Kenema District in particular and other regions in general. Many thanks to the people and Government of France.

We appeal to the Government to ensure and respect the independence of INEC and we trust that INEC will reciprocate by functioning in a manner commensurate with their status, privilege, and the confidence reposed in them. We need not emphasize that international observers should be present in sufficient numbers during the elections.

We observe that no penalty is prescribed in case of an infringement of the code of conduct under Working Group "B" but was done under Group "C" i.e. campaign financial regulations. We trust that, that will be taken care of in our deliberations. We thank the NPRC Government and wish them a smooth handing over to a properly elected civilian government. Long live the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Thank you all.

 **STATEMENT BY THE WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS, NORTHERN PROVINCE**

Madam Chairperson, I am here to represent Women's Organisation of the Northern Region. I bring you warm co-operative greetings. We in this region demand elections and all its process as scheduled, and every eligible Sierra Leonean be free to participate in the electoral process.

- That Presidential and Parliamentary elections be held on the same day.

We are also of the view that all political parties must have free and equal access to the State media and may also purchase additional air time up to an agreed maximum limit.

While we would like to see the electoral process progressing, we take into higher consideration the bringing of the warring factions to the negotiating table.

Mr Chairman, we in this region show great concern on the security situation in the process that will ensure us full participation.

However, as we are all here to discuss issues that will be for or against, I want all of us to dance to the tune of a record which says:

- Whatever you do, allow peace to reign

- Whoever you are, allow peace to reign

- Wherever you are, allow peace to reign.

 I thank you all.

 **STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FARMERS OF SIERRA LEONE**

Madam Chairperson, Most Respected Delegates, Chairman and Management of INEC,

Diplomatic and Consular Corps, Fellow Citizens:

First, we bring you felicitations from the National President of the National Association of Farmers of Sierra Leone and also from all our farmers. Some of you are our members. We salute you for being here.

Second, we bring many thanks to INEC for inviting farmers to take part in this democratization process. The participation of farmers in this process is a signal to the way forward. Farmers assure INEC of their participation and cooperation, even in refugee and displaced camps.

Farmers appreciate the steps taken by the NPRC under the leadership of Captain V. E. M. Strasser in organizing to bring democracy through a free, and fair and perhaps safe electoral process. We believe they are honourable men, they will follow the process through.

ABOUT NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FARMERS OF SIERRA LEONE

- Launched January, 1987 as an indigenous non-governmental organisation of farmers. Registration No., NGO/025.

- To establish and maintain 12 District and 150 Chiefdom branches.

- To facilitate food self-sufficiency in Sierra Leone.

- To promote land conservation and environmental rejuvenation and protection.

- To facilitate poverty alleviation at farmers level.

- To address women farmers and gender concerns.

- To establish and maintain Rural Agricultural Schools for farmers families.

- To act as an organized spokesman for farmers and farmers associations.

- To negotiate and lobby on behalf of farmers.

- To do the necessary paperwork for its disadvantaged members and member associations.

- To inform government about farmers activities and farm development issues.

- To act as commissioned input distribution agent for the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, donors and non-governmental organizations.

- To train its members at workshops, field-days and trade fairs.

- To represent and protect farmers' interests at the farm site and the market place.

- To seek farm development financing for its members.

**FARMERS IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS**

Farming is the backbone of the economy of Sierra Leone. Farmers constitute 80% of the population of Sierra Leone. And by share numbers and occupational placements, farmers constitute some 90% of the voting population. Farmers have always suffered the brunt of bad governance and do marginally enjoy the gains of good government.

In the 1950s and 1960s, farmers were all grassroots and illiterate. They were simply told who their representatives in parliament were. They towed the line merely following symbol. They were not fully conscious of their civic rights and responsibilities.

Today two major issues have changed the electoral attitude of voting farmers.

(a) The war has displaced more farmers than people of any other occupation and many farms have been destroyed.

(b) As a result of (a) above, many farmers have found themselves in big towns and have inadvertently acquired some knowledge of how political and economic systems work and have seen their role as pivotal.

(c) Farmers now have a national organisation that will protect their interests, speak for them, inform them about the programmes of government and inform government about farmers interests and programmes.

FARMERS WELCOME THE ELECTIONS

Farmers welcome the forthcoming elections if the election process will:-

(a) Give farmers the opportunity to exercise their voting rights in a free, fair and secured electoral process.

(b) Put agriculture and farming at the top-most of its agenda of priorities and qualifications in the electoral and development process.

(c) Provide incentive schemes for farm rehabilitation and farmers resettlement and provide sustainable work plans for food production and national food self-sufficiency.

We welcome the proportional representation (PR) system if the zonal democratization processes do not marginalize farmers in remote areas and those displaced in urban areas.

DECREE NO 7

Farmers have some reservation about Decree No.7.

(a) It reads like an exclusion instrument. Section 6(a) of Decree No. 7 in compliance with Section 75(d) of the 1991 Constitution prevent all illiterate persons from serving parties as founder members. This also excludes a majority of our members from full participation of the body politics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Realising that farmers constitute 80% of the population of Sierra Leone and by their sheer number also constitute the bulk of the voters in the national election. Seeing that this population remains on their farm land and participates in the National Electoral Process from their farm lands, and in respect of the modalities and environment in which INEC is to conduct this general election, farmers recommend the following:

1. The security of the farmers and their families right from the farm gate to the national level be guaranteed.

2. That Government should come out with a workable plan of action for farm rehabilitation and resettlement of farmers.

3. That NAFSL be supported and strengthened to be able to give civic education to all farmers regarding their right and responsibilities in the political processes.

4. That National Association of Farmers of Sierra Leone be appointed head of statutory organizations involved in land use and environmental protection.

5. The National Association of Farmers of Sierra Leone calls on INEC to sponsor nationwide civic education workshops for farmers on the matter of voting in the democratization process.

Farmers thank you all.

 **STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL PEOPLES PARTY (NPP)**

We wish to thank the Government of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) for lifting the ban on political activities and charting a course for the restoration of democracy in Sierra Leone.

The spirit of the Conference is noticeably high and we believe that the people of Sierra Leone are in similar high spirit to see this country through general elections within the shortest possible time. We in the NPP therefore endorse a strict adherence to the political time table set by the NPRC Government. We will therefore continue to call on the NPRC Government and foreign governments to ensure a speedy conclusion to the on-going rebel war.

Foday Sankoh and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) should now accept the olive branch of peace to end the killings and the war.

We also advocate that INEC should continue to receive its freedom without any interference, from any quarters whatsoever, so that it should be able to discharge its duties faithfully, zealously, and impartially.

The problems of the political process in Sierra Leone have not been with the people, but with previous Governments who interfered with the process and the Electoral Commission, thereby denying the people of Sierra Leone the right to vote freely and elect their leaders. We need to be assured that such will not be the case in the forthcoming elections.

The electorate on the contrary, are aware of the issues of the day, and know where to go in terms of the process, if they can only be assured of freedom to vote without any interference or intimidation.

On the Code of Conduct of the electoral process, we would only like to add that a clear cut decision for INEC to announce the final results with no interference and consultations should be assured.

We also subscribe to a voting process that would use serially numbered and colour coded ballot papers, one ballot box, counting votes in the polling stations, rather than move ballot boxes and in the presence of as many international observers as possible.

On campaign financing, except where political parties stand to receive lump sum financial assistance from Government or the international community, the Code of Conduct would not augur well when one considers the cost of the elections. The penalties suggested are too severe and need to be re-examined. Is the decree really necessary?

On the issue of proportional representation, why advocate one system over the other? All have merits and demerits, but the other opinion is always important. Let us leave the options open and look at all possible systems.

We are keen to have a realistic appraisal of the security situation in the country, a report which unfortunately, has not been circulated to us.

We congratulate INEC and all those who supported the Conference and wish the deliberations of this Conference well.

 **STATEMENT BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Madam Chairman, Distinguished Personalities, Fellow Delegates, Observers

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Roman Catholic Church in Sierra Leone would like to express profound thanks and gratitude to the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the myriad ways in which it has caused a sensitization of the populace on the forthcoming elections which, with optimism will shape the political will, framework and perspective of Sierra Leone.

Of special significance were the various discussions conducted in some of our national languages both on the S.L.B.S. radio and television. These discussions were not only assimilated by the common man, but also engendered a great sense of nationalism.

Our language, culture and thought pattern should characterise the very *raison d'être* of our existence and the many ways we apply ourselves in the various strata in society.

Authority has its origin from God and there are various ways through which that authority asserts itself.

Sierra Leone has, over the past two decades experienced, rather unfortunately a distorted and malfunctioned, self-centred and perhaps ungodly asserted authority.

Divine providence has always seemed to intercept an obnoxious and catastrophic occurrence in Sierra Leone.

April 29, 1992 witnessed another divine intervention which salvaged the precipitating nature of corruption, injustice, and a general malaise that was characterising the times.

The National Provisional Ruling Council (N.P.R.C.) must be commended for its prompt arrest of the destabilising situation in the country and numerous upward strides it has made since its inception.

Political leadership has come and gone and we have witnessed the good and evil it has caused - evils which are to a very large extent responsible for the rebel war today.

Another political era is in the making. Today as we assemble here at the National Consultative Conference on the electoral process, we are witnessing the amelioration of the political might of Sierra Leone and its concomitant process - a change of attitude of all Sierra Leoneans, a greater sense of patriotism and nationalism, a culture of each other's keeper and a Sierra Leone that God -centred.

Promises have been made about "free and fair" elections and again we have witnessed the hooliganism, thuggery, barbarism and savagery that had sometimes tinged what should have been "free and fair" elections.

The forthcoming elections for which this august body is meeting, are being described as "free and fair". On page 9 of the Working Group Documents under sub-heading Executive Summary, it is stated that, "INEC's efforts to conduct a free and fair election in Sierra Leone against the background of a rebel war has strengthened its determination to overhaul the country's electoral process. Crucial issues to a successful electoral process, as INEC views them, include the revision of the electoral laws, the establishment of a credible voter and civic education programme, and the design and implementation of a durable registration system".

The Roman Catholic Church in Sierra Leone fervently prays for and joins INEC in its ardent desire for a free and fair election and a prosperous aftermath of the elections. We will use our pulpits to sensitise our parishioners and endeavour to join all well-meaning Sierra Leoneans to be exponents of peace, joy and the liberality and openness that have always characterized Sierra Leone.

In support of the voting system - the principle of Proportional Representation, the Roman Catholic Church is appealing again for the distribution of justice, fairness and impartiality.

We hope and pray that there will be a fair representation of all segments of the populace not disparaging the potentiality of minority groups.

May God in His wisdom and providence give us all a new vision and hope for a bright and prosperous 5th Republic.

 **STATEMENT BY THE ACADEMIC STAFF ASSOCIATION, UNIVERSITY OF SIERRA LEONE**

Madam Chairperson, Secretaries of State, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Chairman and Commissioners of INEC, Paramount Chiefs, Fellow Delegates

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

This conference is an important landmark in the history of Sierra Leone for which I personally wish to thank the NPRC for party pluralisation and congratulate INEC for the initiative and hard work carried out so far. I hope and pray that our deliberations will bear fruits for which future generations of our beloved Sierra Leone will be proud.

1. **Elections:**

ASA is divided on whether or not to hold elections now.

For: It would create a conducive atmosphere for the return to normalcy in Sierra Leone as fighting groups are less likely to see eye to eye in a meaningful, unconditional conference for a ceasefire.

Against: The raging rebel war is not an ideal condition for a safe democratisation process.

However, with the proliferation of such large numbers of political parties, it is clear that the whole nation is ready for elections.

As such, or notwithstanding, ASA is wholeheartedly in favour of elections according to the time table by INEC and that the presidential and parliamentary elections should be held simultaneously.

2. ASA is not opposed to **Proportional Representation (PR)** but inherent weaknesses are to be addressed.

 - PR on party basis: Rules out independent candidates with no intention to associate with any party, but with the desire to contribute to the development of the country. Such a candidate could pay a minimum registration fee and enter parliament on the minimum number of votes for representation on PR, otherwise

 - voting based not on issues but on loyalties to parties/ethnic groups.

 Constituency seems too large: 100 names/party for 17 parties = 1700 names to remember.

 - With a high illiterate population, it will be a daunting task to know, remember and assess party representatives.

 - Fear of ASA: polarisation of politics into ethnic divisions with all its ramifications.

 - We feel that the ethnic and constituency map of Sierra Leone does give a fair representation of virtually all groups, and that ethnic integration has been so rapid over the years that it is no longer cause for concern. Why then revisit such a scenario?

 - Besides, PR cannot ensure "proportional" ethnic representation; as party elections need not be on ethnic groups, but effective representation.

 - Also, the overly simplistic "Theory of Greatest Remainders" has a lot of weaknesses that should be considered *eg.,* 200,000 people for 5 seats

 Averaging: 40,000 votes/seat

Assume: Party A polls 140,000 = 32 seats)

Party B 60,000 = 12 seats)

A round up to A = 4 seats B = 2 seats has 2 problems:

- not proportional 7:3 > 2:1

- increased no. of seats

However, a breakdown of constituency to smaller units and seat allocation after registration would suffice, provided **safeguards** are made for:

i. - Proper registration of voters against inflated voter list

ii. - INEC itself should watch out for inherent regional bias with Commissioner from east registering Eastern Region *etc*.

3. **Code of Conduct (COC) and Party Financing**

ASA feels some modifications should be implemented:

i. no action against parties who fail to comply with these codes should be endorsed.

ii. too western to fit successfully within our cultural system and therefore a non-starter.

Inducement: Against the background of the rebel war and its attendant problems - hunger, diseases, *etc.,* - coupled with extreme poverty - is it feasible to canvas - emptily - the support of abandoned, hungry or sick brothers in camps and expect them to listen? Let us be rational. It is as much an inducement to feed refugees and the displaced as a humanitarian gesture.

 - We lack a perfect receipt culture in the country for auditing purposes.

 - Out tradition demands offers of any sort, if we visit chiefs

 **STATEMENT BY SIERRA LEONE UNION ON DISABILITY ISSUES (SLUDI)**

Madam Chairlady, Chairman of INEC, Members of the Diplomatic Corps Distinguished Guests, Fellow Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen, I bring very warm greetings and best wishes from my organisation, the Sierra Leone Union on Disability Issues (SLUDI).

We are tremendously delighted to participate in this extremely important national event. This is the first time in this country's history that disabled people are to occupy an important spot in plotting the course of the nation's future. It is our fervent hope that this is only the beginning of greater things and brighter days to come for the disabled in this country.

Madam Chairlady, Sierra Leone needs free and fair elections to return it to a state of peace for the orderly conduct of business and the restoration of civil liberties for all its people. The disruptions and displacements caused by the rebel war have made this a very difficult exercise, needing very careful preparation.

Having examined the working document presented to us on the proposed electoral process, my organisation is of the opinion that:

 (1) In the light of the prevailing circumstances, i.e. the effects of the ongoing rebel war which has caused many people to flee from their normal areas of abode to either other parts of the country or across the borders in to Guinea or Liberia - proportional representation seems to offer the best chance of free, fair and peaceful elections in this country at this point in time. We therefore strongly support and recommend its adoption as the system of voting for the forthcoming General Elections towards the end of this year. However, it should be adapted to suit our own local circumstances.

(2) The threshold which should entitle a political party to parliamentary representation should be fixed at a level that may be low enough to ensure that no significant groups are left out of the process, and high enough to avoid the formation and registration of political parties without proper justification or a reasonable political programme. We therefore strongly support the suggestion that five percent should be the bottom line.

(3) We have observed that there is a good deal of apprehension or scepticism on the part of some electoral personnel - and more especially registration officers - towards the registration of disabled persons and their participation in the electoral process. In this regard, we strongly urge INEC to do everything possible to ensure that the aged, the infirm and people with disabilities enjoy their full rights to both elect their representatives and to be elected themselves if they so desire. This is no new or strange phenomenon, as it already happens not only in developed countries like Britain and Sweden, but also in some African countries such as Zambia where there are a number of disabled persons in parliament - including a couple of totally blind members - elected by the general electorate.

INEC should ensure that both the general citizenry and the registration officers and other officials of the Commission are properly briefed on the eligibility of disabled people to register as voters and as potential candidates for any election. In other words, INEC should ensure that disabled people are fully enfranchised or empowered to participate actively in the electoral process in particular and the democratisation exercise in general.

People with physical disabilities - i.e. those in wheelchairs or with crutches - should have easy access to polling booths. In other words, polling booths should be placed in such a way that someone with a physical disability should be able to reach them and enter without any difficulty.

With regards to the secrecy of the ballot, provision should made to ensure that people with a visual disability (blind people) are given the opportunity to vote. In the course of this conference, I will suggest some ways in which this could be done.

(4) My organisation is of the opinion that the timing of the elections is a crucial matter which needs very careful consideration. Taking cognizance of the prevailing circumstances, we are somewhat sceptical about the feasibility of conducting elections successfully within the time-frame already set. Nonetheless, we believe that the apparent obstacles are not insurmountable. We only hope and pray that the RUF will sooner rather than later see it fit and honourable to manifest magnanimity and love for their country and join in the new dispensation. But even if they fail to do so, we are convinced that the most important ingredients for accomplishing such an important goal are peace and security.

Madam Chairlady, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I wish us very successful deliberations.

May God bless us all.

I thank you.

 **STATEMENT BY THE SIERRA LEONE MEDICAL & DENTAL ASSOCIATION**

Madam Chairperson, Members of the Diplomatic Corp, INEC Commissioners, Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen -

On behalf of the Sierra Leone Medical and Dental Association, I wish to express the Association's profound gratitude and thanks for the invitation to participate in this important Consultative Conference which, I am sure will shape the future course of events in this country. We are delighted to be part of this process, and we are firmly convinced that, with the collective will and co-operation of all Sierra Leoneans, irrespective of their shades of opinion, the change we are about to put in motion will yield good dividends.

The Sierra Leone Medical and Dental Association firmly believes that:-

(a) The electoral timetable as set out by the NPRC Government with a determination to install a democratically elected civilian government by January 1996, should be adhered to. Further, intensive attempts at peace should be made to improve the security situation. The Sierra Leone Medical and Dental Association is of the view that, the emergence of a democratically elected civilian government might lead to a permanent cessation of hostilities.

(b) In as much as it is the wish of INEC that decisions of this Conference should be by consensus the SLMDA, firmly believes that decisions be taken by secret ballot to avoid coercion or fear by most of the participants present here.

(c) It is the expressed view of the Association that the use of ballot papers as opposed to marbles and also the use of one ballot box at each polling station be adopted so as to avoid the ugly experiences of the past vote-rigging and exchange of boxes, thereby creating thuggery and violence.

(d) The Association supports INEC's proposition on the setting of a ceiling on campaign expenditures. However, the SLMDA is of the conviction that Sections 7(1) and 8(1) of the Draft Campaign Finance Legislative Proposals be expunged from the proposals on the grounds that the country is in a serious economic crisis and as such, parties would not be in a position to mobilise funds sufficiently without the assistance of various interest groups including commercial houses or outside agencies.

(e) The SLMDA supports the proposal by INEC to conduct the forthcoming elections on the system of proportional representation on the grounds that it will promote political integration and harmony amongst the parties; eliminate tribal and regional domination and provide fair representation of the entire country. However, should the war be over, we believe the Westminster type of representation should be adopted. The Association also believes that with this system of election the reconciliation process will be put in motion.

(f) The Association welcomes the idea of inviting foreign observers to closely monitor the electoral process and would propose the use of foreign troops currently assisting us in the prosecution of the war to man the respective polling centres on election day.

Finally, the SLMDA once more wishes to emphasise that in supporting the implementation of the electoral timetable it should go hand in hand with the peace option.

May God guide us in our deliberation.

I thank you.

 **STATEMENT BY KONO DISTRICT**

Chairman, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my pleasure to outline the stand of the people of Kono District on the pending political transition at this Consultative Conference. We thank INEC for initiating the Conference and Government for endorsing it.

1. **Elections**

We the people of Kono District firmly support the Government's decision to return the country to multi-party politics and the holding of general elections as pronounced by His Excellency the Chairman and Head of State, Captain V.E.M. Strasser, in his last Independence Day Message to the Nation. Our support for the election of a democratically elected government is consistent with the views of the international community and the funding agencies on whom much of our present economic survival is dependent.

2. **Proportional Representation**

Having analysed the arguments advanced by INEC with respect to the system of Proportional Representation, we firmly believe that giving the prevailing circumstances in Sierra Leone today, this mode of election should be put to a test. We however wish to advise that this being a new system, it must be given adequate publicity for the education of the entire electorate. We further submit that INEC's proposal to adopt the system of Proportional Representation serves as an appropriate instrument in a war situation such as ours.

3. **Timing of Elections**

Regarding the timing for the proposed general elections, we are of the view that the Chairman of the NPRC's last Independence Anniversary Statement to the Nation to the effect that he would hand over to an elected president in January, 1996 presupposes that general elections would have been held before that date. We therefore fully endorse that policy statement.

4. **Security**

It is generally recognised that the present security set up is far from conducive for the conduct of free and fair elections. We therefore wish to appeal to Government and the international community to provide effective security and independent observers to monitor the proposed elections.

5. **General Observation and Suggestions**

Multi-party democracy has been non-existent in Sierra Leone for 17 years - from 1978 to the present. Now that we stand on the threshold of a new democratic dispensation can we be justified in also seeing a large number of persons denied the right to exercise their constitutional rights by banning them through legislation? We say no.

Decree 8 which is a direct result of the NPRC Commissions of Inquiry bans 57 persons from participation in politics for 10 years.

Our 1991 Constitution on which these present elections and the entire democratisation process are based, demands that Commission Reports must be published, or the reason for their non-publication explained in a statement by the President - in this case, the Chairman of the NPRC.

Those reports have not be published; no statement explaining their non-publication has been made. Nonetheless, draconian decisions have been taken against persons who appeared before the Commission, one of which is the ban imposed by Decree 8.

Publication of a Commission Report is extremely important because the very Constitution says that anyone adversely affected by a Commission's findings could use the report to appeal to the Court of Appeal. In the absence of these reports, persons so affected have been robbed of their constitutional right to seek redress from the Court.

One correction ought here to be made of a widely-held but wrong notion. A Commission is not a court of law where persons appearing before it can be found guilty or not guilty. They do not appear there to answer a criminal charge - they appear only as WITNESSES.

It is precisely this element of guilt that is the prerequisite of disqualification or banning from the political process. The very Constitution has its own banning process. It provides in Section 76(1)(d) **"No person shall be qualified for election as a Member of Parliament if he has been convicted and sentenced for an offence which involves fraud or dishonesty".**

The now banned persons ought firstly to have been tried, found guilty of an offence involving fraud or dishonesty, leaving INEC to deal with them when they present themselves for elections. We therefore urge that for a healthy democratic future, Decree 8 should be repealed immediately.

After all, if we can in all the circumstances of mayhem, extensive and incalculable loss of lives and property, with their attendant devastating effects on our economy, perpetuated by the RUF, invite that body to participate in the political process, what justification have we to deny the same democratic rights to any or all for the banned persons without bringing them to trial, and leaving the law to take its course, as enshrined in our Constitution.

Besides, the citizen's right to chose who governs him is by itself a cleansing process which will weed out all persons with doubtful credentials in politics and public service. That right cannot be fettered with.

Decree 8 is undemocratic, discriminatory and sets a dangerous precedent for leading figures of any regime - be they military, civilian, or the ordinary citizen.

We do not wish to repeat the example here of a Latin American country where nearly the entire lot of a past military regime were tried by a subsequent civilian regime, and they are still languishing in jail.

Decree 8 must be repealed with all haste. Decree 8 will be a fearsome legacy for the NPRC to leave recorded against its name - and it may well return to haunt them.

Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the interest of National Reconciliation, we the people of the Kono District wish to appeal to Government, through INEC, to review Decree No. 8.

Thank you.

 **STATEMENT BY THE WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS, SOUTHERN PROVINCE**

1. **FREE PARTICIPATION AND**

**HUMAN RIGHTS - THE GENDER ISSUE**

In endorsing the Draft Code of Conduct for Political Parties which advocates for full and equal participation of women in the electoral and political process, we state that in order to ensure women's representation in the highest decision-making structures i.e. Parliament and Cabinet, legislation be put in place for at least one-third representation of women to reflect the relative percentage of women in the electorate.

2. **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The women assert that in order for the proposed Code of Conduct to be meaningful, effective penalties for breaches and non-compliance must be provided. A process of speedy adjudication upon breaches and enforcement of penalties must also be instituted. The women propose that a 3 person committee be set up for that purpose to be headed by an independent legal professional and to include at least one woman.

For these objectives to be achieved, we propose that they should also embrace other persons or bodies non-political including servicemen with particular reference to object 5 rules (iii), (v) and (vi).

3. **SECURITY**

To ensure free and fair elections, the women propose the following arrangements to be operative before, during and after the elections :

a) We call upon this Conference to give legal status to the kamajors and local hunters and upgrade their ammunition carrying capacity for defence at community and local levels;

b) In a military regime every soldier is expected to be an ambassador for that regime but the attitude of a good number of our servicemen leaves much to be desired:

i) Negative to the objective of the government;

ii) Negative to the successful conclusion of the war, bringing about a deterioration in the already strained civilian and servicemen relationship. And since the elections will be conducted during this military regime it is proposed that the military be excluded from the security personnel overseeing the elections as they cannot be referees and players at the same time. The women propose that the services of neutral security personnel be elicited;

iii) That the RUF and all those engaged in the war declare a cease-fire and join in the electoral and political process and that this Conference advocates for peace in conjunction with the election and political process;

iv) That if men in uniform want to contest, they must resign their present position with the frame of Decree 7 and contest as civilians;

v) That persons in the government who hold cabinet positions and want to participate in the electoral and political process must make a declaration of intention within 3 months of the elections even though protected by Decree 7 with regards to their period for resignation. Such officials must divest themselves of any military personnel assigned to them as security.

4. **1965 PUBLIC ORDER ACT**

The provision states that political parties before holding public meetings or rallies must seek the permission of certain authorities including SDO's, PS, Chiefs etc. We propose these provisions be repealed and replaced by "TO inform the local police".

5. **PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS**

It is proposed that Presidential and Parliamentary elections be held on the same day and that the declaration of results be made within 24 hours of the end of polling, and a smooth handing over procedure be done immediately.

6. **PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION**

The women endorse the Proportional Representation system but recommend adequate mass education.

7. **RESOURCES**

Besides international observers, the women propose also the use of local NGO's who are *au fait* with our local conditions to oversee the election.

Finally the women wish to register their concern over the proliferation of political parties in a country of just over 2 million electorates. With just over 3 million inhabitants of this country we must now forgive and forget and come together to build a better Sierra Leone.

 **STATEMENT BY THE SIERRA LEONE MOTOR DRIVERS & GENERAL WORKERS UNION**

Mr Chairman, since the 23rd of March 1991, when the rebel incursion started, the A.P.C. Government faced it to a point but because of starvation our fighters became frustrated. This necessitated the intervention of the NPRC with a promise to end the war and they too have played their own part up to this point, but the war still continues.

This august body will agree with me that since the beginning of this senseless war drivers, being the carriers of all essential goods all over the country, have been the target of all ambushes thereby victims of any attacks by rebels.

Since the social and economic well-being of any nation depends on political stability this country also does. The effectiveness of any government is to maintain law and order, thereby creating a conducive atmosphere for its people. Furthermore, elections are meant to enable the people to choose a government of their choice, if this is accepted, elections should be held under peaceful conditions.

Mr Chairman, because of the prevailing horrible situation in the entire country and considering the condition of our displaced brothers, sisters and children who are roaming all over the country, coupled with those in neighbouring countries, we cannot at this point in time expect to have a referendum because most of our people are still in the bush.

It is our conviction that the only saving grace of this nation is to have a general election as soon as it is possible and practicable.

Mr Chairman, since this is the very first time we want to change from the old system of an election to a new one under a very difficult situation, our primary task should be to educate the masses properly so that they themselves can see the need for an election after which to start the registration of voters from camp to camp including neighbouring countries refugee camps. In the event of an election it is just to place ballot boxes all over the camps. Having collectively discussed the working groups documents exhaustively it is the general consensus of all professional drivers of this country to have a democratic civilian government which will come into being as a result of proportional representation (PR) with the support from within and outside the world to end this witch-hunt war.

The above notwithstanding, since we are now committed to the return of the country to civilian democratic rule all our actions must be seen to work towards that direction.

It is in light of this that:

1) we call on the NPRC to either repeal Decree Numbers 7 and 8 because they cast a lot of suspicion on their sincerity of propose;

2) allow the 1991 Constitution and electoral laws to operate and avoid over regulation of the electoral process;

3) urge all delegates particularly the political parties to closely look at the Draft Code of Conduct for Political Parties and Draft Campaign Finance Legislative proposals for thorough scrutiny and approval.

 **STATEMENT BY THE SIERRA LEONE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,**

 **INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE**

Objective: To discuss and agree Chamber's position which will constitute a mandate to Chamber's delegate attending the Conference.

Chairman prefaced the meeting by referring to the following issues which form the basis of discussions among others, and in respect of which working documents will be submitted by INEC during the forthcoming Consultative Conference scheduled to take place from the 15th to 17th August 1995.

A. The Security Situation and the Electoral Timetable.

B. Code of Conduct for Presidential and Parliamentary Campaigns

C. Campaign Financial Regulations for Political Parties.

D. Proportional Representation or First Past the Post System of Voting.

Members present discussed the issues and reached the following consensus:

a) Primarily, members noted that the objective of the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) in requesting for a Consultative Conference is not clear and furthermore that there should have been prior consultations before the preparation of the issues to be discussed at the Consultative Conference;

b) That the National Commission for Democracy should extend its programme to meet a larger number of the electorate in the country so as to educate as many voters as possible on various issues.

**The following conclusions were reached in respect of the issues:**

A. **The Security Situation and the Electoral Timetable**

That the elections should be held as planned notwithstanding the security situation in the country as the air of uncertainty still hangs over investment prospects.

B. **Code of Conduct for Presidential and Parliament Campaigns**

Stronger regulations should be put in place and enforced to prevent political violence experienced in the past, and offenders should be punished.

C. **Campaign Financial Regulations for Political Parties**

In order to prevent vote buying, financial regulations on the expenditure of political parties and company contributions should be put in place.

D. **Proportional Representation**

That proportional representation should be adopted as it will usher in a broad based National Government.

**Other points agreed to:**

1. Equal opportunity should be given to all political parties and those presently in government including the banned Sierra Leoneans to participate in the electoral process.

2. All public officers who wish to participate in the elections should resign from office at least three months before elections as provided for.

3. From past experiences, the role of the security agencies should be strictly monitored and be confined to provision of security only and to have nothing to do with the election itself i.e. the collection of voting boxes, counting etc.

4. Adequate measures should be taken to ensure that international observers are present at all levels of the elections.

5. Government Media -

All registered parties should be given equal opportunity to the use of the media particularly the national radio both FM and SW and television respectively. Also no party should be allowed to monopolise the airwaves.

6. Registration of Political Parties -

The three days limit for political parties to register should be revisited in order to facilitate room for merger in the future and allow other parties to merge at a later date and that the time be extended to two months before elections.

7. The 1991 Constitution should be adopted in its entirety except the replacement provision of the Electoral Commission by INEC.

In that vein, the Chamber acknowledges the fact that in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Constitution, all Commission's Reports and the White Papers should be published, in the absence of which no individual should be banned from holding an elected office or participate in the electoral process.

 **STATEMENT BY BOMBALI DISTRICT**

Chairlady, Comrades all -

I bring greetings and felicitations from the proud electorates of Bombali District in the Northern Province:

First of all, to the Head of State and Members of the NPRC Government for their sincere commitment to ensure a return of true democracy to our beloved Sierra Leone.

Secondly, to the Chairman and Members of the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) for their strong determination to overhaul the country's electoral process and to conduct a free and fair election against the background of a rebel war.

To you my fellow participants, the people of Bombali District have asked me to prevail on you so that together, we will discharge our duties in this Consultative Conference on the electoral process without fear or favour. We must also endeavour to subordinate personal desires to principles and personal ambitions to an exalted love for our country, Sierra Leone so that we will not only receive the endorsement of the people and organizations we represent, but what is far better, we will deserve their endorsement.

We in the Bombali District have a clear policy stand on the whole issue having carefully weighed the pros and cons.

Firstly, after a critical examination of the prevailing situation in our country, Bombali District categorically and wholeheartedly supports ELECTIONS in the shortest possible time for the following reasons:

(a) The people of Bombali District want to effectively participate in their own governance;

(b) They want to lessen the heavy burden of politics and government from the shoulders of our gallant soldiers so that they can better concentrate and effectively prosecute this stubborn rebel war.

Secondly, we in the Bombali District believe that the desired goal of the electoral process will be realised if the security of the people is guaranteed. We therefore request for maximum protection of our people from intimidation and other election vices from now on to the holding of elections in order to ensure free, fair and fearless elections.

Thirdly, I dare say that Bombali District wholeheartedly supports and votes for the proportional representation system of voting for the forthcoming elections. We believe that it is ideal in the present situation where the majority of our people are in Diaspora and it also suits the multi tribal and cultural nature of our political society.

Fourthly, in this new political dispensation, we in the Bombali District would not want politicians to take undue advantage of the illiteracy of our people which in effect will result in another political bungle that will lead us once again to our misery and ruin. We therefore want a vigorous acceleration of both civic and voter education programme for our people to prepare them to participate actively and wisely in political issues.

With these points, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Bombali District, I embrace the National Consultative Conference on the Electoral Process which is in progress.

I thank you all.

 **STATEMENT BY THE SIERRA LEONE WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENT**

 **(SILWODMO)**

Madam Chairperson , Delegates and observers all -

My name is Cecilia Kemah Samuels representing Sierra Leone Women's Development Movement (SILWODMO). I bring you greetings from members of my Organisation. I must take this opportunity to state that we are not a political organisation. We the women of SILWODMO

wholeheartedly support the elections which should be done under the current timetable and the return to democratic civilian rule.

We believe security is of paramount importance. We call upon the Consultative Conference to formulate effective strategies for dealing with potential sources of insecurity which include: -

(a) The RUF;

(b) Undisciplined members of the Armed Forces;

(c) Political thugs and party security units; and

(d) Disgruntled, retired, or demobilised security personnel (i.e. Army, Police, SSD or vigilantes)

The conference must pay particular attention to these issues which will cause trouble.

The women have accepted the proportional representation system but we stress and emphasize that we have effective mass education that reaches every voter, no matter how much it costs the money must be found. Without education the system will not work.

We the women call upon this Conference to respect the fundamental human rights of all Sierra Leoneans and particular those rights of the women. Every woman must be given the right to participate in the elections. We are not only asking but it is our democratic right. The party list must reflect that 55% of the population are women.

To ensure that we have free and fair elections and that the wishes of voters are respected, INEC must make a final declaration of results within 24 hours after the close of the polls.

In closing, we call upon the Government to ensure that our effort is not wasted by ensuring that we have a smooth handover.

I thank you very much and May God bless us all.

 **STATEMENT BY THE DEMOCRATIC CENTRE PARTY (DCP)**

1. **Security Situation and the Electoral Process**

1.1 In spite of the volatility of the security situation and the consequential uncertainty, the Democratic Centre Party would like to believe that with commitment and determination by all concerned in the democratic process, the odds are against the violence continuing.

1.2 The Party is not unaware of the pronouncements of the Revolutionary United Front against elections. But we in the Democratic Centre Party have reason to think that those declarations by the Revolutionary United Front are a kind of posturing inspired not only by an over-estimation of their strength, but also in the belief that goodness and justice are on their side. This Manichaean vision of revolutions - to let the world believe that the members of the Revolutionary United Front are true revolutionaries and that they are fighting a true revolutionary cause, is not sufficient to persuade us otherwise.

1.3 The Democratic Centre Party therefore is of the view that everything be done that is both technically and humanly possible, to honour the electoral timetable as scheduled. In this regard, we urge on all concerned that efforts should continue to bring the Revolutionary United Front into the main stream of the democratic process; and to ensure that when elections are held, the result should be acceptable to all the parties concerned because the elections are seen and agreed to by everybody who participated as free and fair. Such vague judgements which often accompany pronouncements by international observer groups that nothing could have altered the result obtained are understandably diplomatic and self-preserving. A free and fair election is the only guarantee for security, stability and democracy and of these, fairness is the most insidious and needs great care and attention.

2. **Code of Conduct for Presidential and Parliamentary Elections**

2.1 There is nothing new in the Code of Conduct; it is the usual and normal set of rules of good behaviour and good sportsmanship, which have been elevated to the grandiose status of code to cloth it with gravity and legality. One would expect the behaviour the code attempts to teach to be practised without the Code.

3. **Campaign Financial Regulations for Political Parties**

3.1 This requirement is normal to ensure that parties are free agents and not hostage to some powerful entrenched interests - domestic as well as foreign.

3.2 It is however unfortunate that there is silence on counterpart funding in the form of the government providing matching funds to reduce the possibility or even the probability of a party resorting to illicit funding or being held hostage to fortune. Counterpart funding should be given serious consideration - indeed, become part of the election laws. Candidature fees should also be clarified. One wonders whether candidature fees are necessary costs to be rightly incurred by the candidate personally or should become part of a party's cost generally and hence covered by counterpart funding.

4. **Proportional Representation or First Passed the Post System of Voting**

4.1 Since the proportional representation being recommended for this election is without prejudice to a different system in subsequent elections is the party list which removes the voter from the elected, a serious education campaign should now commence to acquaint the voter with the main features of the list system, such as party leadership that inspires trust, accountability of leadership, the character of the party's ethnic coalition and reach as well as the practicability of party's policy and programme including new ideas. Politics is about people and ideas - politics is a confrontation of ideas for the welfare of the people.

 **STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL UNITY PARTY (NUP)**

Madam Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentleman -

We bring you warm and fraternal greetings from the entire membership of the National Unity Party (NUP) and pray that our deliberations here will register profound success in our march towards lasting democracy.

The main objective of our party is to establish a stable centre for the promotion of peace, stability and prosperity for our country and our people. We of the NUP hope that this consultation will help us achieve that aim. With regard to issues to be considered in this Conference, we wish to state as follows:

1) That elections should be held provided there is considerable improvement in the security situation nationwide;

2) That the electoral system based on proportional representation be adopted for the forthcoming elections, and that INEC should mount a massive campaign of voter and civic education to explain the new system to the public;

3) Our party finds sections (v) and (iv) of the Draft Code of Conduct, with particular reference to rewards and inducement, incompatible with cultural practices in our country and could lead to blackmail and threats against any party. We therefore recommend that the sections be made more explicit to avoid confusion, or be thrown out;

4) That given the constraints imposed by INEC on fund-raising, Government be requested to provide a subvention to political parties to enable them to operate effectively;

5) With reference to INEC's Draft Financial Legislative Proposals, the proposals are unacceptable to our party unless INEC is willing to provide substantial assistance to the entire campaign budget of the parties;

6) In order to promote and enhance the democratic process, Government be requested to repeal legislation that impedes the effective participation of certain groups of people in the political process to wit sections 6 and 7 of NPRC Decree No. 7 of 20th June 1995 and section 76, sub-section (1)(b) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991;

7) Madam Chairman, we have among us in Sierra Leone, organisations that we call non-governmental, whose contributions in our country's development, albeit presently inadequate, have been crucial in our collective attempt to cushion the effect of the rebel war.

We would strongly recommend to INEC and NCD that they can be extremely useful in a variety of ways, not excluding the promotion of the campaign for voter and civic education;

8) Our party has reservations with reference to other sections of the programme but will reserve such observations for the working group sessions.

I thank you for your attention.

 **STATEMENT BY DISPLACED CAMPS, WESTERN AREA**

Madam Chairlady, Fellow Delegates, Observers alike -

We the displaced people of the West do fully agree, and endorse all that INEC has done to bring this nation a democratically elected government; but we are afraid that the following is at the back of our minds.

a. The present security of this state is yet to be thought of as we talk of the electoral process, due to the failure of the RUF to positively respond to the NPRC call for a peaceful solution.

b. Sierra Leone being a very small country and has been destablised by the rebel war, that has resulted in her peaceful citizen deserting their homes to unknown areas in the country and out of the country. When we talk about a democratically constituted government we firstly must think of unity amongst ourselves. Therefore, we recommend that the number of political parties be reduced to a much smaller number, this will then signify that we are all ready to destroy that which was built by the former civilian government, that thing is tribalism; this will give us credit by the international community.

c. If a democratically elected government is to be instituted, it must be done in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. We the displaced are quite aware of the fact that if the war is not ended, we will still be on the run as we have previously encountered. Everyday making new homes, anytime far away from our places of birth behind us.

d. Therefore, we are saying an interim government be instituted to do the best in ending the rebel war then a democratically elected government that will be instituted afterwards that will only have the task of rehabilitation and development programmes, instead of war.

Dear delegates, the nations's present state is very deplorable and any democratically elected government that will be in power now will give us one excuse after they have failed us; and that excuse will surely be that government put all the nation's resources into the ending of the war effort, instead of constructive nation building.

Finally, we should all know that what is wrong with Sierra Leone is nobody else but us.

Thank you

 **STATEMENT BY WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS, EASTERN PROVINCE**

Chairman of the National Consultative Conference, Chairman of the NPRC and Head of State, Members of Government and International Communities, Paramount Chiefs, Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

We the Women Delegates of the Eastern Region, that comprises Kailahun, Kenema and Kono, declare our united and considered position on the electoral process to be as follows:

1. We are anxiously looking forward to the forthcoming elections and we also appeal to the NPRC to strictly adhere to the electoral timetable already published;

2. We realize that security is the key to the whole electoral process. We the women from the war front of Kailahun, Kenema and Kono therefore demand from the NPRC Government maximum security at whatever cost to make this election a success.

In light of this, we admonish maximum security from various levels before, during and after elections.

a. Registration of all voters - Let everybody feel at home during the registration period.

b. Campaigning process of Political Parties - Let there be free movement of Political Party Leaders and members to disseminate their political ideas without fear.

c. Process of voting and counting of votes - We are asking for a conducive atmosphere during the counting of votes.

d. Final Declaration of Results - We are asking that the declaration of results be done immediately. That INEC makes the final declaration within a 24 hour limit.

e. That the handing over of the out-going and the incoming Governments should be done smoothly.

Cognizant of the above points, we believe that for Government to ensure us adequate security for conducting free and fair elections, there should be total involvement of our Armed Forces, Police Force, Kamajors and brotherly forces from other countries.

3. We want also to endorse the Draft Code of Conduct section 5 (II) which reads: Facilitate the full and equal participation of women in electoral and political processes, and we therefore recommend its approval.

That the Draft Code of Conduct as recommended by INEC in section 5 (I) be approved of - that is: all discrimination based on tribe, sex, ethnicity, class, gender or religion be prohibited, because these have served over the years as a can of worms eating into the fibre of this nation.

4. We assert that in order for the proposed Code of Conduct to be meaningful and effective, penalties for non-compliance must be provided.

We emphasize that in order for all Sierra Leoneans to know and exercise their rights, it is proper for all voters to understand the system of voting. Therefore we are calling upon INEC to embark upon more effective mass education programmes on the proportional representation system.

We are also asking INEC and all Political Parties to give us a referendum on the best voting system within the life of the first Parliament, before the next election.

 Madam Chairlady, fellow delegates, we suggest to the Government and INEC that the salient points brought up by the women from the East be taken into serious consideration for the welfare of all Sierra Leoneans.

Thank you.

 **STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NADP)**

Madam Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates and Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen -

The NADP being fully aware of the adverse situation prevailing in our beloved country Sierra Leone, congratulates INEC and the NPRC Government for convening this Consultative Conference.

We believe it is good and healthy for Sierra Leoneans to convene and debate issues affecting our return to a democratic civilian rule.

My fellow citizens, if there is going to be peace and prosperity in Sierra Leone, we must first find space in our hearts to accommodate ourselves, and view opposing ideas as a way of expanding our individual horizon to provide guidance and examples for future generations.

The NADP supports the holding of elections as per the programme outlined by INEC; but prefers that both presidential and parliamentary elections be held at the same time, so as to obviate mass mobilization to the presidential party. To ensure free and fair elections, we would recommend that international organisations be asked to monitor and supervise the elections.

We believe that the registration of voters should be witnessed by representatives of political parties who are the key players in the electoral process in order to ensure fair play.

In conclusion, I must say, we support fully the proportional representation system and support the timing of the elections.

I thank you all.

And may God Bless us all.

 **STATEMENT BY KAMBIA DISTRICT**

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates and Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen -

The Kambia District delegation of this historic Conference brings to you warm and fraternal greetings from the people of that District.

Mr. Chairman, the people of Kambia District strongly believe that it is the inalienable right of the people of Sierra Leone to be governed by the government chosen by the people themselves. They therefore wholeheartedly support the avowed intention of the NPRC Government to return this country to civilian rule through a democratically elected government. In that regard our delegation, while thanking the NPRC Government for the commitment it has demonstrated so far to the democratization process, wishes to subscribe its support to the electoral timetable which was enunciated by the Chairman of the NPRC. In adopting this position, our delegation is not oblivious of the present security situation, but Mr. Chairman, we are firmly convinced that in view of the strong commitment by the NPRC Government to the democratization process, buttressed by the very strong yearning of our people for a return to a democratically elected government, the old adage that "where there is a will there is a way" is applicable in these circumstances. Our delegation therefore believes that while maintaining the recent momentum in the prosecution of the rebel war together with the continuing peace initiatives, the NPRC is doing and will continue to do everything in its power to ensure that its solemn pledge to this nation is fulfilled and on schedule.

Mr. Chairman considering that most of our previous elections were marred by violence and corruption and, in the context of a largely poor and illiterate electorate, the electoral playing field can be heavily tilted in favour of financially strong political parties, our delegation subscribes to the view that adequate measures must be taken to address these issues. In that regard, we suggest that these measures should not only include penalties which act as a sufficient deterrent but should also include efficient monitoring mechanisms to quickly apprehend defaulters.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates and observers, ladies and gentlemen, unusual situations often require innovative solutions. Any organization or any country that ignores this fact can hardly progress. This is why, in the light of the present population distribution resulting from the rebel war and our yearning for peace, national unity and reconciliation within the context of a multi-ethnic nation, the Kambia District Delegation strongly favours the list version of the proportional representation system of elections for which a compelling case has already been made by INEC for the forthcoming elections. To ensure that these elections are free and fair, we suggest that both Parliamentary and Presidential elections be undertaken on the same day. Furthermore, we strongly urge INEC to speed up the dissemination of information concerning this form of elections and the electoral process in general to the electorate in all areas of the Provinces including those living in remote locations.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, let me say that our Delegation will endeavour to participate in the deliberations of this Conference in the spirit of the recently adopted National Pledge for Sierra Leone and we strongly urge every delegation to do the same.

Long Live Sierra Leone.

I thank you.

 **STATEMENT BY THE SIERRA LEONE PEOPLE'S PARTY (SLPP)**

1. The S.L.P.P. as a party wholeheartedly welcomes the new democratic dispensation, initiated by the National Provisional Ruling Council and wish to reaffirm its belief in the impartiality and sincerity of the Interim National Electoral Commission.

2. We are fully aware of the current elusive security situation in the country. Also, we are aware of countries which had similar or worse security problems which, through the help of the international community successfully held free and fair elections in the recent past; Cambodia and Angola to name but a few. We should also not lose sight of the fact that the democratic process has enormous potential for conflict resolution. Therefore, it is our desire, as a party that the electoral timetable as scheduled by the N.P.R.C. Government be implemented.

3. The S.L.P.P. is of the view that the present security situation will pose a lot of difficulties to INEC in administering the electoral process. We therefore suggest that in order to overcome this hurdle, INEC requests the UN and other international agencies to bring in troops and monitors to oversee the electoral process.

4. The S.L.P.P. is fully aware that one of the cardinal duties and rights of any citizen is to vote and or be voted for, irrespective of abode. We therefore expect that INEC, in collaboration with the international community, will make adequate provision for Sierra Leoneans living outside the country to participate fully in the electoral process. In this respect, special attention should be directed at countries like Liberia, Guinea, the Gambia, Britain and the U.S.A.

5. The S.L.P.P. is aware of the tremendous importance of radio and television in disseminating political views to the masses. It is also aware of the numerous cases of the misuse of the media by politicians to the disadvantage of others. In this regard, the party expects that INEC would make adequate provision for political parties to have equitable and unhindered access to such media.

6. Taking cognisance of the present state of affairs, and reflecting upon the unfortunate history of constituency gerrymandering in this country, the S.L.P.P. fully endorses the proposal for the **PROPORTIONAL** representation system, as the only credible and acceptable way out of our present political quagmire.

The S.L.P.P. is aware of the tremendous resolve, courage and stride taken by the N.P.R.C. Government, headed by Captain Valentine Essegrabo Melvin Strasser, towards the establishment of a democratic civilian government. We are also aware of the heroic and selfless action they undertook in rendering free this country from the yoke of bondage under the past regime.

Suffice it to say that had it not been for these special attributes of our current leaders, we would not have been here talking about a democratic electoral process.

The S.L.P.P. on behalf of its numerous supporters throughout the country and beyond would like to extend sincere, eternal gratitude to all of them.

Finally, may we also thank INEC, for organising this Conference, that has brought all of us together, which is reflective of the S.L.P.P. motto: "ONE COUNTRY ONE PEOPLE".

May God guide us all. Thank you.

 **STATEMENT BY THE FEDERATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS**

 **IN SIERRA LEONE (FOMWASAL)**

*Bisimilahi rahman rahin: In the name of Allah most gracious most merciful.*

Madam Chairman and all present here -

The Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Sierra Leone (FOMWASAL) is a Federation open to all Muslim Women's Associations and Organisations in Sierra Leone as well as all Muslim women who have attained the age of 18 years.

The Federation, amongst other things, aims at:

(1) educating Muslim Women of their rights, duties and privileges;

(2) creating an awareness amongst Muslim women to improve on various facets of deprivation; and

(3) encouraging and stimulating Muslim women to participate and be more active in practising their religion, *ie.,* Islam.

As women constitute 55% of the Sierra Leone population, FOMWASAL will appreciate a gender sensitive political agenda and therefore recommends that INEC intensifies its efforts to continue to educate women in order to enhance their full participation and involvement in the electoral process, including voter registration.

Members of FOMWASAL join their women compatriots to advocate for:

i. free and fair elections, using the Proportional Representation (PR) system with the provision of maximum security;

ii. mass education of the populace on the PR system;

iii. effective penalties for breaches and non-compliance of the Code of Conduct for political parties;

iv. a limit to be placed on election campaign finance; and

v. free participation of all eligible Sierra Leoneans in the electoral process; and in addition, FOMWASAL will like to draw the attention of INEC and all concerned to the following:

i. That once this Consultative Conference has agreed upon the modalities for the elections, the electoral process can only be delayed or postponed if INEC is so mandated by this Consultative Conference which shall be reconvened by INEC to decide this issue. We call upon INEC and this Conference to make contingency arrangements for the speedy reconvening of this Consultative Conference, should the need arise.

ii. Political parties must have in their manifestos, strategies they intend to formulate to enhance the reconciliation process in the present conflict situation in the country.

iii. FOMWASAL calls upon the citizenry of this nation to be fully committed in facilitating the success of the programme in returning the country to democracy through a free and fair election, using the PR system, which is the only realistic option open to this nation currently.

iv. We appeal to the people of this nation to take conscious decisions in the process of electing the leaders of our beloved Sierra Leone.

v. Finally, as Sierra Leone marches towards a multi-party democracy, all concerned, especially politicians vying for elections must bear in mind that 90% of the women and 70% of the men in Sierra Leone are illiterate (one of the highest in the world). 40% of the schools in Sierra Leone have been destroyed, and there are consequently 75% of children, aged 6-14 years, out of school - displaced serving as combatants, or forced to supplement the family labour force.

Remember, ladies and gentlemen, that **"A Nation will never enjoy democracy with such a high illiteracy rate"**.

 **STATEMENT BY THE DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY (DLP)**

Madam Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen -

1. We congratulate the N.P.R.C. for trying to maintain its political agenda.

2. The war situation - the NPRC started with all the vigour at its disposal that it was the belief of us that the war could have ended by December 1993. What has happened to the serious decline that has led to grave loss of lives, properties, cattle and plantations? That answer is urgently needed from the N.P.R.C. However, with regard to the security situation, my Party shall be making meaningful contributions at the Conference through the responsible or appropriate committee set up for that matter.

3. However, let me make reference to paragraph 4(c) of the N.P.R.C. Decree No. 7 - that there is no mention of the words REGISTERED LEASE, only the word LEASE SO STATED. Nevertheless we shall conform to the wishes of INEC, regardless of the time constraint concerning the due processing.

4. The words "in the opinion of the Commission" to be found against section 5 of the Decree in my own opinion should be seriously looked into and, if possible, be removed.

5. Section 7. Looking at this section, it would appear the Commission is restricting the fundamental right of the people to join organisations of their own choosing - "a member of any Commission established by the Constitution,...., or an employee of a corporate body established by an Act of Parliament or out of funds appropriated by Parliament shall not (with special reference to 7(a)) be eligible to be a founding member of a political party,...."

6. Representation: Let me ask the question - representation of the delegates is it proportionate as compared to some other organisations present here? What yardstick has INEC used? PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION - which is accepted by my Party.

I thank you.

 **STATEMENT BY THE UNITED NATIONAL PEOPLES PARTY (UNPP)**

1. **REACTION TO INVITATION TO THE CONFERENCE**

(Suitable Opening Salutation). The United National Peoples Party (UNPP) welcomes and is grateful for the kind invitation to this all-important National Conference. The Party also appreciates the efforts of the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) in preparing the ground and providing the enabling environment for meaningful participation by all concerned in this historic Conference.

2. **THE UNPP POLICY POSITION ON SOME SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

(1) ***THE ELECTORAL TIMETABLE & THE PEACE PROCESS***

The UNPP's **POSITION** on the issue of the **ELECTORAL TIME-TABLE** is clear and unequivocal, that is, that the **ELECTIONS** must proceed as per the **AGENDA** advanced by **INEC** and endorsed by the **NPRC** Government. The **UNPP** firmly believes, however, that the pursuit of **PEACE** is of paramount importance. We will collaborate fully in the NPRC's Government DRIVE towards **PEACE** and **STABILITY** in the country.

(2) ***THE METHOD OF DECISION-MAKING AT THE CONFERENCE:***

The UNPP considers that one of the most **SENSITIVE** issues facing the conference and its participants is the **METHOD** to be **ADOPTED** for arriving at **DECISIONS** on all **MAJOR ISSUES** of **NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE.** The UNPP agrees with **INEC,** in principle, that the **PRIMARY OBJECTIVE** of the **CONFERENCE** is to reach a **BROAD NATIONAL CONSENSUS** on how best **INEC** should proceed to ensure a **LEVEL PLAYING FIELD** for all participants in the entire electoral process. Nevertheless, the UNPP is genuinely **WORRIED,** having regard to the nature of our prevailing situation, about the **UNSPECIFIED MEANS** of arriving at the said **CONSENSUS.** The party is therefore of the strong **CONVICTION,** that **DECISIONS** on all **MAJOR ISSUES** deliberated upon at the Conference **MUST** be arrived at by means of **SECRET BALLOT,** and not, **REPEAT NOT,** by **CONSENSUS.**

(3) ***THE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION VERSUS THE MAJORITY OR SINGLE MEMBER CONSTITUENCY ("FIRST-PAST-THE-POST") SYSTEMS OF VOTING***

The **UNPP** supports, for the coming elections, the **PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM** of voting. We believe that there must be reasonably adequate **SAFEGUARDS**. For example, since the **PREPARATION OF VOTERS' REGISTERS** has in the past proved to be of a fundamentally **CRUCIAL** nature in relation to the **CONDUCT** of general elections, the **UNPP's** firm stand is that **INEC** should include the **PARTICIPATION** of **POLITICAL PARTIES,** as the **MAJOR PLAYERS** in the political **GAME,** in the **PREPARATION** of voters **REGISTERS.** In addition, the Party suggests, that **INEC** extends invitations to **NEUTRAL AND INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS** - both **LOCAL** and **FOREIGN** - to take an active part in the preparation of such registers. On the actual **DAY** of **POLLING,** the **UNPP** would **DEMAND** adequate and desirable **SECURITY** measures, including **COUNTING, ON-THE-SPOT**, of ballots cast, in the **PRESENCE** of all contesting parties. Finally, the UNPP endorses the **ADOPTION** of the **SINGLE BALLOT-PAPER** and **BALLOT-BOX** system for each polling station for all the contestants at the elections.

(4) ***THE PROPOSED CAMPAIGN FINANCE REGISTRATION***

The **UNPP** endorses the view, that it is in the public interest, and indeed good and sound public policy, to **LIMIT** the **CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURE** of candidates for public office. The Party therefore accepts, in principle, the **IDEA** of a **CEILING** on such **EXPENDITURE,** as proposed in Clause 3 (i) of the relevant Draft Proposals. However, the UNPP believes that to **IMPOSE** a **PROHIBITION** on **CONTRIBUTIONS** to political party funds (in cash or in kind) by companies, partnerships, or firms or business enterprises (presumably both indigenous and foreign-owned), or by aliens, as contemplated in Clauses 7 (i) and 8 (i) of the Draft Proposals, will be completely out of **REALITY** with the prevailing **SOCIO-ECONOMIC** circumstances of ALL sectors of the Sierra Leonean society which are mainly results of the four or more years of conflict in the country. The UNPP therefore calls for a **REVIEW** of this aspect of the Proposals.

(5) ***THE OVERRIDING NEED FOR NATIONAL UNITY, RECONCILIATION AND RECONSTRUCTION***

The UNPP is of the firm **CONVICTION**, that there is an **OVERRIDING** and **IMPERATIVE NEED** for a **SPIRIT** of **NATIONAL RECONCILIATION** and **MAGNANIMITY**, as a pre-requisite of **PEACE AND STABILITY** in our country. The Party is therefore committed to doing everything humanly possible to achieve acceptance by all Sierra Leoneans that we must have **NATIONAL UNITY** and **RECONCILIATION**, with a **SPIRIT OF MAGNANIMITY** and **TOLERANCE**. Therefore, the **UNPP** will call on all to put aside all **SENTIMENTS** of **REVENGE**, and to embark instead on **POLICIES** and **PROGRAMMES** aimed at bringing about **STABLE** and **DURABLE PEACE**. The Party **WILL NOT ENCOURAGE** any actions or activities reflective of **VINDICTIVENESS** or **WITCH-HUNTING** which will doom, our **YOUNG** and **FRAGILE DEMOCRACY** to **COLLAPSE** and **FAILURE**.

(6) ***GENERAL***

Finally, the **UNPP** reserves the right to take such positions on unspecified issues coming up for deliberation during the Conference as the Party considers necessary, in the overall interest not only of our Party, but also of the **PRACTICE** of **SOUND** and **SUSTAINABLE** multiparty **DEMOCRACY** in Sierra Leone.

Subject to the foregoing **POSITIONS** the **UNPP** pledges to co-operate with all well-meaning participants to **ACHIEVE** the laudable **OBJECTIVES** of this **MOMENTOUS AND EPOCH-MAKING** national gathering.

 **STATEMENT BY THE SIERRA LEONE ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS**

 **(SLAJ)**

Ladies and Gentlemen Fellow Sierra Leoneans -

On behalf of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists, the first thing we would like to point out is that we are attending this conference under protest.

We feel that overall representation at this conference is far from adequately democratic - and the partial and limited nature of the agenda does not cover aspects crucial to the success of democratisation, or even as INEC puts it more narrowly, the Electoral Process.

We are still of the opinion that a broad-based National Democratic Conference would be the perfect forum for all democratic forces to deliberate fully, and also for all aggrieved parties to state their cases, which would, in our opinion be a great step forward in finding appropriate solutions to the twin-questions of peace and democracy. This position is fully outlined in SLAJ's position paper of March 20th earlier submitted to authorities.

However, our members overwhelmingly voted despite all limitations, to be present and contribute to INEC'S agenda. We are a democratic Association and our constitutional and professional role ties us to democracy. This is why we are here. I will speak briefly on the main points on INEC'S agenda.

 INEC'S FINANCIAL REQUIREMENT REGULATIONS

Has INEC the mechanisms to monitor financial spending by political parties? We think the proposal will be difficult to enforce. Given the financial constraints in the country, we also believe that unless INEC is prepared to provide financial assistance or matching funds to the political parties, it would be unfair and restrictive to limit their fund-raising. We also believe the question of financial regulations is best left for determination by a future democratic assembly.

 CODE OF CONDUCT

Existing public order legislation already, in our opinion, covers most of the proposals INEC has put forward. We call on the government to renew its pledge to uphold the rule of law and its impartiality during the election process.

We also note, as journalists, that no provisions have been made for un- impeded access to the state media - which is financed from tax-payers money. We also wish to see full protection for state employees to express and uphold their political convictions.

We are of the opinion, that the 1991 Constitution should remain the basis of INEC'S conduction of these elections. In particular we affirm here that any attempt to lower the age qualification for presidential candidates would be viewed unfavourably by our members, the wider public and the international community.

 PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Given the existing security situation and the apparent concentration of the majority of the country's population in the main urban centres and in refugee camps abroad - proportional representation should be adopted as a TEMPORARY measure pending the return of the country to civilian rule and creation of a properly constituted Electoral Commission. A future government could also consider the pressing question of decentralisation and an elected local government system which should adequately address some of the fears people have about P.R'S failure to ensure area representation.

 SECURITY: TIMING OF ELECTIONS

We see elections as a possible step to breaking the existing bloody impasse in the country.

Our Associations March 20th Peace Proposals call for SLAJ to (section 7) "work with other pressure groups, peacemakers and peace movements in Sierra Leone and elsewhere to bring about rapprochement between all warring parties." We are also pledged to consult with "NPRC and RUF in the search for a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict."

We will continue to pursue the peace option. It does seem apparent that a broader national consensus can be achieved in the interests of peace and democracy. We do not see the issue as an option between peace or elections. Our Association will do all it can both to find a solution to the war and to facilitate free and fair elections.

In this regard we call on the National Commission for Democracy (NCD) to accelerate a mass political education drive. We in SLAJ are willing to put at the disposal of NCD all our resources to ensure that the people are fully educated on their democratic rights and obligations.

We also call on other democratic forces (Labour Congress, Bar Association, Political Parties) to take our Association into partnership. Together we can and will achieve a speedy democratisation of our society.

We therefore support INEC'S holding of elections in the shortest possible time.

 **STATEMENT BY KOINADUGU DISTRICT**

Madam Chairlady, Your Excellencies, Members of the Interim National Electoral Commission,

Members of the N.P.R.C. and Secretaries of State, My Colleague Delegates and Observers,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen -

On behalf of the Chiefs and the entire people of Koinadugu District, I wish to first of all express our profound thanks and gratitude to the N.P.R.C. government which, notwithstanding the ongoing rebel war has strictly followed the time table to bring back multi-party democracy to Sierra Leone. The single party system did not augur well for the people of this country because it encouraged hooliganism, tribalism, nepotism and all forms of corruption.

To the Interim National Electoral Commission, I wish to express thanks for convening this all important conference although it had been given the mandate as an independent body to conduct free and fair elections. In that regard, the people of Koinadugu District wholeheartedly endorse its recommendation in respect of Proportional Representation. That system is the most appropriate electoral system that now suits the people of Sierra Leone especially under the prevailing conditions. The old system, amongst other things, caused non-representation by minor ethnic groups which part of Koinadugu District suffered for over a decade.

Although mention has been made about the following points, I wish to re-echo and emphasise our views on them:

(a) Provision of adequate security for the electorate during the entire electoral exercise;

(b) Mass education of the people about the new electoral system as has been in existence for nearly half a century;

(c) Invitation of international observers who will work closely with INEC in the conduct of the elections in a free, fair and properly secured atmosphere;

(d) That the NPRC government continues to strictly keep within the framework of the timetable for transition to multi-party democratic rule as already announced to the people of this country and Presidential and Parliamentary elections be done together; and

(e) We the people of Koinadugu District do wholeheartedly endorse and approve the draft Code of Conduct for political parties.

With these few words Madam Chairlady, on behalf of the entire people of Koinadugu District, I extend to this Conference and the Interim National Electoral Commission best wishes for success in the efforts to bring this country to a genuine democratic civilian rule.

I thank you all.

 **STATEMENT BY THE TEACHERS' COLLEGES SENIOR STAFF ASSOCIATION (TCSSA)**

**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The TCSSA (Teachers Colleges Senior Staff Association) is a non-partisan, non-political, and non-sectarian association which aspires towards the promotion of education and the enhancement of better conditions of service for its membership in all the 6 teacher training colleges in Sierra Leone.

**AMONG OTHERS, THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

1. To provide means of co-operation and to co-ordinate the collective opinion of the members of the Association on matters affecting the interest of education in general, and the teaching profession in particular in Sierra Leone.

2. To identify and associate itself with viable educational and professional activities or projects undertaken by the government of Sierra Leone, and the administration of each constituent college; and any other organisation with aims and objectives similar to those of the Association.

3. To regulate the relationship between members of the Association on the one hand, and the employers on the other, and to advice members where necessary; and to protect their civic rights and privileges as may be necessary.

**ON THE ISSUE OF THE CURRENT ELECTORAL PROCESS, THE TCSSA IS OF THE VIEW THAT:**

1. Not withstanding the present problems faced by the country, we believe that the electoral process should be carried on in order to install a democratic government. We are convinced, based on the Liberian and Somalian examples, that only a properly constituted civilian government can disarm or enter into any meaningful dialogue with a rebel force in the quest for peace.

2. In the spirit of freedom of association, as many political parties as possible should be allowed to participate. We believe that in the course of time some parties with similar aspirations will coalesce to reduce the number of parties on the pitch.

3. For fairness in the execution of campaigns, INEC should ensure that all registered parties should have equal access to state media apparatus such as radio, television, newspapers etc.

4. For all mini- or mass-rallies, the Inspector General of Police should be notified by writing, and based on his approval, enough security should be provided to ensure the safety of participants.

5. For the safety of the electorate during polling day, we propose that:

i) An international peace-keeping force will be required to monitor the conduct of the elections from the polling booth to the counting table to eliminate thuggery.

ii) Due consideration be given to single-box open-ballot system of voting to eliminate possible rigging of votes.

iii) The role of Paramount Chiefs as registrars of their constituents and as distributors of food aid should critically be looked into so as to reduce their influence on their people in their choice of candidates.

iv) Enough international observers should be deployed on the ground to ensure free and fair voting and counting.

v) And finally, all efforts should be made to ensure that all voting be done on the same day.

 **STATEMENT BY SIERRA LEONE ASSOCIATION OF NON GOVERNMENTAL**

 **ORGANISATIONS (SLANGO)**

The Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (SLANGO) lends its total support to the democratic process. In this regard, we encourage the NPRC Government's move for a speedy transition to a democratically elected government.

However, we are concerned about the limited time available for voter education, registration and all it entails to ensure effective participation of the people in the electoral process.

In view of the above, we believe that the time of the elections should be realistically considered at this Conference.

The current security situation does not allow for the effective participation of the population in the electoral process. In this regard, we urge that Government takes adequate security measures to address this very important issue.

The present mood of the country calls for peace and reconciliation, which are essential components of the democratic process. We therefore, appeal to all political parties to incorporate conflict resolution and reconciliation as part of their political agenda.

Successive governments have not allowed for the full utilization of the potential of women in politics. In this regard, we advocate for greater representation of women in all aspects of the political process.

Regional imbalances in past governments have been a major cause for political strife. We therefore, urge that measures be taken to address this in the interest of peace and stability.

Previous elections have been plagued by violence, thuggery and corruption. We therefore, support the prescription of Codes of Conduct for the electoral process, but are concerned that no penalties have been prescribed for the violation of these codes.

In as much as some voter education is on-going in the Western Area, INEC should intensify its voter education programme, especially in the provinces. In this regard, SLANGO membership through its grassroots and community linkages and networks, is willing to participate in partnership with INEC.

Insufficient information reaching the electorate often results in the electorate making wrong electoral decisions. INEC should provide adequate information for dissemination to the electorate and provide adequate training of those charged with the responsibility for voter education.

In view of the prevailing circumstances resulting from the on-going rebel war, SLANGO supports the recommendation by INEC that the Proportional Representation System be adopted for the next election.

Thank you for listening.

 **STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE (NDA)**

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) applauds INEC for convening this National Consultative Conference to consult with a cross-section of the people of Sierra Leone on the electoral process. The National Democratic Alliance, having consulted with its membership, wish to put forward the following considered views on the four major topics to be discussed at this conference:-

A. **THE SECURITY SITUATION AND THE ELECTORAL TIME TABLE**

The election of President and Members of Parliament must be conducted simultaneously. The war should not be use as an excuse to delay the elections, as the democratic governance of the state must be seen to be put in place by January 1996.

INEC should seek international supervision of the entire electoral process, including security, from the registration of voters to six months after the handing over of government. This will ensure a stable base on which the new government can build its foundation.

B. **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY CAMPAIGNS**

The National Democratic Alliance supports the Code of Conduct as proposed by INEC in its entirety. However, the National Democratic Alliance notes with concern the absence of penalties for the infringement of, and or disregard for this Code. The National Democratic Alliance therefore, strongly recommends that INEC constitutes a committee, comprising some of its members and three members of the public who are not members of any political party, to consider complaints on a prompt basis. The Conference should determine the kind of penalties for any infringement of the Code.

C. **CAMPAIGN FINANCIAL REGULATIONS FOR POLITICAL PARTIES**

At this moment in time, the National Democratic Alliance does not subscribe to the draft proposals as laid down by INEC for party financing for the following reasons:-

a) they are complex and have far reaching implications for a developing country like Sierra Leone; and

b) they are impracticable under the present economic situation in Sierra Leone.

The National Democratic Alliance, however, recommends that section 35, subsection 3 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991 be implemented instead.

D. **PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION OR FIRST-PAST-THE-POST SYSTEM OF VOTING**

The National Democratic Alliance supports the List System of Proportional Representation (PR) as long as it does not conflict with any law for the time being in force.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, the National Democratic Alliance has as its motto RESPECT FOR ALL, and, therefore, recommends free participation of every Sierra Leonean in the electoral process so as to promote peace, unity and RESPECT for democracy.

 **STATEMENT BY PORT LOKO DISTRICT**

I bring you greetings from Port Loko. Mr Chairman, we observe today a novel venture symbolizing an end as well as a beginning and signifying a change in this nation's political history - by convening this Conference.

I, on behalf of my people of the Port Loko District, thank INEC for initiating this laudable venture. We also thank the NPRC for its co-operation without which this venture may not have been achieved.

Security

As for Security - I consider it in two aspects:

(i) The State: The NPRC, ably aided by foreign troops, has done reasonably well to relieve this nation of the persistent bugs of rebels but to no avail. We believe that peace talks must go on but, not to be considered a stumbling block to elections. We believe that the talks may contribute tremendously to moderating the war since the warring factions are no other persons but Sierra Leoneans.

(ii) Elections: We in Port Loko honestly hold that elections must go on within the time frame stipulated by the NPRC. The elections, we suggest, must not only be free, but free from fear and intimidation. We believe they should be monitored by neutral and external agencies. We honestly hope that Presidential and Parliamentary elections be simultaneous.

Code of Conduct

This is an excellent specimen of conduct long over-due; we wholeheartedly welcome it. I think the parties should impose sanctions for any wilful defaulter.

The Campaign Financial Regulations for Political Parties

We welcome this part but with some reservations to the onerous sections requiring political parties to undertake as a condition. The question of the proposed legislation in respect of this part, I think, is premature and therefore parties must be given time to study it carefully.

Proportional Representation

As explained, may not be the best ordinarily; but for now we welcome it as the most appropriate system to adopt.

Mr Chairman, fellow delegates this is pre-eminently the time to speak the truth, frankly and boldly. We have no reasons or need to shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today.

Member delegates the prosperity of this nation is now in our hands. We must withdraw our minds from petty jealousies and direct them to the conditions which the present situation of our nation impels. We warmly and earnestly embrace elections within the NPRC time frame.

I thank you all and pray for tolerance and understanding in our deliberations.

 **STATEMENT BY THE SIERRA LEONE EX-SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION (SLESA),**

Mr Chairman, Members of the Supreme Council and Secretaries of State, Your Excellencies

Fellow Delegates, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen -

1. We soldiers, whether on active service or reserve, are under oath to defend and protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country against foreign aggression, but retired Cpl. Foday Sankoh has violated this oath by waging war against his own country and her people. SLESA entreats Cpl. Foday Sankoh to come to town and hug peace now, in the name of God.

2. SLESA pleads with the UN, OAU, USA, FRANCE and her former colonies - Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso - to bring every pressure to bear on Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh to stop the destruction of their own kith and kin. Let them warn Sankoh and Taylor to desist from using their countries as a spring board to destroy Sierra Leone and Liberia. It may be theirs tomorrow. Assuming that Taylor and Sankoh had the justifications which ignited the war, but such justifications became futile soon after President Doe was killed and the APC Government overthrown. We passionately plead with these two brothers to be humane and reasonable to accept the peace overtures offered to them at various times. Let them stop killing their own people and to refrain from the day-to-day destruction of their countries. Sierra Leone and Liberia have no future in the domains of Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh.

3. It is our candid opinion that the war has reached a saturated point where it cannot be decisively won on the battle field, but on the negotiating table. Our loyal patriotic colleague soldiers have been fighting these stubborn enemies with indomitable courage and fortitude, but yet the conflict goes on with terrible dimensions daily.

4. Having critically and militarily examined events over the past four years and as of today, it will be perilous, suicidal and sadistic to go ahead with general elections while the war rages on (no matter how well meaning and sincere the intentions of the NPRC regime may be), except if the RUF sincerely decides to lay down arms under UN and OAU supervision, and even if that becomes the case, with the proviso that the following pre-requisites are fulfilled in the national interest, before elections can take place:-

a. Let the sympathetic international community help both Liberia and Sierra Leone to end the conflict through diplomacy and negotiation by the end of 1995.

b. Political parties sympathising with the RUF should also play a pivotal role by asking Sankoh to save Sierra Leone from imminent collapse, because without peace their chances of becoming President will become a glimmer.

c. Every effort should be made to bring our people back from refugee camps in the neighbouring countries and for our displaced people to return to their districts and re-settle before April 1996.

d. Produce an up-to-date Voters List for the existing constituencies by July 1996.

e. Conduct town and district council elections by October 1996. These are a must before general elections may take place.

f. General elections could then be held in January 1997 by which time a congenial and peaceful atmosphere might have returned to our shattered and devastated towns and villages.

5. SLESA finally appeals to our patriotic and friendly countries, who are meaningfully helping us today, to exercise patience and bear with us. Democracy would be demeaning if it lacked solid foundations on which to uphold its tents.

 **STATEMENT BY TONKOLILI DISTRICT**

Madam Chairlady, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen -

At a meeting held on 10th August 1995, organised by the District Officer, Tonkolili District, Magburaka, at the Kholifa Native Administration Barrie, a brief explanation on the Consultative Conference was explained and discussed by section chiefs, heads of departments, Muslim leaders, Christian leaders, chiefdom elders, and dignitaries at grassroots level on the four major issues.

i. The devastating effect of the rebel war in the Tonkolili District, has caused very adverse effects on the District as a whole. Even some of our children, wives and other relatives have been killed or abducted by rebels of Foday Sankoh.

ii. Government has made all efforts to bring the war to an end, either by military solution or by negotiation. The intervention of international communities, *eg.,* the United Nations (UN), the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the Commonwealth of Nations, and Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS), had appealed to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels of Foday Sankoh to come to the negotiation table, but with no positive result.

In view of these reasons stated above, we the people of the District are presenting our case, that every rebel activity should have political ambition, so the lifting of the ban on political parties by His Excellency the Chairman and Head of State, Captain Valentine E. M. Strasser, in his Independence Day Speech of the 27 April 1995, and the establishment of Decree No. 7 for the registration of political parties, are indications of the Government's efforts for democratic civil rule so, the RUF rebels should have no alternative but to have embraced the democratisation process currently in progress in the country.

With this, we are advocating for an election time table that may further give the rebels scope to cease fire and form a political party.

In view of the new system being advocated by INEC, proportional representation (PR), the people are appealing to INEC, if it will be implemented, to have nation-wide education through the civic education programme. If the people are properly educated on the proportional representation system (PR) of voting that will foster national reconciliation.

We the Tonkolili people unanimously agree that general elections should be held towards multi-party democracy as the Consultative Conference indicated, at the earliest possible time. We stress - free and fair elections.

The District conveys God's blessing and guidance to all the deliberations of this Conference.

 **STATEMENT BY NATIONAL REPUBLICAN PARTY (NRP)**

Madam Chairman , Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen -

I wish to convey warmest greetings to you all from National Republican Party.

We wish to thank INEC most sincerely for the importance they have indeed attached to this electoral process, a manifestation of which has made this august gathering possible.

Madam Chairman, the concept of democracy is most welcomed at this time of our political history. It is not surprising therefore, that most speakers have given their unreserved approval to its implementation.

Therefore, as a political party, we wish to make the following pronouncements:

1. That we whole hearted endorse the holding of free and fair elections and on the date already stipulated by N.P.R.C. Furthermore, we wish to suggest that Presidential and Parliamentary elections be held on the same day and for the following reasons :

i. To ensure that no undue influence is tolerated from any body or a group of people because of their political advantage; and

ii. To ensure that INEC does not overspend its resources on issues that have identical outcomes.

2. NRP endorses the Code of Conduct for political parties as prescribed by INEC. But the party is of the opinion that, issues so far raised be further scrutinized for subsequent approval in the working sessions so as to give the semblance of it being formulated by the people who would be affected by it.

3. Campaign Finances:

We as a group lend support to the views upheld by INEC on the above issue except for section 8(1): This is because we are of the opinion that INEC could direct a party in the area of its expenditure but we consider it undemocratic for INEC to determine how a party should raise its funds. We only hope that in the working sessions delegates would give appropriate assessment of its implications and accordingly recommend to INEC.

4. Security:

In anticipation of the conduct of free and fair elections in this country under the prevailing circumstances, we recommend that INEC exploit all the possibilities of maximising security during the electoral process with the assistance of the UNDP. In this vein, we also recommend that the armed forces of the Republic of Sierra Leone be completely divorced from the security arrangements.

5. Taking into consideration the very high percentage of displaced Sierra Leoneans, it is only feasible that we unequivocally endorse the practice and implementation of the system of Proportional Representation as an alternative to reactivating democratic principles and practices once more in our beloved Sierra Leone. The importance and relevance of this system at this moment of our political history cannot be over emphasized.

6. We no doubt are aware of the fact that, this is going to be a very new system of electioneering as opposed to what the electorates have been used to and taking cognizance of the high illiteracy rate in our country vis-a-vis the time available for Presidential and Parliamentary elections, we recommend that INEC intensifies its efforts on civic voter education if the exercise is to be meaningful and beneficial.

7. Provision be made in the Constitution for political parties to merge if they so desire if even after they would have been issued with a final certificate of registration.

I thank you.

 **STATEMENT BY PARAMOUNT CHIEFS, EASTERN PROVINCE**

Chairlady of this august occasion ,Chairman of the N.P.R.C. and Head of State of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Members of Government and the International Community, Colleague Paramount Chiefs,

Delegates to the Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen -

On behalf of the Paramount Chiefs from the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone (Kenema, Kono and Kailahun Districts), I Paramount Chief V.A. Dassama of Dama Chiefdom, Kenema District, make the following policy statement with regards to the Electoral Process that:-

1. In conformity with the pledge of the Head of State and Chairman of the N.P.R.C. at the First Anniversary celebrations to return the country to multi-party democratic rule, and as articulated in his Independence Day Speech of 27th April 1995, we welcome the lifting of the prohibition imposed on political activity in 1992 in Sierra Leone.

2. The N.P.R.C. Government's transition programme should not be derailed, and therefore the elections are to be conducted according to schedule.

3. Against the background of the socio-economic problems currently plaguing our beloved country, we approve the "List System of Proportional Representation" proposed by INEC for the conduct of the forthcoming Presidential, and Parliamentary Elections.

4. If free and fair elections are to be meaningful, the Government must ensure the security of the nation and all the participants in the political game, to provide a level playing field for the game to be played in a peaceful atmosphere.

This means, in short, the total involvement of the Sierra Leone Army, the Police, the local hunters (Kamajors) and our friendly foreign forces.

5. INEC (with the support of Government) must ensure that the political game is played according to the rules and regulations set for that purpose. At this juncture, let me hasten to remind INEC that there is apparently no penalty (or punishment) in the draft Code of Conduct for Presidential and Parliamentary campaigns for any violation of such Code.

6. The electorate must be given sufficient political education through the mass media (especially the national radio and television) which should be made accessible to all parties. May I therefore appeal to Government (through the S.O.S. East) to provide an F.M. radio station in Kenema to cover the East.

7. Government be reminded that a crucial feature of any electoral or democratic process is the establishment of an independent electoral commission. It is against this background that we wish to further appeal to INEC to do the following:-

a) Ensure its neutrality and impartiality; and

b) Invite international organizations to observe the forthcoming elections in Sierra Leone.

Indeed, impartiality and incorruptibility are important ingredients of any meaningful electoral process. This implies not only the neutrality of the personnel of INEC, but also the existence of procedural safe-guards to ensure free and fair elections.

8. Finally, INEC should make all practical efforts to involve the Sierra Leonean refugees in the Republic of Guinea and Liberia and those in hiding places in our country in the electoral process.

It is only when all of the above are done that we will have a credible government after the elections that will be acceptable to all Sierra Leoneans and the international community.

 **STATEMENT BY MAKENI TOWN COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman, Members of the Interim National Electoral Commission, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Colleague Chairmen of Town Councils, Fellow Delegates and Observers, Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen -

I bring you felicitations from Chiefs, elders, men, women and youths of the Township of Makeni, I also salute the previous speakers before me for their short but brilliant and constructive contributions at this august gathering, which should all serve as incentives, to emulate and forge ahead.

Mr Chairman, distinguished brothers and sisters, on behalf of Makeni Community, I take pride and privilege to represent the people of Makeni at this historic meeting in this splendid conference centre under the auspices of INEC for their quest and desire to usher our beloved nation to a new political dispensation leading to multi-party democracy.

Our presence here today demonstrates the importance that we all attach to this Consultative Conference for the evolution of a new democracy. The preparations which preceded, and now accompany this Conference, as well as the positive and enthusiastic response by both the organisers and the participants further strengthen, not only our determination, but also our resolve and hope for a better and fruitful future.

Ladies and gentlemen, in accordance with the time table set by the National Provisional Ruling Council, in its declaration to return Sierra Leone to a civilian rule, INEC as an independent neutral body, has been mandated to conduct free and fair elections. INEC, in pursuance of this objectives, has set in motion certain electoral processes which we are gathered here with the sole aim to deliberate on.

Mr Chairman, needless to say that it is a foregone conclusion that general elections are a **must** if this country if it is to take its rightful place among other democracies, so as to promote political integration and fair representations of all shades of opinions, we the inhabitants of the municipality of Makeni strongly support the holding of a general election, according to NPRC time table, to foster unity, peace and progress, and above all, to build a national democratic future.

Mr Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in carrying out this noble goal, we in Makeni urge INEC *inter alia*, to:

i) review the electoral laws;

ii) streamline Sierra Leone's electoral processes;

iii) compile the list of eligible voters; and

iv) introduce civil and voter education programmes with a view to fore-stalling violence, fraud, intimidation and massive vote rigging to name but a few.

Given the prevailing circumstances, and present trends, we in Makeni lend our unstinted support to INEC for its timely introduction of proportional representation as the system of voting for the forthcoming elections, if only the system will lay solid foundation for peace and tranquility, and indeed allow the formation of a government of national unity. We, in like manner, endorse, wholeheartedly the draft Code of Conduct as well as the draft Campaign Finance, legislative proposals, with slight amendments which we shall highlight at group discussions.

But, let me caution that we must stand firm together in the service of our people, so that the processes we have initiated are not toyed or tampered with or hijacked, in order for democracy to become a reality.

Mr Chairman, fellow delegates, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, permit me to emphasise the urgent need for guaranteed internal security arrangements, as a pre-requisite for the successful conduct of elections. Even as we focus our attention on holding elections, the prevalence of law and order is a must. Only in an atmosphere of peace and stability, can the noble ideas of INEC be achieved. It is no doubt incumbent upon the NPRC to continue to guarantee protection and security to all peace-loving Sierra Leoneans, and non-Sierra Leoneans alike to facilitate free, fair and peaceful return to a civilian administration.

This point takes me to the present security situation in Makeni Township in particular, and Bombali District in general. Mr Chairman, I am pleased to report that through God's loving mercies our area is relatively calm and quiet. Our gallant security forces, under the guidance and wise leadership of the Secretary of State, North, have been able to hold fort in defence of Makeni and its environs, free of any rebel attacks to date.

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentleman, it will be a remiss in my duty if I conclude this short address without expressing my disappointment over the visible absence of our provincial administrators at this conference. You all will agree with me that the bulk of the delegates have either direct or indirect links with the provinces. It is but fitting that in future gatherings of this nature, we endeavour to recognise the significant roles, and the active participation of our administrative officers, because they not only monitor and co-ordinate our activities but, by their training, they guide and direct all our undertakings *vis-a-vis* state functions.

Mr Chairman, allow me to stress that from this position of strength, with unity of purpose, and assuring signs of progress, we will move forward to greater prosperity which will involve everybody including Chiefs, elders, men, women, children, teachers, politicians, technocrats, administrators, *etc,*  regardless of status - united in purpose of determination to build a better Sierra Leone.

Finally, I pray for God's guidance, blessings, peace and stability for our country so that the ship of state will once more sail along calm waters.

Thank you all.

 **STATEMENT BY WESTERN AREA RURAL COUNCILS**

Madam Chairman, Distinguished Delegates -

Please allow me to congratulate His Excellency for a speech well delivered, and also the organisers of this Conference.

1. Elections should be held as schedule in the transitional programme. But if the security situation gets worse, we will advise that elections be deferred.

2. Due to our experiences we have had over the years of constituency elections, when violence was the order of the day, we will advise that the electoral system based on proportional representation be adopted and that I.N.E.C. should mount a massive campaign of voter and civic education to explain the new system to the public.

3. We in the Western Area Rural Council do support the draft Code of Conduct.

4. In order to promote and enhance the democratic process, we are appealing to the Government to repeal regulations that impede the effective participation of certain groups of people in the political process, to which sections 6 and 7 of NPRC Decree No. 7 of 20th June, and section 76 sub-section (1)(b) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 apply.

 **STATEMENT BY PARAMOUNT CHIEFS, NORTHERN PROVINCE**

Madam Chairlady, Members of the NPRC, Members of the Interim National Electoral Commission,

My Colleague Delegates, Observers, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen -

I would first of all like to register my sincere thanks, and appreciation for the honour bestowed on me, and my colleague Paramount Chiefs of the Northern Province, by the invitation extended to me to attend this historic conference as their delegate. I extend fraternal greetings and best wishes for successful deliberations on behalf of my colleague Paramount Chiefs, and myself. I would also like to commend the NPRC Government for its efforts in prosecuting the rebel war, which we hope will soon be concluded.

With regard to the subject of the electoral process, I can assure this Conference that we the Paramount Chiefs, and sub-Chiefs of the Northern Province unanimously support the proportional representation system. We have no doubt that the system is the best for this country in the democratization process at this point in time, when we are on the road to a genuine democratic system of government. Experiences have taught us that the former Westminster type of electoral process was not in the best interest of this country. It was characterised with political violence, tribalism, nepotism, corruption, and disenfranchisement of a large group of the electorate. We however wish to make the following suggestions for consideration by the Commission:

(1) that government makes adequate security arrangements for the elections;

(2) that the Interim National Electoral Commission intensifies its efforts in civil education on the new electoral system before the elections;

(3) that the position of Chiefs in the democratization process be clearly defined in order to avoid conflicts with politicians in the performance of their functions;

(4) that provision be made for the protection for Chiefs against political victimization;

(5) that Provincial Secretaries and District Officers be invited to future conferences of this nature when Paramount Chiefs are invited, so that they too can fully participate in the democratization process in their provinces and districts;

(6) that politicians be obliged to respect the institution of chieftaincy, and understand that they are subjects of the Paramount Chiefs as long as they are in their Chiefdoms; and

(7) that the election timetable be strictly adhered to.

On behalf of the Chiefs of the Northern Province, I congratulate the Interim National Electoral Commission for its wise decision to hold this Conference, which I believe, is a big step in our present democratization process, aimed at returning the country to a democratic civilian rule.

  **STATEMENT BY BO TOWN COUNCIL**

Madam Chairlady, Fellow Delegates, Foreign Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen -

I first of all want to register my appreciation and thanks to the organisers of this all important Conference for giving consideration to the Bo Town Council.

The Bo Town Council believes that true democracy in Sierra Leone, be it through the pluralistic system or Proportional Representation, can only be achieved by the degree of independence and free handedness of the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) in the execution of its duties.

While the method of Proportional Representation could serve as a better alternative yet it is seemingly clear that INEC doesn't have enough time on its hands to fully and adequately education the lot of the masses in the provinces whose benefit the very INEC is about to seek on the complexities and intrigues that could be envisaged. It is an entirely new system and INEC requires a lot of groundwork if the system is not to be sent down the throats of people. Council will advise against in respect of the foregoing at least for the pending election.

Sierra Leone has never had true democracy even under the single-member constituency commonly referred to as first-past-the-post. This is simply because what had been obtained was a trickery and covert system within an established and acceptable system. A one-party system which had been operating in Sierra Leone cannot be ascribed to as a true democracy. The system was neither pluralistic nor proportional.

Bo Town Council therefore believes that with doubtless independence of the Electoral Commission, a true democracy through the single-member constituency could be achieved with the formation of a popularly elected government and a formidable opposition. This system of true democracy operated in Sierra Leone only between 1962 and 1967 and we believe that the nation was quite acceptable to it until in 1968 when we had a system that was undefined and unacceptable.

Madam Chairlady, ladies and gentlemen, if this workable political solution is acceptable to all, then one needs to advise government to start rehabilitation programmes in the already liberated areas because in a true democracy the will of the people must be very adequately reflected.

 **STATEMENT BY KOIDU/NEW SEMBEHUN TOWN COUNCIL**

Madam Chairman, Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Members of INEC,

Colleague Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen -

I would like to first of all associate myself with the sentiments that have been expressed by the previous speakers in thanking the Chairman and members of INEC for organising this well conceived National Consultative Conference on the pending transition to a democratically elected government.

In this connection, I would like to express the hope that the views expressed at this august meeting, with particular reference to the critical issues which we believe will serve to promote long standing peace, national reconciliation and stability in this our beloved country, will be treated with the importance and attention it deserves.

Having said this, I would like to state that the position of the people of the Kono District generally on the main issues bearing on the transition process, have already been ably articulated by one of the delegates representing the District. That statement reflects the position of the Kono people including the Chairman, Councillors and staff of the Koidu/New Sembehun Town Council.

What perhaps I should like to add is that considering the fact that local government institutions are supposed to be the supportive pillars to the central government in its development efforts, it is therefore hoped that the democratic system of government that is about to be introduced will be extended to the local government institutions including the Chiefdom Administrations.

Finally, as Sierra Leone is about to make yet another beginning in shaping the destiny of this nation, I would like to observe that the health of every governmental system is the extent to which the leadership in particular and the citizens in general recognise the rule of law.

On that note, I would like to appeal to the Government, through INEC, to initiate a spirit of tolerance and national reconciliation by giving an opportunity to all Sierra Leoneans to participate fully in the transition process and the task of rehabilitation and reconstruction that lies ahead.

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 **STATEMENT BY THE *"DOUBLY FRUSTRATED"* SIERRA LEONEANS IN**

 **REFUGEE CAMPS IN MONROVIA, LIBERIA**

On behalf of all the Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia, I am hereby commenting to say that, the decision made by Interim National Electoral Commission, for having general elections is one of the basic fundamental aspects of democracy. Also it will enable us to speed up the military regime to return the country to civilian rule. Everyone is tired of the instability of this nation especially the *"dog-eat-dog"* activities in this small country.

However, I regret to say that calling for elections at this crucial stage would be an increase of the war. Elections, as it implies also is a war. African mentality towards politics has different interpretations. What suffers us greatly is a phrase - "What all of you agreed on would be different; what they would do will be different". Today our elders are all heading for the top and forgot to know that, thousands of Sierra Leoneans are homeless, they are dying everyday through this power and greed. Take for instance, in Liberia, there are over 360,000 within the outskirts of Monrovia alone. Those living in the controlled areas of the various warring factions triple this number. Our sweet home is completely in ruin. I suggest that we should find solutions to stamp out all aggressions and to end this war.

In fact, where or in what part of this country will elections take place? Elections will only take place in a situation where there is free movement in the country or complete assurance of a ceasefire is a reality, but not the opposite.

Our politicians only care for themselves but not for the man in the village. How many of these people have taken the risk to visit their brothers outside Sierra Leone in refugee camps? Some solutions I hope our politicians should find now to achieve their aims are as follows:

i) To talk to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader, Foday Sankoh, to lay down arms jointly with the NPRC and be brothers to help rebuild our sweet home;

ii) To forgive one another, have trust in one another, with sincerity; and

iii) Let our innocent people be fed and free from danger.

The most, or one of the physical aspects our people must realise is to pay us visits to understand our problems too. One tree cannot make a forest. This is not all Sierra Leoneans in Sierra Leone today. I hope organising this Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) means, bringing the country to civilian rule through elections. I want all parties involved to take note of one sensitive area, and that is, could this bring peace in the country? Could this stop the war? Our parents, brothers, sisters, are dying everyday through starvation and the gun, but solutions have not taken into consideration to stamp it out, but instead, elections. We are tired of living out of our home today, but how could we come? We who were unfortunate to go to Liberia went from bad to worse and we shall be very grateful if people could pay a visit to us, and discuss about this country's future. These collective ideas would result in fruitful progress.

We want our people to visit us in Monrovia and discuss our issues to build up our home.

 **STATEMENT BY THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY(SDP)**

Madam Chairperson, Delegates

On behalf of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), I wish to thank Dr James Jonah, for the clear and concise speech he made here today, the contents of which, I am sure, we have all taken on board. His task is neither enviable nor easy. As everyone knows, it is easier to point out the problems than to solve them. The Interim National Electoral Commission is, for instance, aware that it should anticipate problems and deal with them accordingly. But who among us can anticipate all the problems that the coming elections will throw up? There is, however, the very great temptation to blame INEC for every electoral malfunction. Given all of the problems it is going to face, the SDP does sincerely wish INEC well.

I would ask my fellow delegates to please permit me to remind them that it is our duty as politicians to help INEC to conduct a broadly successful election. We must ensure, for instance, that our parties do not resort to extra-electoral methods. We must, in particular, desist from stoking up the embers of violence or the commission of acts which smear and obstruct the democratic process. For far too long, this country has been a by-word for electoral malpractice and political violence.

Let us, fellow delegates, endeavour to depart from the old ways and prove to ourselves and the world that we can conduct our elections in a responsible and mature manner. I feel certain that we can do it if we put our minds and hands to it. In the name of the people of Sierra Leone on whose behalf we meet here, I ask you to embrace the politics of responsibility. The SDP sincerely hopes, indeed expects, that at the end of the projected elections it will be possible for all of us to congratulate ourselves on our "free and fair elections", not "free and fair fraud".

Regarding the mechanics of the elections, the SDP is happy to note that relevant guidelines will be set by INEC with our help for the impartial coverage of the elections. But I must emphasise that having agreed on a Code of Conduct it behoves us all to scrupulously abide by it. As parties move into top election gear, it becomes all too easy to ignore the rules. Let us remember that fellow delegates, let us remember that.

The fundamental question facing us, fellow delegates, and which we are here to resolve, is whether the coming elections should be conducted on the basis on proportional representation or on the Westminster-type system of first-past-the-post.

As has been said, where the former system is used, seats are awarded to the various political parties in proportion to their share of the total votes cast. If the latter, then the candidate for whom the most votes have been cast secures election. You can see at once that the differences between the two systems are greater than the similarities. It is parties which are supported rather than persons.

As we all know, proportional voting has never been used in this country. It is therefore untested. The root objection to this system is that its results in unstable coalitions. Italian governments are always cited as a prime example. Those who advocate it take the view, among others, that it expresses the various will of the people and encourages consensus politics.

The view which the SDP takes in this matter is that bearing in mind the present dire and dangerous predicament in which we find ourselves as the result of the rebel-war, we have no choice but to adopt proportional voting for now. It is not that we want it. It is that we have to. We have to deal with the current situation as it is. Politics, after all, is the art of the possible. The case therefore for proportionality is self-evident and cannot be successfully argued against.

I hope that there will be a welcome convergence of thinking among all the parties assembled here. The task of responsible leadership is to avoid irreconcilable positions. The opportunity which the coming elections give us to shape the future course of this nation must not be missed. We must put our national survival first. The SDP therefore commends PR to you.

In conclusion, Madam Chairperson, I wish to thank the National Provisional Ruling Council for convening this assembly and yourself, and INEC for all the hard work you have put into it. The SDP prays that we have a successful conference which I sincerely hope will be conducted in a friendly atmosphere and in the spirit of true patriotism.

 **STATEMENT BY NATIONAL PATRIOTIC COUNCIL (NPC)**

Madam Chairman, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen -

We are gathered here today and will be here for the next two days as a family to discuss freely, frankly and fearlessly; to reason together and to formulate plans and strategies necessary to save a drowning nation.

The task of salvaging Sierra Leone now drifting in the high seas of uncertainties, doubts and anxiety with growing and uncontrolled menace to personal safety, to life and property and the imminent collapse in the social, political and economic well-being of the state is too great a task for any man, any group of men or political party to feel worthy of it. No person, group of persons or political party can today guarantee our debased, dehumanized suffering masses anything except such promises have the backing of God the creator and controller of the universe. When commissioned by God to shepherd his people, God himself will take control of the heart and mind of his anointed leader and bring to order his ways so that whatever actions he takes, every word he speaks, every breath and heart beat of his, will be consecrated to the singular resolve of pleasing God and people.

The people however have their own part to play. They must exercise their uncontestable right of choosing between good and evil between life and death, between God's blessing and God's curses and indeed between God's choice and that of the devil exercised through the craftiness of politicians.

We want to thank the NPRC Government therefore, for voluntarily opting to give back power to the people and to give them their uncontestable rights of electing those they feel must bear rule over them. Let nothing derail this process - war or no war; ambushes or no ambushes, the destiny of this nation depends upon the relationship between the next government and the Almighty God. I believe because the word of God tells me so, that every leader and every government is ordained by God even the worst of them with a mission and a time-frame to execute that mission "The NPRC came to clear the way" and they have executed it pretty well. A leader is either an agent of God's wrath and judgement on a nation or an agent of God's favour, God's blessings and God's mercy on a nation. God being a just God will always punish offenders be they individuals or nations and would reward people or nations that recognise his sovereignty and authority over all human institutions.

I believe God is going to give us through this election an agent of his blessings, peace, mercy and favour. People of Sierra Leone, let us seize this glorious opportunity and don't let it go.

Perhaps what we need to do, is to give the NPRC the assurance that they are safe under whatever incoming government. Sierra Leone must now be politically matured to treat past leaders with the greatest respect and protection instead of disgracing them noting that what you sow is what you are bound to reap - the golden rule - "Do unto others as you want them do to you". I believe the NPRC has done reasonably well. Young as these men are, they have achieved in three years what our fathers, elder brothers, the experienced and highly qualified politicians failed to achieve in decades. They are assets to this nation. We must therefore allow the Head of State to get the glorious honour of setting a standard for other military governments in Africa to copy.

Having said this, let me now make the following policy statement on behalf of the National Patriotic Council (NPC):

(a) That the proposed time table for elections be strictly followed;

(b) That the system of proportional representation suggested by INEC be adopted for these elections considering our circumstances and situations;

(c) That we genuinely forgive and forget the mistakes of past politicians and encourage all others in exile to come back home and help rebuild what we all destroyed;

(d) That the elections be conducted on a free and fair basis devoid of all political intrigue and manipulation;

(e) If we want peace we must invest in peace and speak the language of peace:

We want to suggest that the nation and individuals no longer regard Foday Sankoh and his team as enemies but as brothers who have gone astray;

(f) We suggest that this august assembly makes a statement forgiving Foday Sankoh and his men and express our readiness to accommodate them in the interest of peace;

(g) We recommend that house owners be allowed to purchase short guns for self defence. We believe that the only advantage rebels have over the people is the guns they are carrying;

(h) To be very frank, it is not easy for rebel groups to ground arms to a government they have exchanged fire with over three years. We therefore believe that a civilian government will be in a better position to accommodate, to forgive and forget the rebels in the interest of national reconciliation; and

(i) Immediately measures be taken to register voters and to educate the masses on the proposed electoral process.

Having said these, I want to thank INEC for convening this National Consultative Conference and I pray that God will help us achieve lasting peace, security and good governance.

May God bless us all.

 **STATEMENT BY THE COALITION FOR PROGRESS PARTY (CPP) -**

 **KOMBRA PARTY**

Madam Chairman, Chairman of INEC, INEC Officials, Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Participants, Observers -

I speak on behalf of the Coalition for Progress Party (CPP) otherwise known as "KOMBRA PARTY" of which I am leader and chairman.

Madam Chairman, permit me to convey my Party's felicitations to INEC and supporting agencies for their unenviable role in this period of transition to return to democracy. To the delegates at this Conference I bring felicitations from my party for their full support of such a Conference which reflects goodwill and determination to participate in the preparatory process that will bring the greatest good to the greatest number.

Madam Chairman, the CPP - Kombra Party wishes to register the following interventions in regard to the agenda in front of us:

1. **Elections Timetable & Peace**

The CPP maintains that the NPRC timetable for national elections be respected in keeping with our goals for materializing the democratic process in this country.

The CPP therefore wishes to state its preparedness to participate and collaborate in the peace process with the present government, other political parties and other groups with resources to participate in the peace process. However, peace is of prime concern to my party. In this regard, the CPP is calling for an intensification of the peace campaign. The services of those in speaking-terms with Sankoh and the R.U.F. must be sought as well as the resources of those who are veteran peace makers, not forgetting the experienced voices of the war-torn women of our continent who have lived worse conflict situations, and survived them, through their vigilance. We have no time for sectionalism, bitterness and false pride. We have to rid our country of this cancer of disaffection by trying all possible formulae to bring the disgruntled to the conference table and hear them out, so that the torture of war can become a forgotten nightmare to our widows, our orphans, wounded, handicapped and homeless.

2. **Proportional Representation & Security**

The CPP endorses INECs Proportional Representation formula in the spirit of national reconciliation, in the context of the current political situation as it affords an opportunity for power-sharing by contending political interests. CPP welcomes both local and foreign observers in our election process at all stages from preparation of voters registers to polling day. On polling day, CPP sees as most desirable, observer security staff both men and women who should witness counting of ballots cast on-the-spot.

3. **Campaign Financial Regulations**

The CPP endorses limits to be set on campaign budgets, but regards the INEC proposed prohibition on political party contributions as suicidal at the time of such serious economic constraints. The CPP therefore advocates that this prohibition be removed or measures be taken to supplement all campaign expenses.

4. **Draft of Code of Conduct**

The CPP has no trouble with this Draft Code of Conduct and embraces it as a bench mark for parity and equity in the election process.

Madam Chairperson, at this point, I ask you to permit me to say in utmost humility that as the first woman in this country to head a political party, and present my candidature for the presidency of this Republic, I am duty-bound to fight even harder for the active participation of women on all levels of decision making, unprohibited access to economic and social structures, and protection from all sorts of violence including war. It is within this framework that my party CPP - Kombra Party encourages a 50/50 power-sharing policy at all levels of our party structure. We shall fight for this proportion of power-sharing on the national level in the political and economic sectors; and will do everything possible together with gender-oriented groups through mass education and pressure groups to create an enabling environment to sustain this party.

Equity is one workable formula by which we can solidify a culture of peace, unity and democracy.

Madam Chairperson, I take this opportunity of wishing all participants fruitful deliberations.

 **STATEMENT BY PEACE COALITION FOR SIERRA LEONE (PECOSAL)**

 ***(Representing Sierra Leoneans in the USA)***

Madam Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen -

My name is Jonathan Peters, of Peace Coalition for Sierra Leone representing Sierra Leoneans in the United States of America.

Those of you in this audience who took part in the Talking Point debates at Liberty Hall last year may well remember me as the poet of "Go Kam, Go Kam" I am here today as spokesman for the newly formed Peace Coalition for Sierra Leone, a United States organisation. PECOSAL is organised on the pKknciple articulated by Edmund Burke in 1770 to the effect that for evil to triumph it is only necessary for good people to do nothing. In favour of doing something, PECOSAL endorses the principle of both INEC and the NPRC that a democratic process must be followed in the transition from military to civilian rule. PECOSAL urges this transition without delay at the same time that it congratulates INEC in organizing this historic National Consultative Conference for dialogue between Sierra Leoneans at home and abroad, in determining the shape of our second republic that is being born.

Peace Coalition for Sierra Leone insists that true peace is not the absence of war; that unlike other forms of government, full and sustainable democracy is an evolutionary not a revolutionary process; that a democratically arranged election now does not guarantee democratic governance later; that to avoid a return to the politics of yester years, Sierra Leone now lacks the infrastructure and policies that are prerequisites for meaningful democracy, including:-

(a) a fully funded and functional justice system

(b) a well organised, disciplined and efficient civil service

(c) sufficient literacy and political education programmes to let the citizenry know among other things, how to exercise their rights and that membership in parliament and ministerial status in government are not gateways to unlimited resources of wealth that constituents can draw on at will (d) constitutional reform measures to ensure that elective politics is most unattractive to fortune seekers and power mongers - witness also the current spectacle of seventeen political parties, offering an indication that we need constitutional and political reform before we will be ready for multi-party national elections.

Because we believe that peace is foremost we have developed an acronym for addressing the situation and it spells peace thus:

PACT between warring parties leading to forgiveness, reconciliation and a permanent end to the rebel war.

ESTABLISHMENT of a representative national civilian government through a democratic instrument formulated at this conference to include the warring sides in the minority and civic groups in the majority with cessation of all hostilities as a pre-condition.

ACTION to resettle and rehabilitate displaced persons in their constituencies so that voter registration can proceed in a systematic manner to ensure uninhibited participation of all eligible citizens in the political process.

CONSOLIDATION and execution of a planned programme of economic reform, recovery and sustainable growth that will bring relief, hope and prosperity to our people living in a land that is blessed with wealth but that for too long has been cursed with political leaders.

ELECTION nation-wide first to local councils following the resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced persons, then to a national parliament as well as for the presidency of our nation.

Madam Chairperson, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it should be clear from these remarks that PECOSAL considers peace as a prerequisite and not a corequisite to free and fair elections on a broad scale. Unpopular as this view may be, we believe that in the immediate future - for a period of at least three years - we need not a multi-party system, but a non-partisan governing council of statesmen and stateswomen that will selflessly and tirelessly work towards establishing a fully functioning society based on a system of government that will make our people vigilant because it has been fashioned by them, one that will never more be hijacked by politicians whose wont everywhere in the world is to put self-interest first and national interest later. What we need first is a country of a few chiefs and many Indians not one of all chiefs and no Indians as the current political struggle involving 17 political parties eloquently dramatises.

PECOSAL is very much in favour of bi-party or multi-party democracy but, mindful of the Akan proverb that the state is like an egg, hold it too tight and it will break, let it loose and it will fall and smash, it strongly advises that the programme of democratization be an orderly and progressive process not a hurried or harried one. What Sierra Leone needs now is not the least bad system but the best system of civilian rule, first because we agree that the military government has served its time, but then, because we follow the first best option away from the mistakes of the past and towards a sensible programme that will harness our natural resources well to make Sierra Leone for once a nation blessed with wealth, also blessed with leaders and with law abiding disciplined hard working and dedicated citizens.

Because of the anxiety among many groups to change the political status quo, too many calls are being made here for keeping to the NPRC time table for relinquishing power by January 1996, while asking for a democratisation process, prior to elections that could take the two or even three years PECOSAL proposes. Let the truth be heard. About ten years ago, people danced in the streets when Brigadier-General Joseph Saidu Momoh became President because they thought he would usher in the millennium, but they got tired of him after six years of 'stagflation'. Just over three years ago we all celebrated the NPRC's coming into power with Captain Valentine E. M. Strasser at the helm. Cries of "saviour" and "redeemer" were heard. Now people are so tired with the military junta that they want any kind of civilian government possible as long as the military goes, even if it means an impossible agenda for elections by December 1995 and even if it means bringing to power the very type of politicians who helped to run the economy into the ground in the first place. People of Sierra Leone, when will we learn?

The truth of the matter is that it takes much more than a political structure to get economic progress and much more than a single leader to achieve success. Our problems, even the war, have an economic basis and unless we reform our political and economic infrastructure regarding justice, government, economic policy and management, three years from now or in a lesser time we will be looking for fresh redeemers. It is for this reason that as I've already said, the implementation of multi-party democracy must come in carefully planned and wisely executed stages. And it is for this reason that we are proposing an interim government including all interested parties.

Finally. We pipul dem, den nor say kappu sense nor kappu word? We get for tap dis go kam, go kam between waa en peace en tell waa say go, go, go en peace kam, kam, kam, kam siddom.

 **STATEMENT BY THE OSLO PEACE CONFERENCE**

 *(Representing various groups of Sierra Leoneans abroad)*

We the delegates of the Oslo Peace Conference view with dismay the development of war and politics in Sierra Leone and think it is a matter of patriotic duty to effectively and objectively raise our voices against this race to elections, abusing and misusing that word called democracy.

This is not the time for politics. We should therefore address the question - is this the type of conference we should be having? Given the fact that Sierra Leone is in a state of war, social and economic deprivation, breakdown of the infrastructure, the insecurity and lack of confidence in the people, we therefore call upon the NPRC, Dr James Jonah and all fellow Sierra Leoneans who feel that this is the time for democratic elections to seriously reconsider this timetable and instead, set in motion a procedure for the selection of a national representative government.

Fully aware of the devastating and tragic consequences of the current conflict in Sierra Leone, the Oslo Peace Conference which represents various groups of Sierra Leoneans from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Norway and Denmark having debated:

M On strategies for achieving an effective cease-fire and ending of hostilities,

M On strategies for bringing factions to the negotiating table,

M Role of the international community in the peace process, and

M On the transitional political process and return to civilian and democratic rule;

came to the conclusion that the general elections be postponed until peace, social and economical rehabilitation have been achieved.

On strategies for achieving an effective cease-fire, we recommend the empowerment of an impartial and independent international commission as the principal actor that will identify Sierra Leoneans to help in contracting and instilling confidence among all parties in the cease-fire and peace process.

Furthermore, immediate steps should be taken to provide relief and the basic necessities to citizens to help buttress the cease-fire and ensure smooth transition to peace and stability.

On strategies for bringing factions to the negotiating table we recommend that efforts should be made to clearly identify all forces involved in the conflict and to solicit the advice and help of organisations and government in establishing firm lines of communication with and between all these groups with the aim of bringing them fully into the peace process.

On the role of the international community, we note that while troops from the ECOWAS countries have played and may still be playing a helpful role in Sierra Leone, realise their role is now becoming contentious and is being seen by the RUF as an obstacle to peace, we therefore call for an open and honest re-examination of the position of foreign troops vis-a-vis the peace process.

On the transitional political process and return to civilian and democratic rule, we commend and support attempts by the government to facilitate a transition to democratic civilian rule, including the lifting of the ban on political parties, the starting of an electoral process and the convening of a National Consultative Conference. We do however, express deep concern about the decision to hold elections at this critical time in our country's history and strongly urge that the Government postpone the elections until peace and stability are restored.

We appeal to all political parties and groups in Sierra Leone and abroad to postpone participation in the electoral process and make the search for peace and stability their priority. We call for the holding of a broader national peace conference with representatives from all sectors of Sierra Leone society including the NPRC, RUF and all political parties.

We propose that the agenda and the mandate of the national peace conference include:

1. Ensuring a complete and permanent cessation of the conflict;

2. Creating a political transition process including the setting up of a transitional or interim government of national representation; and

3. Devising a national rehabilitation and economic reconstruction programme.

**CONCLUSION**

Madam Chairperson, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, we are under no illusion about the complexities of the situation facing Sierra Leone, nor are we naïve and consider or believe that peace reconciliation will be easy to achieve when the whole present governmental-system and rebel activities are wrapped in mistrust, misinformation, the lust for power, ignorance and greed.

We therefore hope that peace and reconciliation will be paramount and be given priority over the call for general elections.

If we wish to have true peace we must give it a soul. The soul of peace is love. It is love that gives life to peace, more than victory or defeat, more than self-interest or fear or weariness or need. The soul for peace is love, which comes from the love for God and expresses itself in love for man.(Pope John Paul VI)

Thank you for your attention.

 **INEC'S APPROACH TO CIVIC/VOTER EDUCATION**

 **BY THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER, EAST**

 **MR IBRAHIM M. SESAY**

Madam Chairlady, all other protocols observed.

My business is to outline the main steps taken in the voter education campaign so far. Voter education started in April, 1994, immediately after the Commission came into being. This was due to the Commission's conviction that the business of good governance starts at elections. Prima facie, therefore, it means that the electorate who eventually cast their ballots in favour of the candidates must be adequately prepared for the task.

The only way the Commission can ensure this is to educate them on a day-to-day and month-to-month basis, in order to make them aware of the things required of the Commission, the electorate and the politicians.

In this vein, it became necessary to test some of the instruments to be used. In about May, 1994, a Pilot Education Programme {dubbed Public Education Programme (PEP)} was done in one chiefdom per district and the Freetown East Two Ward, as part of the Commission's Pilot Voter Registration Programme (PVRP). The main aim of the civic/voter education component of the PVRP was to examine the extent of voter apathy and to ascertain the efficacy of the methods to be used in the overall voter education drive.

The pilot education employed the services of three civil society organisations because of certain particular attributes which they exhibited - we were convinced that these organisations had branches all over the country, and each had employed methods which captivated the majority of Sierra Leoneans at some point in time. Therefore, bringing their experiences to bear on the process would yield the desired success. These organisations were:- the Health Education section of the Ministry of Health, because we were very impressed with the way they handled the child survival project or the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI); the National Social Mobilization Secretariat (NASMOS), which by then was a vibrant organization advocating political awareness all over the country; and the Civic Development Education Centre (CDEC) at Kissy Road which had groups in many schools and chiefdoms in the country, and they do the same thing as NASMOS - only that they have some academic outlook in some of their programmes. So we thought that the trio would help the process.

 After the Pilot Voter Education and the concomitant Voter Registration, however, the Commissioners as well as the personnel who took part in the registration were convinced that the public education programme was far from being satisfactory. The first problem was the inability of the trio to meet the targets set at the outset. This was because the three organisations ran counter to the plans which were stipulated for that project. For example, the bulk of their personnel were taken from Freetown to work in districts that they hailed from. The problem here was that somebody who comes from Bumpeh Town, for example, and who has been living in Freetown for the past ten or fifteen years may be largely removed from the local society and, therefore, may not be the best type of person for the exercise. In the Commission's conviction, the inclusion of people in the local environment would increase the level of rapport and the success of the venture.

Secondly, these organisations were to show neutrality by refraining from chanting the slogans of erstwhile political parties or whatever organisations. This is because the Commission is an independent body and that independence must be seen to operate. In addition, the message they were to give out was to be the standard message from the Commission.

However, when these people went out to the field, even though I took pains to explain this neutrality to them during one of their training sessions, they got this message wrong. In Bumpeh chiefdom, for example, they told the Paramount Chief something like this: "Look, all that you have been doing is not what we are concerned with. We are independent, we have no business with Paramount Chiefs". Then they went straight ahead to talk to the people. So they ran into problems because the people could not respond to them. They had to come to Bo and the District Officer had to sort certain things out. And all of this contributed to the problems. We were of the view that it was because the personnel were taken from Freetown and not from Bumpeh chiefdom itself, even though they hail from the chiefdom. But notwithstanding, elections being self-publicity events, the registration programme was highly successful.

After the pilot, the business of the Commission was to chart out a clearly defined policy with clearly defined stratagems to achieve those policy objectives which would end up educating the mass of the people about elections. This was buttressed by a number of teams from the European Union (EU), United Nations (UN), the Commonwealth and the Swedish International Development Association (SIDA) who reported that the registration was alright but the voter education was not good.

We had a problem and we had to correct it. As a starting point, the Commission set up the Civic/Voter Education Department. This was done in such a form as to include two international experts and two Sierra Leonean experts. The use of these would be helpful and this department is currently working closely with the Publicity Department in the Commission. The Civic/Voter Education Department designs our programs and ensures that the messages are standard. This would forestall misrepresentation or misinterpretation of our messages. Even for posters and t-shirts, we inscribe "Designed and published by the Civic/Voter Education Department of INEC".

Once that department had been formed, we were set to do public education. But this occurred at a time when the ambushes started on the highways and most parts of the country could not be accessible. This stumbling block created the necessity for the voter education to be phased in a cascading manner. In this system, the main towns, i.e., Bo, Kenema, Makeni and Freetown, which were safe havens for the fleeing rural population, became the starting centres for the campaign because it was assumed that they were holding up to half of the population of the country. By the time the process took on the district headquarters, about 70.00 per cent of the population would have been accounted for.

In terms of instruments, we needed the mass media. In this respect, the electronic media, especially the radio, were most important. But the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (S.L.B.S.), supposedly the most popular radio in the country, sometimes becomes a largely Western Area affair. Although it hardly covers up to 60.00 per cent of the nation, we had to use it. A programme was charted in April, 1994. It is regular and runs from Sundays through Thursdays on radio and from Mondays through Fridays on television. It is done in English, Mende, Temne, Limba and Krio, which are the main dialects in the country.

The radio would reach people we could not reach physically but some areas in the south-east and northern interiors were still out of reach to the SLBS. Possibilities were thus explored to take care of the problem of limited cover and fortunately a network of radios could be tried. Thus, Radio Romankneh AM 1520 in Makeni was contracted, as was Radio Kiss 104 in Bo. The former has a more localised operation, centred on Makeni and its environs, but the latter has a larger latitude of operation. The same programmes carried by the S.L.B.S. are the ones that are aired by these stations.

Next, we asked the Elections Officers to monitor the radios from their respective districts. The result was that the messages were not reaching Kenema, Kono, Kailahun, Koinadugu and Pujehun districts. There was, therefore, a dilemma. The urgent need for a nationwide radio coverage became paramount, in order that the messages would reach far and wide.

Friendly organisations were contacted and we were lucky to have the European Union to agree to give the SLBS a new transmitter that would cover the whole country. This will aid the voter education programme of the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC). I am sure that you may have heard the announcement on the S.L.B.S. Radio that this donation has been made. The E.U. has signed the contract to facilitate the transaction with the company overseas. Very soon we shall have the messages reaching everybody, everywhere.

With this success, the Commission is well on the way to fulfilling one of its basic functions as spelt out in the N.P.R.C. Decree No. 1 of 1994, which set up the Commission. The Decree mandates the Commission "... to educate the electorate on the electoral process and its purpose". Failing to do this is like failing in our duties. Hence, the Commission is doing everything possible to register success in this regard. We may not have done well up to now, but we are still in the process of doing very well after now.

In addition, we are utilising the SLBS Television. This facility may be highly localized in operation, being effective in the Freetown Peninsula area only. Those who have access to this facility, the affluent few, could be sensitized. The same programmes which are recorded for radio are the same that people will see on television.

The argument for sustaining the TV programmes is that literate people tend to be so ignorant of political developments in the country, and they may be potentially more dangerous when it comes to matters of misinformation because the illiterate ones tend to swallow hook, line and sinker whatever they hear from the supposedly educated ones. Sometimes, therefore, we should educate those of us who went to school first before educating the illiterate ones. The illiterate people seem to be very receptive because they will receive, understand and do as told. The educated ones will receive, fail to understand and fail to do. So the problem is one of trying to change the mentality of people, with a view to making them understand the basic messages.

The next thing we want to start is the village-to-village, town-to-town and door-to-door campaign. In this we have a friend in the British High Commission, who have donated five refurbished land rovers for use in this phase of voter education. These will be fitted with audio/visual materials.

We hope to go from place to place educating the people. We shall have road shows, for example. These will be very good because some of the programmes we put on the S.L.B.S. television could be shown in a village or some other locality for free. The public address system will be used to announce information necessary for the public.

As we are grateful to the British for the land rovers and the European Union for the Consultants, so we are to the United States Embassy for the sponsorship of the programmes you hear on radio and television.

These programmes would reach everybody everywhere with time. Another way of ensuring this is exemplified by what you see outside the plenary hall - the Voter Education Stand with education materials. We have produced car stickers, one of which reads "INEC, ENSURING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS". The other reads "THE FOOTSTEPS TO DEMOCRACY". And still another says "THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS". This is the most important message that this Commission wishes to sell to the people of this nation.

This message stems from the INEC logo which is a symbolic representation of a man dropping a ballot into a ballot box. It means that your single ballot is the most important weapon that you have. The moment you cast a vote for a party or a candidate, you sever part of your responsibility, personality and rights to somebody else who will arbitrate or take decisions on your behalf. Therefore, at the time of casting your ballot, you are making a most important decision in your life. What the Commission wishes is that people should realise that the future of this country depends on that ballot and it is in their hands.

We also have fliers, handbills and posters. These will also be distributed in Bo, Freetown, Kenema and Makeni as first phase start-up. The other districts will be serviced as the security situation improves. In addition, there are t-shirts that carry the following messages: in front we have "THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS" and at the back it reads "INEC, ENSURING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS".

These t-shirts and other education materials will be distributed free of charge. The Voter Education Department is pleased to announce that each delegate in this hall will be given one t-shirt as a take home gift. In addition, you will each have car stickers, hand bills and posters as samples you can show around. Those who still care for some 1995 INEC calendars may take a few copies. Mark you, the calendars were not printed to convey the same message as normal lunar calendars that only count days and months. These ones were designed to serve the purpose of educating the public on issues germane to the electoral process. They are of superbly demonstrated artistic and graphical illustrations which could be easily understood. It is a twelve-page calendar, scaling the main footsteps to democracy and displaying the INEC activities from the refurbishment of the headquarters building to the holding of Presidential and Parliamentary elections in December, 1995; if the N.P.R.C. election time table should hold. It is, therefore, very educative and a must for every home in this country.

Newspapers are also used extensively. One way of letting the public know what we are doing is to put out announcements for tender for whatever we do. Even changes in dates stipulated for certain activities are announced. Also, the Commissioners easily grant interviews to journalists who sometimes come without appointments. This is part of our open door, open book policy. These are all channels by which the public can be enlightened on issues of vital importance to the forthcoming elections.

At this point it is proper to stop and encourage questions, so that some of the things lingering in your minds would be clarified. I thank you very much for listening.

 **REGISTRATION OF VOTERS**

 **BY THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER, SOUTH**

 **PROFESSOR H B S KANDEH**

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen:

First of all I will start with the legal basis for voter registration. The 1991 Constitution stipulates that voter registration should be carried out every three years. There is also the Electoral Franchise and Registration Act of 1961 which has been amended several times and which lists the procedures for voter registration in detail. These regulations have been with us for a long time, but most of us are not familiar with the procedures. That is why the Commission has decided to consolidate them and put them in a contemporary format so that they will be accessible to all of you.

When INEC was set up last year, one of the first tasks embarked upon was the Pilot Registration of voters. The reason for that was because we did not then have access to all of the country and we wanted to adopt a system that would be a lot more visible than what had been applied before. In the past some voters did not even know that they had been registered and most people took the chance of going to their nearest polling station to see if their names were on the register. So in the Pilot Registration we decided to adopt a procedure which would make the entire voter registration system very visible and transparent.

The procedures used in the pilot were as follows: first of all we informed all communities as provided in the Franchise Act, ten days before the actual start of registration. And before going to any community, we would again, through the Paramount and Section Chiefs, inform that particular community one or two days before our registration teams arrived in the area. This was to ensure that people in those communities would wait for our registration teams.

We decided to canvas people because we know there has been a lot of apathy to elections in this country. In the past people did not bother to register, because they saw no point in even voting. They complained that usually on polling day boxes were stuffed with marbles by party stalwarts. We therefore decided to go to every dwelling and contact all families. Those in institutions like hospitals were also canvassed, as well as those we considered as the floating population, who have no fixed abode - those who sleep in markets or similar places. The idea was to get to every Sierra Leonean and give every Sierra Leonean an opportunity to be registered.

The central point of our registration system, was that we would only register eligible voters who were actually seen by Registrars. If a Registrar went to your house and you informed him that there were ten eligible voters in your house but only three were present, he would only register the three present. He will inform you that he will call back at the house to register the absent people when they return. Even if we know your family quite well, we will not register any absent member until we actually see him/her at home, because we want to avoid the fraudulent practices that were going on in the past.

All those registered will be issued with an ID Card. The ID card has a unique serial number which belongs only to you and will later on be used to locate your name on the voter=s list. You will have to present this card before you will be allowed to vote on election day. The ID card will also be unique to a particular Registration Area because we are insisting that you can only vote in the same area where you were registered. We know that a lot of the population is displaced, but because of time constraints you will have to vote where you were registered for this particular election.

In addition to the ID Card, the Registrar will affix a dwelling sticker on every building or dwelling visited. The sticker serves as a check to indicate the dwellings in which registration has been carried out.

If you see a particular part of a town with no dwelling stickers at all, then it is obvious that we have not carried out registration in that particular area, and it should be a cause of concern for that community who should immediately complain to INEC. They should demand that a team be sent to complete registration in that part of the town.

So the basic steps of the field registration are as follows: first inform the whole country that the registration is starting and that has to be ten days before the teams actually start. Then each community will be informed in advance of the specific dates so that people do not wait indefinitely for a registration team to show up. The registration itself is a very quick process of identifying those eighteen years and above, registering them, issuing them with ID Cards and fixing dwelling stickers on their dwellings. Following this, people can continue with their normal life as the team moves on to another household or settlement.

 All completed forms, compiled by the field registrars are returned to INEC Headquarters, where the information is computerised and the actual voters' list prepared. This initial list is known as the Provisional List of Voters and it has to be displayed to the public..

 Again we start out by giving notice that we are going to display the list that has been compiled. We know this did not happen in the past. We will send this provisional list back to the same communities where the information was collected in the first place. There is a fourteen day period during which the list will actually be displayed in each community, so that people can go and check whether their names are on that list and their ID numbers tally with what is on the list. If your name is not on the list, you can make a claim and your name can be added. If you notice names on that list which are not supposed to be on the list for that community, then you can object to such names. For example if you notice that a twelve year old has been included in the list, you as a member of that community, not just because you belong to a different party, but as a member of that community should point out that there is some false information on that list and that the particular person is not an eighteen year old and therefore should not be included.

You therefore have an opportunity to object to a name and an opportunity also to include your name if you had been omitted during the field registration. There are revision courts to resolve these claims. If you know that somebody is a Guinean and therefore should not be registered, the person objected to is given the objection notice and given an opportunity to respond and challenge your objection in a revision court which will be held in that particular community. The revision officer would have the final decision of whether to include or exclude names from the provisional list after which the list becomes final. After the provisional list has been finalised in agreement with members of the community, the final list will be prepared for use at the polling stations.

We have suggested a phased approach in terms of the registration exercise, because we know that at the moment not all parts of the country are accessible. We know that all of the regional headquarters (Freetown, Bo, Kenema and Makeni) are accessible and secure, and that although there may be problems in the environs of these regional headquarters, there is security within the headquarters themselves. Therefore in terms of a possible starting point we thought that as a first phase we could carry out the registration in these Regional Headquarters. Following this, if the security situation permits the second phase would extend to the district headquarters. But we know that neither Kailahun nor Pujehun is accessible to us at the moment. So probably for those two areas we would have to use surrogates like Segbwema and Gondama Camp. Now the aspect that we have to be very careful about and which we at the Commission do not want to provoke is that we do not want to carry out a registration exercise which will create more tension, or more problems in the country than we have at the moment. You all realise that large areas of the north are accessible. For now, registration can be carried out in most of Koinadugu District, Bombali District and some parts of Kambia.

But there will be a problem if we at INEC decide that because of security we will concentrate the registration in those parts of the country that are considered safe as was done in 1992. We will have a lot of complaints from areas that are left out. Already there are complaints that, INEC is planning to exclude areas from the south and east and is only concentrating on those parts of the country which are considered relatively safe. And therefore we would have destroyed the very foundation of the exercise of uniting the country. So for every phase we have to ensure that there is parity. The first phase will include the four regional headquarters so every region is represented. Then the next phase will be all district headquarters, which means all district headquarters in the country are included. And if the security situation permits we will move down to all chiefdom headquarters.

The decision whether to concentrate on district and regional headquarters for the registration and the election is also something that will be discussed at this Conference. We have been talking about when to hold elections, but have not largely addressed where to hold the elections because of the security situation. I think the voter registration will be a very important test case to assess areas of the country where elections can be conducted later.

What role will the political parties and members of the community play? There is provision for local and international observers in the electoral process. The Electoral Laws make provision for political parties to take part in the voter registration exercise. At INEC, we had planned to carry out the voter registration before political parties were registered, so that there would be less interference. However we now have to do the registration after the political parties have been registered so what role should they play? We at INEC had indicated that we would want them to be very active at the display stage, after completion of our field registration. So during the display of the provisional list, the parties can check the list and help us to finalise the list. However because they are now on the scene, they can observe but definitely not interfere with the field registration exercise and have comments which later on we could use to up date the final list.

Members of the community are going to be relied on much more than the political parties. If our registration team gets to your area and you find out that they are doing things which they are not supposed to do, according to what you have been told, you should inform the INEC regional office that things are going wrong in a particular community. We do not want padded lists, or a voters' list with a lot of false information. If there is going to be any problem with the elections, that is where it will start, because every body on the list with an ID Card will be entitled to cast his ballot on polling day. If we do not check to make sure that only the right people are included on the list, then the basis for problems starts immediately at that point.

I think you will definitely have a lot of questions from this very brief presentation in terms of what the procedure is for registration. Looking at eligibility requirements, you should be a citizen, you should be eighteen years and above, you should not have been convicted of any electoral fraud in the past and you should not have been declared mentally unbalanced by a court of law.

On the question of proving citizenship, we are going to rely a lot on our traditional leaders in the communities to indicate to us members in that particular community, who are Non-Sierra Leoneans.

 **INEC'S PREPARATION OF THE ELECTORAL LAWS**

 **BY THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER, NORTH**

 **ALMAMI I CYLLAH**

Most students of jurisprudence agree that a democratic state's most important law is its constitution, in fact, the constitution is sometimes referred to as the supreme law of the land. Very few constitutional thinkers however, appear to have analysed the relationship between a country's constitution and its electoral laws.

The usual sequence of events in the evolution of a democracy is that the people would by some device, however rudimentary, select their representatives who would in turn adopt and promulgate a piece of legislation we have come to know as the Constitution. This evolutionary sequence clearly demonstrates that the electoral laws of a democratic state must, of necessity pre-date, not only its constitutional laws but all other statutory laws. It is obvious therefore, that the electoral laws of most states, including Sierra Leone, have their genesis in customary or traditional law. With the passing of time these customary laws should give way to modern statutory laws so that the process by which we select our leaders can be orderly and efficient.

The world is entering into an age of representative governments where democratic values are becoming widely accepted norms. Democracy appeals to our basic sense of existence, values and justice where the inalienable rights of the people to play major roles in deciding their destiny(ies) are recognized. Democracy supports peace, by leading to responsible and responsive governments. It fosters development, by promoting the free flow of ideas to prevent decay.

Issues of good governance are high on the international front and in recent years, decisions to determine the future of many nations were made by the number of elections held world-wide. Transitions to pluralistic societies and governments have taken place on an unprecedented scale, reflecting the hopes and aspirations of people for the opportunity to participate in and build a more secure future.

Representative governments, transparent and accountable governments and administrations, in all sectors of society are indispensable foundations for the realization of social, economic and moral development. There will always exist the interdependence and mutually reinforcing relationship between representative, responsible government and development. Democracy ensures that decisions are taken with the fullest participation of those who will be affected and aimed at participatory self-governance. Inherent in the concept of democracy is that it grows from within, from sideways and from below rather than being imposed from the outside or from above,

The growth of a culture of democracy is an ongoing process. The fact that there is no instant democracy, there is therefore no definitive and final state of democracy. We note that governments and people are capable of trampling upon and destroying democracy and each generation must therefore continue to seek, nurture, sustain and create new avenues in order to promote and protect it.

The end of the cold war has swiftly brought in an era of transformation in many parts of the world. In others it precipitated a remoulding of societies moving towards change for growing domestic pressures. There is now a window of opportunity and hope for democracy in Sierra Leone, perhaps a unique moment in history to be seized. It is a significant and welcome development towards the end of over a quarter century of economic mismanagement, disfigured by systematic denial of democracy and violations of human rights and steeped for the last four years in violence and unnecessary killings of our people.

An important institutional expression of democracy is the holding of free and fair elections. However, elections are not enough as it is evident in the past that, it is possible to hold formal elections without sustainable democracy. What happens before and after elections is as important as the elections themselves. The rights and obligations of oppositions and governments; the role of the media, be it print or electronic; methods of voter registration; and above all the electoral laws that will govern political participants are few issues central to elections.

The importance of electoral laws is rooted in the fact that no democracy can come into existence without them and as we in Sierra Leone have learnt the hard way, no democracy can be sustained if its electoral laws are not respected.

The electoral laws of any democracy thus require a long term perspective taking all election elements into account. The electoral laws must provide for popular participation of voters, candidates, and equal access in the electoral process. When serious doubts are raised about the fairness of an electoral system, additional safeguards - an added measure of transparency - should be introduced even if the law meets an otherwise acceptable standard.

It cannot be overemphasised that respect for the electoral laws of Sierra Leone at this juncture in our history is crucial to the development process. More and more countries around the world are coming to the realisation that a key element in their development strategy must be a well organised and efficient electoral system based on well respected electoral laws. Respect is the key word. History has shown that disrespect for electoral laws is always a prelude to the breakdown of democracy. Wherever you find that the electoral laws are being flouted and abused you can be certain that the Constitution is in danger. Since it is the electoral laws that gave birth to the Constitution and when it is abused and misused its offspring the Constitution becomes anaemic and dies.

 EVOLUTION OF ELECTORAL LAWS IN SIERRA LEONE

As mentioned before the early electoral laws of most countries are based on traditional or customary laws and practices. Sierra Leone is no exception in this respect. In theory our traditional methods of electing leaders gave way to limited franchise in 1951 while Sierra Leone was still under British rule. By 1957 this country enjoyed full franchise status and was well on the way to political independence which was achieved in 1961. The first general election after independence was held in 1962 and is reputed to be the fairest and freest election ever held in Sierra Leone. The next election was held in 1967 and some say that it was the last election in this country with any semblance of fairness or freeness.

All would agree that we have had a very checkered past as far as elections are concerned and all will also agree that we have no one to blame for our plight but ourselves. I want to suggest to all present that in order to overcome our present difficulty, the interest of Sierra Leone must be put above all other interests. It must be put above food and drink, above money above political favours and most of all, it must be put above winning.

There are some practices which perhaps have their roots in our traditions and which by themselves are worthy and wholesome habits but which have no place in any election system. Take for example the problem of treating - the practice of providing food, drink and entertainment for the purpose of influencing how people vote. There has always been a prohibition against this practice in our electoral laws but how many of us have made a conscientious effort to uphold and respect our electoral law in this respect? This is why I said that we must put country before food and drink or anything else. In the coming elections the stakes will be very high and I want to take this opportunity to appeal to the electorate not to sell their electoral birthright for any price whatsoever.

 INEC'S MANDATE AND POLICIES

Any casual observer of Sierra Leone's electoral history or of its present socio-political condition will readily conclude that remedial action is necessary. To its credit the NPRC sought to provide a remedy when in his speech in November of 1993 the Head of State announced the establishment of an Interim National Electoral Commission. This announcement was put on a legal basis in 1994 with the promulgation of the Interim National Commission Decree Section 4 of that Decree sets out the functions of INEC. It states, inter alia, that the Commission shall be responsible for the conduct and supervision of all public elections. The Commission accepted this mandate with the firm understanding that any election over which it presides will be fair and free. To this end INEC formulated the following policies for electoral reform: -

(a) That the electoral laws should be easily available to everyone in the simplest possible form;

(b) That the Commission's status and responsibility must be reflected in the electoral laws;

(c) That the electoral laws should be sufficiently flexible to deal with situations which may arise as a result of the current social conditions;

(d) That the whole electoral process should be open and transparent;

(e) That there should be an adequate appeal procedure for persons who are aggrieved by the action of electoral officials;

(f) That there should be reasonable time limits in the electoral laws so that political parties, candidates and the Commission itself can have sufficient time to meet their legal obligations;

(g) That there should be no compromise with respect to the secrecy of the ballot;

(h) That all necessary measures should be taken to protect the ballot boxes and other election documents;

(i) That all necessary measures be taken to ensure orderly conduct at the polling stations; and

(j) That everyone involved in the elections should be governed by a Code of Conduct.

 MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT INEC'S POLICIES

INEC has taken several measures to implement its policy decisions. Among the most important of these measures is the compilation of a packet of legislative proposals designed to restore Sierra Leone to multi-party democracy.

Before making any legislative proposals with respect to electoral laws INEC, with the assistance of its legal consultants, undertook two important exercises. Firstly, we carefully reviewed the existing electoral laws of Sierra Leone to see whether they coincided with INEC's policies. Having completed the study of local laws, the Commission undertook a study of the electoral laws of other democratic countries with special emphasis on those electoral laws which have been endorsed by both the UN General Assembly and the Security Council. Examples of the electoral laws which the Commission consulted are those of Cambodia, Ghana, Mozambique, Namibia, and South Africa.

 CONSOLIDATION OF ELECTORAL LAWS

With respect to the current electoral laws of Sierra Leone the Commission found approximately 80 - 85% to be very sound electoral legislation which met all the requirements of fairness and efficiency. The major problem however, was that the laws were fragmented and therefore very difficult to locate, let alone understand. The two major electoral statutes in Sierra Leone are The Franchise and Electoral Registration Act 1961 and The Electoral Provisions Act 1962. You get an idea of how fragmented and difficult to read these statutes are, when I tell you these Acts have been amended at least nine times. The Commission has therefore sought to remedy this situation by recommending extensive consolidation of all the Electoral laws of Sierra Leone. As I said before much of our current electoral laws compare favourably with the laws of other democratic states. So let it never be said that Sierra Leone does not have proper laws relating to elections.

 AREAS IN WHICH INEC PROPOSED CHANGES

Having said that, there are many features in our present electoral laws that commend themselves to the Commission, let me hasten to add that there are some unacceptable provisions which fall short of universally accepted standards and which are not in accord with INEC'S policies.

Let me give you some examples, perhaps the most striking is Section 26(a) (ii) of the Electoral Provisions Act of 1962 under which a Presiding Officer has the power to require that an elector submits to being searched before he or she is allowed to vote. You will, I hope agree, that this provision is an unwarranted and undignified invasion of an electors privacy and has no place in our electoral laws. The Commission has proposed that this provision be removed.

Perhaps a little less startling but just as undesirable are the sections in the Electoral Provisions Act 1962 which clearly permit the violation of the secrecy of the ballot. These provisions include Section 27, which requires that "every ballot paper shall have a number printed thereon and shall be attached to a counterfoil bearing the same number." Now consider this provision in relation to Section 26(b)(iv) which states that "the number on the Register of electors shall be marked on the counterfoil of the ballot paper". The mischief which these two Sections create is very serious. They make it very easy to trace a voter if one starts from the number on the ballot paper then trace back to the identical number on the counterfoil on which is written the voter's number on the Register of Electors and of course the Register of Electors contains the voter's name and even more worrying, the voter's address. The Commission has proposed that there shall be no numbers printed on any ballot paper.

The Commission is also troubled by the provisions of Section 26(i) of the Electoral Provisions Act 1962 which allows the Presiding Officer to record the vote of a blind or other physically disabled person. The Commission appreciates that a physically impaired elector, especially one who is blind may need some assistance in casting his/her vote. But why should this category of voter not have a choice in determining who should assist him or her in performing this important civic duty? The Commission has proposed that this Section be deleted and replaced by a provision which will allow the physically challenged elector to be assisted by another elector of his or her choice.

Another provision which caused the Commission a great deal of concern is found in Sections 26(j) and (k) of the Electoral Provisions Act 1962. These Sections deal with persons who are unable to go in person to the Polling Station at which they are entitled to vote on Polling Day. These persons include electors engaged in official duties in connection with the elections, Police Officers, and other members of the Security forces. Under the current law a Presiding Officer may be authorised to record the vote of these electors. The Commission is of the view that these provisions unnecessarily breach the secrecy of the ballot in respect of these electors. A new method which permits these electors to cast their votes themselves has been proposed. The proposed arrangement is that these electors may apply to have their names transferred from the Register of Electors at which they would have ordinarily voted to the Register

of Electors where they are employed or posted for duty. They must then vote at a polling station in the

latter area.

The Commission has also recommended the abolition of the tendered ballot paper. This is a ballot paper which is of a different colour from other ballot papers. Tendered ballots were used by a person who presented himself/herself to vote but found that another person has voted in his/her name. Again this procedure tended to compromise the secrecy of the ballot and as I pointed out before, this is contrary to the Commission's policy.

The Commission also proposed several changes in both the Franchise and Electoral Registration Act 1961 and the Electoral Provisions Act 1962 which would reflect its overall and ultimate responsibility for the conduct and supervision of elections as set out in Section 4 of the Interim National Electoral Commission Decree 1994.

Another important category of change to the electoral laws proposed by the Commission relates to the adjustment of certain time limits found in the law. As you know there are time limitations on many of the activities relating to an election.

Throughout its proposals the Commission has sought to ensure that there is reasonable time for political parties as well as electoral officials to meet the requirements of the law. Section 8 of the Electoral Provisions Act 1961 amply illustrates the unrealistic time limits found in some Sections of the existing law. This section provides for a minimum of 15 days between the last day for the delivery of nominations and the first day of voting. This 15 day period is clearly inadequate when one takes into account that if there is an objection to a nomination, an appeal procedure has to be completed before ballot papers could be printed, checked and distributed. In order to allow sufficient time for these sensitive and time-consuming activities, the Commission has proposed the extension of several legal time limits. For example, it proposes that the minimum time between the last day for nominations and polling day be extended from 15 days to 30 days and that the maximum time be extended from 30 days to 60 days.

Another very important change proposed by the Commission relates to the procedure after the close of the poll. In an effort to ensure greater security for the ballot boxes and other election documents the Commission has proposed that an initial count of the ballots should be conducted at the Polling Station by the Presiding Officer. The count will be witnessed by a Counting Agent appointed by each political party, the polling station staff and any authorised observers present. The results of the count will be recorded in a form approved by the Commission and signed by the Presiding Officer and other polling station officials. The Presiding Officer will also invite the Counting Agents provided by the parties to append their signatures to the record of the results. As a safety measure a certified copy of the record of the results of the poll for each Polling Station will be distributed as follows:-

(a) to the Returning Officer;

(b) to the Counting Agents;

(c) to the Electoral Commissioner responsible for the Electoral District;

(d) to the Executive Secretary of the Commission; and

(e) a copy to be retained by the Presiding Officer.

The reason for this generous distribution of copies should be obvious. Should the ballot box be lost or tampered with after leaving the Polling station, certified copies of the results would be in the possession of several responsible persons. In such an event the statement of the results of the Poll, on the oath of the Presiding Officer will be accepted as representing the result of the Poll at the Polling Station.

 NEW FEATURES

INEC has considered it necessary to introduce a few new features into the electoral laws of Sierra Leone. The proposals for new provisions were prompted by the following considerations:-

(a) The prevailing social conditions in Sierra Leone;

(b) The need to bring the electoral laws in line with acceptable international standards;

(c) The need to ensure proper conduct at Polling Stations; and

(d) The need to introduce measures designed to promote high standards of conduct on the part of political parties during the election campaign.

INEC is conscious of the fact that the prevailing social conditions could affect some aspects of its preparatory work. The Commission has therefore, made legislative proposals designed to give it some flexibility to deal with situations as they arise. One such proposal is the inclusion of a new provision in the Franchise and Electoral Registration Act which would allow the Commission, in exceptional circumstance, to establish a period for new registration although the normal time limit for registration has expired. Another new provision contemplates the registration of electors abroad. These proposals obviously take into account the possibility of electors being unable to register during the regular registration period because of displacement due to social unrest.

Another new feature being proposed by INEC is the inclusion of a provision to allow International Observers to monitor the elections. This proposal is designed to bring Sierra Leone in line with the modern trend of welcoming international scrutiny. It follows, however, that if we are willing to welcome International Observers we must enact laws that meet international standards.

One of the goals of INEC is that everyone involved in the elections of Sierra Leone should conduct himself/herself in an orderly and dignified manner. This high standard of behaviour should also be the aim of political party operatives, electoral officials as well as voters. The Commission has included certain measures in its proposals which would allow it to make Regulations pertaining to a Code of Conduct which would be designed to ensure proper standards of behaviour by all concerned. The content of the proposed Code of Conduct is an item for discussion at this Conference as you know and I trust that you will give it careful consideration and your full support when a consensus is reached.

 WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

CONCLUSION

Edmund Burke, a notable 18th century philosopher had written in 1770 that "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing".

Sierra Leone has a rare opportunity now. In the face of opposition from many quarters of society, we should work to reinstate a democratically elected government:-

 i. A government that will be committed to self determination.

 ii. A government that will be committed to the principle that the people should be involved in the decision making that affects their lives.

iii. A government committed to the promotion and protection of human rights.

 iv. A government that will be committed to providing moral leadership for our nation.

v. A government that will be committed to reconciliation for as we all know, an eye for an eye can only make the world go blind.

Our people are yearning for and must be given a real, genuine choice to have such a government.

The time for democracy seems to have come for Sierra Leone. But this promise will not be realized unless we all work hard in order to bring it to fruition. As a member of INEC and a citizen of Sierra Leone, that in spite of the present difficulties, we grasp this opportunity to return this country to her democratic heritage and so create a legacy of peace and freedom of which we as well as our children, can be justly proud.

 **EFFORTS TO ENHANCE THE INTERIM NATIONAL ELECTORAL**

 **COMMISSION'S INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY**

 **BY ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER, WESTERN AREA,** **ALHAJI DR A T FADLU-DEEN**

Mr Chairman:

It is my pleasure and privilege to make this short presentation to highlight some of the efforts made by INEC to enhance its independence and integrity.

You will agree with me that in order to comprehend this topic, we have to review the past, examine the present, and look into the future.

The political history of this country for the past two decades has been marred by violence, coercion, intimidation, corruption, and victimisation, just to name a few. Many families were disrupted, friends and relatives were plunged into disaster, with uncompromising attitudes that broke up families. Civil Servants lost their jobs because some of them refused to carry out instructions which were detrimental to the welfare of the country in general and to certain targeted individuals in particular. On or before the date set aside for nominations, prospective candidates were kidnapped, beaten up and locked up for several days until after the nomination, and at the end of the day candidates were declared un-opposed.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I need not bore you any longer with more sordid details because I know that even some of you here present today at this conference were either victims of those circumstances or perhaps perpetrators.

INEC is here to change all this and to help build a better Sierra Leone; but we cannot do this by ourselves, because we need your cooperation and change of attitude in order to achieve our objectives. You say *INEC*, but we say *"na we all neck"*.

In our efforts to enhance INEC's independence and integrity, we embarked upon various strategies, chief of which were: -

i) solicit for funds through international agencies;

ii) find a suitable building that will reflect the seriousness, prestige, and independence of INEC;

iii) declare to the press, media and the whole country, that we as Commissioners are committed to play our roles individually and collectively in the democratisation process of this country, so that we can all join to build a better Sierra Leone, not so much for ourselves, but for generations to come; and

iv) to screen the staff and restructure the whole Commission with a progressive outlook for future development.

Our Chairman, Dr James Jonah, at the Commission's first press conference at Parliament building, emphasised in no uncertain terms, that any individual or group of people or Departments that attempt to put undue pressure on the Commissioners, to play any dubious games, will not be tolerated. Rather than yield to such corrupt and unethical practices, the Commissioners will resign. Ladies and gentlemen I want to assure you that we still hold those views.

We are all aware of the enormous cost involved in conducting registration, referendum and elections, especially for third world countries like Sierra Leone. Costs that would hardly be entertained by poor countries like ours. Even in large wealthy countries like South Africa, those of us who were privileged to be in that country as international observers, monitors, consultants and advisers, were aware of the phenomenal donor input in cash and in kind that amounted to millions of dollars. How much more for a small poor country like ours?

We in the Commission commend very highly the Government of Sierra Leone, for wholly financing the Pilot Registration which was undertaken by INEC last year; that exercise amounted to millions of leones. Considering the gigantic cost of addressing the Rebel War and some of the harsh conditionalities imposed by the IMF and World Bank, spending millions of leones on a pilot registration is very highly commendable. That in itself demonstrated the government's commitment to the democratization process, for our beloved country.

Staff

When we were first appointed, the Commission inherited a total staff numbering over 200 (two hundred), some of whom were not reporting for duty. They had no place to sit in the office, no supervision, no work. The Commission had to go through the painful exercise of recommending to the Establishment Secretary, the redeployment of some of those staff who were non-performers or who had no business in the Electoral Commission. This exercise was carried out with the assistance of I.P.A.M. in doing the human resource audit. We tried to emphasize the importance of training our staff. The Electoral Commission in the past was the dumping ground for all and sundry. It was the practice of ministers and senior government officials in high places to send their, girlfriends, wives, friends, and relatives for employment by the Commission irrespective of whether they were qualified or not. It is obvious that those recruited had to seek the interest of their benefactors, hence confidential and secret documents of the Commission found their way out of the Commission into the hands of others to the disadvantage of the other side. To forestall this kind of situation, the Commission had demanded that all its staff must subscribe and be subjected to a code of secrecy.

Polling day staff, party agents, and supporters must comply with our Code of Conduct. We expect a very high standard of behaviour by candidates and supporters during the campaign period.

We intend to involve international observers and monitors in the conduct of elections. We are also endeavouring to establish our financial independence but, at the end of the day the Commission will have to depend upon the government to provide funding for our exercises. Donor agencies in responding to a request for funding, always ask the question - "What is your government's contribution to the exercise?"

 **INVOLVEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS**

 **BY THE CHAIRMAN, INEC, DR. JAMES O C JONAH**

Madam Chairperson,

I have to cover a topic which is closely related to the integrity and independence of the Commission. One of the devices that has been used is to involve international observers. As many of you may know, at the United Nations (UN), one of my activities was to act as a focal point for global elections assistance. Therefore, we have developed over the years, the practice of authorising observers. But for the UN to send an observer to a country, it must be certain that the rules and regulations and laws are in accordance with international standards. The UN will not send observers to observe an election if it believes the process is flawed.

We have also set, as a pre-condition, that for the UN to be involved in certifying an election as free and fair, it must be involved throughout the entire process. Many countries do not like this, and many countries avoid it. The exception relates to cases like Namibia and South Africa where the subject was debated either in the General Assembly, or in the Security Council and decisions arrived at. I would say Sierra Leone is one of the few countries that has written to the United Nations, at the beginning of the process for its complete involvement. Of course, on the advice of INEC, the Head of State and Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), sent two letters to the Secretary-General of the UN in March 1994. So the UN is involved. As you know, as an indication of its involvement, the UN has a representative right now in INEC's Headquarters - (a legal expert).

The UN has also provided an expert, a Consultant from Sweden who comes now and then. He has been here three times already. The UN has also sent a team to study and investigate our processes, and I must say to the political leaders that in one of our meetings after this conference we will share this report with you. That report is very interesting because it made certain key suggestions which are similar to what you are saying and what we have recommended; for example, to have presidential and parliamentary elections on the same day. That report also advised, and we have recommended, that we focus primarily on the parliamentary and presidential elections now to be followed by the local elections. So this is the way we are related to the United Nations. With respect to the Electoral Laws, you have heard from the Commissioner North how we have coordinated and drawn examples from the UN experience.

But we have not stopped there. We have involved the Commonwealth. As you know, the Commonwealth has taken a firm stand on democratic rule in commonwealth countries and therefore has been concerned about Sierra Leone. The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth paid a visit to Sierra Leone a few months ago and has shown interest in getting involved in our procedures. As such they have sent us one legal consultant who is resident with the Commission at the present time. There is also someone from the commonwealth observing you at this conference.

We have also had other international NGOs. IFES was here with a team of American officials just a few weeks ago and they also want to be involved. There are also American NGOs. In all of this, what we want to do is for these observers to keep watch over INEC. We watch you, they watch us. That is the procedure. They will observe whatever INEC does, whether INEC is following international standards and we will see to it that you comply with our electoral laws and procedures.

I can say that one of the areas where there is great difficulty is of course, funding. This was touched on by Dr. Fadlu-Deen. It is a big problem. The reason why we have had difficulty in getting international donor support is not because they are unwilling to contribute. The problem is that we Sierra Leoneans have confused the international public. Those of us who really know will tell you that when you read some of our local press or listen to some debates on TV or radio or hear some of our nationals abroad speak, you will believe they know exactly how Sierra Leoneans think. They will tell it dogmatically to governments abroad that Sierra Leoneans do not want elections. I know a government that already had money for us for elections, but had to withdraw it because they said a group of Sierra Leoneans informed them that we did not need elections.

This is one of the good things about this conference and I was very grateful for the question raised by Mr. Kabba. It is very important because he gave you figures. Even though from our Pilot Programme we knew certain things about the country, yet I was stunned by the determination of Sierra Leoneans to move toward democratic rule as was expressed yesterday. You know that one of the ideas in having this conference and having the working groups was to obtain guidance from you. Frankly, we were looking for consensus, but what one got yesterday on elections was a mandate. I make a pledge to you that INEC will uphold this mandate. There is for me no longer any ambiguity. I hope those government representatives who have followed the events of yesterday and even today will be able to send a clear message to their governments that the people of Sierra Leone, despite all the security problems want to go for elections.

Let me come to a very difficult exercise. I know that many of you in your statements have expressed confidence in what INEC is doing. We want you to continue to do so and in that spirit of confidence between us, I think it is incumbent on me to bring to your attention some problems that we may have and to seek your understanding and cooperation. It was the intention of INEC during the course of this conference to bring these problems to your attention. The problem was timing. We thought that having gauged the sentiments in the working groups, and I can tell you that we were not expecting an overwhelming endorsement as we got yesterday, we would then be able to discuss with you all some of these difficulties. That was our intention.

In the light of the mandate which you have given us, I feel this is the time before we break for lunch, before we start our working groups, to let you know what I am talking about. As I have already discussed with some of you political leaders who have come to see me, INEC will have some difficulty in meeting the deadline. The reason is what the Chairlady said yesterday - the question of the financing of the campaign. I want to be very candid with you. The budget that we have for elections runs about US$17m. It will take us sometime to get the necessary funding and as we heard from Commissioner Kandeh, we want to start the Registration process in September. Hopefully, and I think there is some guarantee, the British Government will help us with that exercise.

You also said something yesterday which is very good; you have overwhelmingly endorsed the Proportional Representation idea but you have also said that we must conduct massive education so that people can understand it. We will do that. But we will need some time. For example, for you to have a clean register, if we follow all the procedures, in all candour it will not be ready until January 1996. This is our idea. The NPRC asked us a long time ago to determine the time. I can even tell you that before the Chairman made his speech, I was asked for INEC's assessment of its ability to meet the time schedule. At that time, we said we would try our best to stay within the guidelines, but two or three months ago we began to sense some problems, so we have confided with some donors, with some political leaders (those who took time to talk to us), and with some of the NGOs. We have also shared this in confidence with our sister organisation The National Council for Democracy (NCD). We have said that a realistic time for us in INEC to give you a very good election will be most likely March next year. **We** are saying this and let me quickly add that this consideration is not inspired by the Government. This is our honest opinion to you. We want you to put this trust in INEC, give us that time to raise the necessary funds to help the Proportional Representation (PR) to have proper organisation. We will bring experts to help you. I know that this has to be brought out at this stage before you go to your working groups. It is important and we hope that the trust that you have shown in INEC will continue. This is an INEC proposal. Of course we are aware of what you have said and we will never betray the mandate you have given to us.

I also want to make a pledge. One of your participants said yesterday that whatever the date for the elections, if there is going to be a change on what we have agreed here, we will have to reconvene this conference, and we pledge we will do that.

Please we ask you by whatever means you can now, to say to me, "INEC, although we regret what you are asking us to do, we accept March 1996." I can see that despite some of your uneasiness you are ready to go along. I advise that as we go into the working groups this afternoon, we discuss all these issues in detail, even though some of them have been mentioned here, and some of you have made very good suggestions. So that when we leave here tomorrow, the world will know that we have taken an objective and practical decision to move this country towards governance of the people by their own consent.

Thank you.

 **REPORT OF WORKING GROUP "A"**

Madam Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1 **SECURITY**

78 delegates and observers attended the discussion session yesterday the 16th August 1995. The Electoral Commissioner, Eastern Province, Mr. I.M. Sesay was our able Chairman. The problem of security was discussed and considered under the following headings:-

(a) Problems of Security

(b) Causes of insecurity, and

(c) Solutions.

Various contributions were made by the Army, the Police and members of the working group, all of whom threw greater light on the problems, causes and the possible solutions.

After much heated debate, the following were recommended by consensus:-

(1) That elections be held in December 1995 as scheduled.

(2) That the Army must provide the necessary security for the entire electoral process.

(3) That the Armed Forces present a Security Action Plan to INEC for the electoral process.

(4) That all political parties, organisations, institutions, the press and individuals, denounce the R.U.F. and their collaborators and all forms of violence.

(5) All political parties include in their programme, Civic Education related to security.

(6) That all political parties contribute positively to the locally recruited auxiliary forces such as the Kamajors and the Tamaborohs.

(7) Security at polling stations shall be in accordance with established international standards. Deployment of security forces at polling stations shall conform strictly with those standards.

(8) That the entire citizenry of Sierra Leone make a genuine commitment to the entire electoral process by being peaceful ourselves and educating our families, our immediate relatives, and, communities on peaceful co-existence and bringing to the notice of the appropriate authorities, any potential conflict situation.

(9) Because of the on-going rebel war and its attendant burden on our forces, and, to facilitate the holding of free and fair elections, INEC should appeal to the, United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) the Commonwealth, the European Community, the United Kingdom and all friendly countries, to help strengthen our security network to oversee the entire transitional democratic process and finally;

(10) That the international community helps INEC with the provision of foreign observers to monitor the entire electoral process and the transition to civilian democratic government.

2 **THE ELECTORAL TIME TABLE**

Our Group number of 78 delegates and observers were at the discussion of yesterday, 16th August. Commissioner for the Southern Province, Professor H.B.S. Kandeh ably chaired the discussion.

On the 16th August 1995, the general consensus was for elections to be held in accordance with the Electoral Time Table i.e. in December 1995, And handing over to a democratically elected government in January 1996. This was in line with the view of the over whelming majority of the plenary.

But!! I repeat but, only God and fools don't change. So, on the 17th August 1995, i.e. this morning, following contributions from INEC, the observer Representative from the Commonwealth Secretariat and of course other members of the Working Group, all of whom highlighted problems of funding and INEC's inability to meeting the DECEMBER DEAD LINE for elections, our Working Group now recommends for the consideration of the Plenary, that Presidential and Parliamentary elections be held and an elected President installed not later than End of February 1996.

Ladies and Gentlemen, these are the views of our Working Group, Group "A" on THE SECURITY SITUATION AND THE ELECTORAL TIME TABLE.

 **WORKING GROUP B**

 **RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT**

 **FOR POLITICAL PARTIES**

*(SEE ITEM 9 - DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT - PAGE 160)*

PREAMBLE: In this code of conduct, reference to parties means registered political parties.

CLAUSE 1 Accepted.

CLAUSE 2 Line one, to delete registered.

CLAUSE 3 Accepted.

CLAUSE 4 Accepted.

CLAUSE 5 i) Line 2 to add "or disability" excluding mental disability. Immediately after religion and to delete the or before religion.

ii) Line 1 to add "and ensure" after facilitate.

iii) Accepted.

iv) This clause was considered controversial and provoked lots of arguments.

a) Some were with the view that in as much as money power must be removed from electoral process, our traditional courtesies should not be ignored.

b) Others held the view that the whole clause must be expunged. After thorough examination of the implications, it was agreed that the clause be retained subject to no conditions.

PENALTY - Any party or member who violates this code of conduct shall be liable to a fine of Le500,000. The Committee recommends the setting up of a tribunal comprising a lawyer, a woman and one other person to enforce the code of conduct for political parties.

 **DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT FOR POLITICAL PARTIES**

 **AS IT READS AFTER GROUP B DISCUSSIONS**

1. The object of this code shall be to promote conditions conducive to the conduct of free and fair elections, and a climate of democratic tolerance.

2. All registered Political Parties, their leaders, members and supporters, shall abide by this Code of Conduct.

3. All registered political parties are entitled to and shall enjoy the fundamental right of a free and fair election, including the freedom to campaign.

4. All registered political parties shall respect the right and freedom of all other parties to campaign and disseminate their political ideas and principles without fear.

5. All political parties, their leaders, members and supporters shall specifically obey the following rules:

i) discrimination based on tribe, sex, ethnicity, class gender, religion or physical disability, excluding mental disability shall be prohibited;

ii) ensure the full and equal participation of women in the electoral or political process;

iii) intimidation, in whatever form, shall be prohibited and political parties should emphasise this prohibition;

iv) all political parties shall refrain from offering any inducement or rewards to persons to obtain their support;

v) the possession and use of any weapon of any kind, or of any instrument or any object capable of use as a weapon, at any political rally, meeting, march, or demonstration shall be prohibited;

vi) all political parties, their leaders, members, and supporters shall refrain from disrupting the meetings, marches, rallies and demonstrations of other parties;

vii) all political parties shall refrain from obstructing persons from attending the meeting, marches or rallies of other parties;

viii) all political parties shall refrain from speeches calculated to arouse parochial and sectarian feelings and controversy or conflicts between sexes, communities and linguistic groups;

ix) all political parties, their leaders, members, and supporters shall refrain from deliberate dissemination of false and malicious information, and shall not defame other political parties and their leaders, nor use abusive language against the leaders and candidates of other parties;

x) all political parties shall avoid the coincidence, in time or place, of their meetings, rallies, marches or demonstrations with those of other parties, and to this end they shall liaise and co-operate with the appropriate authority;

xi) all political parties and their candidates shall at all times avoid, in speeches, broadcasts, pamphlets, newsletters, press statements, posters, their party platforms, campaign advertisements or otherwise, using inflamatory language or other language which threatens or incites violence in any form against others;

xii) all political parties shall refrain from plagiarising the symbols of other parties, and shall not steal, destroy or disfigure the political or campaign material or posters of other parties, or the election material of INEC;

xiii) all political parties shall ensure freedom of access of other parties to all potential voters on public or private property, in camps or reception centres or wherever they may be. Parties shall ensure that potential voters wishing to participate in political activities are free to do so;

xiv) all parties shall consistently reinforce and emphasise to their supporters and to all voters that the ballot will be secret and that no person will know how any individual has voted.

xv) all parties shall bring all information or complaints regarding intimidation or other allegations of unlawful conduct immediately to the attention of INEC;

xvi) parties shall not abuse the right to complain, nor make false, frivolous or vexatious complaints;

xvii) all parties shall issue instructions to their members and supporters to observe the Constitution of Sierra Leone, and all instruments that relate to registration and elections, the Code of Conduct of Political Parties, and any instructions issued by INEC;

 xviii) all parties shall take decisive steps to restrain members and officials who infringe the code;

xix) all parties must accept the final outcome, once an election has been declared free and fair.

 **WORKING GROUP C**

 **RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE DRAFT CAMPAIGN FINANCE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS**

 **WITH REGARDS TO SETTING LIMITS ON CAMPAIGN FINANCING**

***(****SEE ITEM 10 - DRAFT CAMPAIGN FINANCE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS - PAGE 162)*

**Introduction**

It is in the public interest, and is generally recognised as good public policy to limit the campaign expenditure of candidates for public office. In order to effectively enforce any limits on campaign expenditure, it is necessary for the Commission to require the reporting of all contributions received and all expenditures made by political parties and candidates before, during and after an election.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Commission recommends that legislation be promulgated along the following lines.

1(i). Every political party shall, within ninety days after the issue to it of a Final Certificate of Registration, under Section 4(viii) of Decree No. 7 or such longer period as the Commission may allow, submit to the Commission a written declaration giving details of all its assets and expenditure including, but not without prejudice to the foregoing, all contributions, donations or pledges of contribution or donation, whether in cash or in kind made or to be made to the initial assets of the party by its founding members in respect of the first year of its existence.

1(ii) A declaration submitted to the Commission under Sub-section (i) of this Section shall state the source of all funds and other assets of the political party.

1(iii) The declaration shall also contain such other particulars as the Commission may in writing direct.

1(iv) The declaration shall be supported by statutory declaration made by the National Treasurer and the National or General Secretary of the political party.

1(v) The Commission shall, within thirty days after the receipt of the declaration required by Sub-section (i) of this Section, cause it to be published in the Gazette.

1(vi) Without prejudice to any other penalty prescribed by this law or other enactment, where a political party:-

a) refuses or neglects to comply with this Section or

b) submits a declaration which is false in any material particular

the Commission shall cancel the Registration of that political party, subject to an application to the Supreme Court for review.

2(i) Every political party shall maintain at its head or national office an accurate and permanent record of the following:-

a) a list of its membership;

b) any contribution, donation or pledge of contribution or donation whether in cash

or in kind made by the founding members of the political party;

c) a statement of its accounts, showing the source of its funds and the name of any

person who has contributed to the funds, membership dues paid, donations in cash

or in kind and all the financial transactions of the political party which

are conducted through, by, or with the head or national office of the party;

d) any property that belongs to the political party and the time and mode of acquisition of the property; and

e) such other particulars as the Commission may require with respect to the foregoing or any other matters.

2(ii) Every political party shall maintain at each of its regional offices an accurate and permanent record in relation to the requirements under Sub-section (i) of this Section of the matters relating to the region and the districts and constituencies comprised in the region.

2(iii) The accounts of every political party shall be audited and published once in every year in such manner as the Commission may direct, but not later than the 31st day of December, by an auditor approved by the Commission and a copy of the audited accounts shall be filed by the political party with the Commission at such time as the Commission may specify.

2(iv) Every member of a political party and also, every member of the public shall be entitled upon payment of a fee prescribed by the Commission, to inspect or be given copies of the audited accounts of the political party filed with the Commission under this section.

3(i) Principle no sum shall be paid and no expense shall be incurred by any political party or candidate whether before, during or after an election on account of or in respect of the conduct or management of an election in excess of the amount of a certain amount for each candidate in respect of a Presidential or General Election or a certain amount in the case of an election to Local Authorities. Agreed with in principle, on the proviso that INEC confers with interested parties.

3(ii) In determining the maximum amount referred to in Sub-section 2(i), regard shall not be had to any deposit required to be made by a candidate in accordance with Section 13(i) of the Electoral Provisions Decree 1995. **PROPOSED**

 **NEW**

 **DECREE**

3(iii) Without prejudice to any other penalty provided in this Law, or any other enactment, any person who contravenes the Provisions of this Section shall on summary conviction be liable to a fine of a certain amount or imprisonment or both such fine and imprisonment. Agreed with in principle, on the proviso that consultations be made with interested parties.

4. Every candidate at an election shall keep separate and correct account of all expenditure in connection with the election, incurred or authorised by him/her, between the date on which he/she has been nominated and the date of the declaration of the results thereof, both dates inclusive.

5(i) Every political party shall, within twenty-one days before a public election, submit to the Commission a statement in such form as the Commission may direct of its assets and liabilities.

5(ii) Every political party shall, within sixty days of a public election in which it has participated, submit to the Commission a detailed statement in such form as the Commission may direct of all expenditure incurred and in respect of each candidate put up or supported by that political party specifying the manner in which any money involved was spent.

5(iii) A statement required to be submitted under this Section shall be supported by a statutory declaration made by the General or National Secretary of the political party and the National Treasurer of that party.

5(iv) Without prejudice to any other penalty provided in this Law or any other enactment, where a political party:-

a) refuses or neglects to comply with this Section:

b) submits a statement which is false in any material particular

the Commission shall cancel the Registration of that political party, subject to an application to the Supreme Court for review.

6(i) No citizen of Sierra Leone shall contribute within any one year to the funds of a political party an amount whether cash or in kind exceeding a certain amount and in addition to any penalty that may be imposed by any law against a person who contravenes this Section, any amount in excess of a certain amount or its equivalent value in kind contributed by that person shall be forfeited to the State and the political party to which it was paid shall pay it to the State. Agreed with in principle, on the proviso that INEC confers with interested parties.

6(ii) Sub-section (i) of this Section shall not apply to any contribution, donation or pledge of contributions or donations whether in cash or in kind made by any founding member of the party as his contribution to the initial assets of the party within the first year of its existence as a party.

8(i) No alien shall be appointed to any office or be a founding, ordinary or other member of a political party in Sierra Leone.

9(i) Principle, without prejudice to any other penalty provided in this Law or any other enactment, any person who willingly and knowingly and with intent to conceal or misrepresent contributions given or received or expenditures made or incurred by a political party or candidate shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine of a certain amount or imprisonment of a certain number of years or to both such fine and imprisonment. Consultations with interested parties to determine the penalties.

9(ii) Principle, any person who willingly and knowingly files or prepares or assists in the preparation or filing or acquiesces in the preparation or filing of any report or statement required under this Section which is false, inaccurate, or incomplete in any material particular, or who wilfully and knowingly fails or refuses to file any such report or statement when required to do so, pursuant to the Provisions of these Sections, shall on summary conviction be liable to a fine of a certain amount or to imprisonment of a number of years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

 **WORKING GROUP D**

 **REPORT ON PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION**

*(SEE PAGE 165)*

Group D realized that Sierra Leoneans have gone through a checkered political evolution, and as such we felt that we need not bore you with details about this ugly past which is very fresh in our minds.

It is with this in mind that we must appreciate that whether as men and women, we are all victims of a system which once exploited us and therefore the most effective answer is to organize ourselves for change, united as women and men to alter the social political and economic systems. The interaction of these composite parts of society is of utmost importance and the terms of the interaction ought to be evolved by both men and women.

This conference offered Group D an opportunity to discus and take common positions on the electoral process of this country. Our mutual concerns in group D as citizens of this country was guided by our historic responsibilities and by our common vision for social and political transformation.

Madam Chairlady, since the mandate was given by participants in their policy statements in the plenary sessions on the first day of conference, it was very easy and comfortable for group D to deliberate on the proportional representation system of voting. In vies of this stance, members in our group had to brain storm and jag their memories on the proposed PR system.

Simply put from our discussion the PR system is one in which votes are not wasted to parliament. In Sierra today we need a political system in which everybody has a stake in. A political system that reflects national interest. A political system that will bring us all together in this crisis period. The PR system in our own estimation would seem to do just that.

In our deliberations, it was unanimously agreed that we adopt the simple list system. The PR in our considered opinion gives a lot of importance to the political parties and even our 1991 constitution so talked about upholds that no one can be president of this country unless you belong to a political party. If the PR is properly understood and used well, the parties will wild more power.

To further clarify the list system therefore, group D illustrates that a party will draw up a list of candidates for elections, but these candidates must be ranked by the party. The strong men and women must be placed at the top of the list. For a national touch, the trick here is for the party to balance its list regionally. We propose that on that list, the first ten people must be taken from each region in order to make the selection broad based and balanced. If this is done with all sincerity then tribalism, sectionalism and regionalism will easily phase itself out.

We also looked at the possibility of making out list on regional basis; this we found to have a lot of problems, so that idea was dropped.

Madam Chairlady, parties have absolute right to draw up their lists and to rank their candidates, and during this period of compilation, they can make changes and can have the opportunity to scrutinize their candidates. One month before elections, every party turns in their lists to INEC and these lists are publicized so that the populace will know which party to vote for, once this list is with INEC, no alteration or change of candidate's name or ranking order will be encouraged.

The PR system is a fair relationship between seats and votes and most members in the group were comfortable with that. Their only worry was that they see some inconsistencies in the 1991 constitution. This is so because at that time, this PR system was not on the mind of government when parliament passed the 1991 constitution and even when the referendum was made.

Most members were uncomfortable with section 56 sub section 2b of the PR system was not the same as in the past system. With the PR system candidates can move up the list as their colleagues go to cabinet or to other executive posts.

We take this opportunity to also point out that the elected president has the appointed ministers from the other lists of other parties, and even outride the list.

Another important issue that was touched was that of allowing our brothers and sisters overseas or outside the country to vote. Members in group D were of the considered opinion that since we are at a crucial point in our history, we do appreciate their show of concern for us to defer elections and to be allowed to vote overseas or outside the country. We will however appeal to them to continue to show understanding and concern. Since we are here and they are over there, as their fellow compatriots in trouble, we are going ahead with elections for now, but we will gladly welcome those who desire to come home and vote. We however, trust that when they return, they will report correctly to the international communities overseas now that they have a feel of our situations.

Madam Chairlady after much illumined, interesting and frank discussions, the following recommendations and decisions were arrived at that :

1. We wholeheartedly endorse and embrace the proportional representation electoral system in this crucial moment of our history.

2. We at conference agree on the 5% of total votes cast as the threshold for the parliamentary election. We feel that if we go above 5%, then we will be defeating the purpose of the PR system. Below 5% is not considered good either.

3. Since we are in a transition period and our democracy is also in transition, we must think of ways to patch up our society for now. We therefore advocate for the formation of a national unity government by agreement of the government as this will give an opportunity for minorities to be involved in decision and policy making. We feel that with the prevailing conditions in the country, the PR is very attractive for unity and it will help us to think as one people.

4. We therefore mandate INEC to look into the technicalities of the matter.

5. We accept the single list system, We therefore suggest that we have two lists of different colour - one for the presidential elections and the other list for the parliamentary elections, as we hold the shared view that both elections must take place on the same day. The presidential list will carry the symbol of party, the name and picture of the presidential candidates. The parliamentary list will carry only the symbol of the party.

The technicalities of the list system, we leave to INEC to work out.

6. Since Sierra Leone is now one constituency, we have decided to adhere to the 55**+**% of total votes as the threshold for the presidential elections as stipulated in the constitution.

7. Having examined various formulae to add to the 1991 constitution or to modify it, serious deliberations on our part has forced us to leave that provision in the constitution as it is. We however feel that since the PR is being adopted to foster National Unity, conference recommends that the newly elected president give serious consideration to the formation of a National Unity government and to this end, we further recommend that section 56 sub section 2B of the 1991 constitution be suspended. There should also be consequential amendments as we go along to fit the PR system.

8. We appeal to INEC to plunge itself assiduously into a massive education programme to educate the masses, and to further seek the expertise knowledge of technocrats in the field to see this programme to positive fruition.

9. In adopting the list system of PR, conference recommends that INEC, in its registration exercise undertake measures for identity cards with pictures.

10. All these suggestions are only adhoc arrangements for the purpose of this elections. May be having given it a try, the populace will decide to accept it or reject it. Furthermore any suspension of provisions of the constitution should be considered as a temporary measure.

11. Since one of the disadvantages in the PR system is the multiplicity of political parties, delegates in group D and not INEC feel something must be done about the proliferation of parties. We must for the good or our country, party leaders and party stalwarts will maturely review this stance and under no duress merge for a better Sierra Leone.

I thank you

 **MOTION MOVED BY MR. I.B. KARGBO**

Madam Chairperson, on behalf of all of us present here at Bintumani Conference Centre - paramount chiefs from all the regions, representatives of political parties, trade unions, district councils, student unions, members of the displaced both here in Sierra Leone and Liberia and Guinea, members of the N.P.R.C., religious leaders and youth organisations - I hereby move that since the general consensus is to return Sierra Leone to democratic civilian rule in February 1996, that the Revolutionary United Front and other unknown warring factions lay down their arms and integrate their movement (movements), into the new political process, especially since it is now clear that INEC is conducting the electoral affairs of the country in an impartial manner.

Motion was seconded by Edward Turay, and the motion was unanimously voted for by all delegates present at the Bintumani Consultative Conference.

 **CLOSING REMARKS**

 **BY DR. JAMES O.C. JONAH, CHAIRMAN, INEC**

Madam Chairperson:

It was not my intention to speak to this audience at this time. However Madam Chairperson, you are correct that it would have been ingratitude on my part if I should allow the participants to leave this hall without expressing my deep appreciation for what they have achieved here in the last three days. I sincerely believe that Sierra Leoneans everywhere should today be proud of being Sierra Leoneans.

When we assembled here last Tuesday, there was much that could have resulted in disaster. I myself came here with much trepidation. But your performance in the last three days has made me proud. I can now affirm that I do not regret that I came back home. A challenge was given to all of you and you have passed the test magnificently. My only hope is that, this is a watershed in our history. I witnessed here during the policy statement, something which I never knew I would have observed. In fact when we gave five minutes for each of the speeches someone asked me, "do you ever believe that Sierra Leoneans can hold on to five minutes? you will have a disaster on your hands". I think what you demonstrated was great discipline. I was also pleased to learn from relatives who told me that on Tuesday night, they had to stay up all night just to follow the deliberation of this Conference and I know many of them were elated by what they heard and what they saw on television.

You know that I have had occasion to express a difference of views with the NCCP, but I had a great deal of respect for its representative when he stood here, despite their strong views on some issues, to compromise because of the national interest. That is a good example. I also witnessed in one of our meetings, two of the delegates who got into very heated argument. They stood up, looked sternly at each other, then stretched their hands to each other. That too was a good example. I want once more to say let us go away from Bintumani Conference Centre to spread the word around. Quite often in the last few weeks/ months, Sierra Leone has been maligned in the international media. I hope the international public opinion can now see what you can accomplish.

I know our Executive Secretary will be expressing the vote of thanks, but I want particularly to say that the SLBS/TV and radio have done a marvellous job. They have given full coverage to these proceedings so much so that Sierra Leoneans everywhere

in the country were able to follow what was going on. To our international colleagues, I know that you have been here all the time following everything we were doing. It should be so, because this, as we have all said, is a historic moment for Sierra Leone, and I hope, what we all have witnessed, will offer you an assurance that despite all the negative developments, there is still some room for hope in the resurgence of Sierra Leone.

I thank you very much.

 **VOTE OF THANKS**

 **BY MR DAVID MINAH, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, INEC**

Madam Chairperson, Members of the Supreme Council, Secretaries of State, Mr. Secretary General, Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Paramount Chiefs, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have over the last three days at this historic National Consultative Conference discussed in a free and frank atmosphere vital matters relating to the future of our country. We have also listened attentively to policy statements from various civic organisation groups, Paramount Chiefs, Women's Organisations, the NPRC Government, Municipal and other local government bodies, political parties, representatives from refugee and displaced camps and of our brothers and sisters currently domiciled in foreign countries.

Madam Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, all of those statements were articulated to represent the views of Sierra Leoneans across the country and in the Diaspora on the electoral process.

INEC has also reported to you on its activities since its inception, as well as the Commission's proposals for the future on a number of matters relevant to the electoral process.

The group work in which all delegates and some observers have actively participated have all been designed to assist in charting the future direction for INEC.

Madam Chairperson, in recognition of the tremendous efforts that have been put into making the National Consultative Conference achieve the success we have all acclaimed, I have been designated to say thanks to you all.

To start with, Madam Chairperson, you deserve a standing ovation for your brilliant opening remarks which set the pace for

the sessions and have guided us throughout this historic gathering; and the efficient leadership you have demonstrated thus belying the sceptics of gender equality. Your concluding statement gave us all food for thought. I also thank you for your understanding of the issues involved and accommodation of the varying points of views expressed during the conference.

Mr. Secretary General of the NPRC, please convey INEC's sincere gratitude to His Excellency the Chairman of the NPRC for taking time off his very busy schedule to perform the opening ceremony. Indeed his government's initial endorsement of INEC's proposal to convene the conference has not only provided the catalyst for facilitating the process but the Chairman's Opening Statement once again, reiterated the NPRC's commitment to the programme of return to civilian democratic rule. This assurance, I believe, was of great comfort to all of us.

Madam Chairperson, I will be remiss in my duty if I fail to give thanks to our sponsors the UNDP and donor governments particularly the British Government and the European Union all of whom spared no efforts in putting together the funding, logistics and personnel for the conference. Our grateful thanks go to the International NGOs and the Diplomatic Corps, some of whose representatives travelled from their various headquarters at INEC's invitation to observe the Conference. I am sure, having observed the deliberations of the conference and the recommendations of the people of Sierra Leone emanating therefrom they are now better placed to advise their governments and organisations to lend support to our democratisation process so that our aspirations will be realised within the time frame recommended by this conference.

Madam Chairperson, but for the attendance by and the active participation of the delegates and observers, both from abroad including the refugee camps and the various organisations in Sierra Leone, the National Consultative Conference would not have been possible. I say to them, "INEC appreciates your very valuable contributions". I urge however that the dialogue which the conference has initiated between us, INEC and you the people of Sierra Leone will continue in our joint efforts to achieve the goals we have together set ourselves. While INEC entertains fair, free and frank discussions at all times, it also expects understanding from all and sundry to steer the course you have prescribed for us.

The Hotel and Conference Centre Management and staff deserve our gratitude for the excellent facilities they have placed at our disposal throughout the conference.

The SLBS/TV and Radio and the media as a whole have done a marvellous job. We thank them immensely.

Finally, Madam Chairperson, Members of the Supreme Council and Council of Secretaries, Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps and International Organisations, Paramount Chiefs, Your Worships, the Mayors and Chairmen of Committees of Management of our municipalities, Delegates and Observes, I thank you all for listening to me.

 **DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT FOR POLITICAL PARTIES**

1. The object of this Code shall be to promote conditions conducive to the conduct of free and fair elections, and a climate of democratic tolerance.

2. All registered Political Parties, their leaders, members and supporters, shall abide by this Code of Conduct.

3. All political parties are entitled to and shall enjoy the fundamental right of a free and fair election, including the freedom to campaign.

4. All political parties shall respect the right and freedom of all other parties to campaign and disseminate their political ideas and principles without fear.

5. All political parties, their leaders, members and supporters shall specifically obey the following rules :

i) discrimination based on tribe, sex, ethnicity, class gender, or religion shall be prohibited;

ii) facilitate the full and equal participation of women in the electoral or political process;

iii) intimidation, in whatever form, shall be prohibited and political parties should emphasise this prohibition;

iv) all political parties shall refrain from offering any inducement or rewards to persons to obtain their support;

v) the possession and use of any weapon of any kind, or of any instrument capable of use as a weapon, at any political rally, meeting, march, or demonstration shall be prohibited;

vi) all political parties, their leaders, members, and supporters shall refrain from disrupting the meetings, marches, rallies and demonstrations of other parties;

vii) all political parties shall refrain from obstructing persons from attending the meetings, marches or rallies of other parties;

viii) all political parties shall refrain from speeches calculated to arouse parochial and sectarian feelings and controversy or conflicts between sexes, communities and linguistic groups;

ix) all political parties, their leaders, members, and supporters shall refrain from deliberate dissemination of false and malicious information, and shall not defame other political parties and their leaders, nor use abusive language against the leaders and candidates of other parties;

x) all political parties shall avoid the coincidence, in time or place, of their meetings, rallies, marches or demonstrations with those of other parties, and to this end they shall liaise and co-operate with the appropriate authority;

xi) all political parties and their candidates shall at all times avoid, in speeches, broadcasts, pamphlets, newsletters, press statements, posters, their party platforms, campaign advertisements or otherwise, using inflamatory language or other language which threatens or incites violence in any form against others;

xii) all political parties shall refrain from plagiarising the symbols of other parties, and shall not steal, destroy or disfigure the political or campaign material or posters of other parties, or the election material of INEC;

xiii) all political parties shall ensure freedom of access of other parties to all potential voters on public or private property, in camps or reception centres or wherever they may be. Parties shall ensure that potential voters wishing to participate in political activities are free to do so;

xiv) all parties shall consistently reinforce and emphasise to their supporters and to all voters that the ballot will be secret and that no person will know how any individual has voted.

xv) all parties shall bring all information or complaints regarding intimidation or other allegations of unlawful conduct immediately to the attention of INEC;

xvi) parties shall not abuse the right to complain, nor make false, frivolous or vexatious complaints;

 xvii) all parties shall issue instructions to their members and supporters to observe the Constitution of Sierra Leone, and all instruments that relate to registration and elections, the Code of Conduct of Political Parties, and any instructions issued by INEC;

 xviii) all parties shall take decisive steps to restrain members and officials who infringe the

 code;

xix) all parties must accept the final outcome, once an election has been declared free and fair.

(Drafted 20.4.95)

(Drafted 26.7.95)

 **DRAFT CAMPAIGN FINANCE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS**

**Introduction**

It is in the public interest, and is generally recognised as good public policy to limit the campaign expenditure of candidates for public office. In order to effectively enforce any limit on campaign expenditure, it is necessary for the Commission to require the reporting of all contributions received and all expenditures made by political parties and candidates before, during and after an election.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Commission recommends that legislation be promulgated along the following lines.

1(i). Every political party shall, within sixty days after the issue to it of a Final Certificate of Registration, under Section 4(viii) of Decree No. 7 or such longer period as the Commission may allow, submit to the Commission a written declaration giving details of all its assets and expenditure including, but not without prejudice to the foregoing, all contributions, donations or pledges of contribution or donation, whether in cash or in kind made or to be made to the initial assets of the party by its founding members in respect of the first year of its existence.

1(ii) A declaration submitted to the Commission under Sub-section (i) of this Section shall state the source of all funds and other assets of the political party.

1(iii) The declaration shall also contain such other particulars as the Commission may in writing direct.

1(iv) The declaration shall be supported by statutory declaration made by the National Treasurer and the National or General Secretary of the political party.

1(v) The Commission shall, within thirty days after the receipt of the declaration required by Sub-section (i) of this Section, cause it to be published in the Gazette.

1(vi) Without prejudice to any other penalty prescribed by this law or other enactment, where a political party:-

a) refuses or neglects to comply with this

Section or

b) submits a declaration which is false in any material particular

the Commission shall cancel the Registration of that political party.

2(i) Every political party shall maintain at its head or national office an accurate and permanent record of the following:-

a) a list of its membership;

b) any contribution, donation or pledge of contribution or donation whether in cash or in kind made by the founding members of the political party;

c) a statement of its accounts, showing the source of its funds and the name of any person who has contributed to the funds, membership dues paid, donations in cash or in kind and all the financial transactions of the political party which are conducted through, by, or with the head or national office of the party;

d) any property that belongs to the political party and the time and mode of acquisition of the property; and

e) such other particulars as the Commission may require with respect to the foregoing or any other matters.

2(ii) Every political party shall maintain at each of its regional offices an accurate and permanent record in relation to the requirements under Sub-section (i) of this Section of the matters relating to the region and the districts and constituencies comprised in the region.

2(iii) The accounts of every political party shall be audited and published once in every year in such manner as the Commission may direct, but not later than the 31st day of December, by an auditor approved by the Commission and a copy of the audited accounts shall be filed by the political party with the Commission at such time as the Commission may specify.

2(iv) Every member of a political party and also, every member of the public shall be entitled upon payment of a fee prescribed by the Commission, to inspect or be given copies of the audited accounts of the political party filed with the Commission under this section.

2(v) Notwithstanding the provisions of this Section the Commission may at any time order the accounts of a political party to be audited by an auditor appointed by it and also request the political party to file with it the audited accounts at a time to be specified by the Commission.

3(i) No sum shall be paid and no expense shall be incurred by any political party or candidate whether before, during or after an election on account of or in respect of the conduct or management of an election in excess of the amount of Le......\* for each candidate in respect of a Presidential or General Election or Le.......\* in the case of an election to Local Authorities.

3(ii) In determining the maximum amount referred to in Sub-section 2(i), regard shall not be had to any deposit required to be made by a candidate in accordance with Section 13(i) of the Electoral Provisions Decree 1995.

3(iii) Without prejudice to any other penalty provided in this Law, or any other enactment, any person who contravenes the Provisions of this Section shall on summary conviction be liable to a fine of Le......\* or imprisonment or both such fine and imprisonment.

4. Every candidate at an election shall keep separate and correct account of all expenditure in connection with the election, incurred or authorised by him/her, between the date on which he/she has been nominated and the date of the declaration of the results thereof, both dates inclusive.

5(i) Every political party shall, within twenty-one days before a public election, submit to the Commission a statement in such form as the Commission may direct of its assets and liabilities.

5(ii) Every political party shall, within forty days of a public election in which it has participated, submit to the Commission a detailed statement in such form as the Commission may direct of all expenditure incurred and in respect of each candidate put up or supported by that political party specifying the manner in which any money involved was spent.

5(iii) A statement required to be submitted under this Section shall be supported by a statutory declaration made by the General or National Secretary of the political party and the National Treasurer of that party.

5(iv) Without prejudice to any other penalty provided in this Law or any other enactment, where a political party:-

a) refuses or neglects to comply with this Section:

b) submits a statement which is false in any material particular

the Commission shall cancel the Registration of that political party.

6(i) No citizen of Sierra Leone shall contribute within any one year to the funds of a political party an amount whether cash or in kind exceeding Le.......\*. and in addition to any penalty that may be imposed by any law against a person who contravenes this Section, any amount in excess of Le....\* or its equivalent value in kind contributed by that person shall be forfeited to the State and the political party to which it was paid shall pay it to the State.

6(ii) Sub-section (i) of this Section shall not apply to any contribution, donation or pledge of contributions or donations whether in cash or in kind made by any founding member of the party as his contribution to the initial assets of the party within the first year of its existence as a party.

7(i) No company, partnership or firm or business enterprise shall contribute any amount whether in cash or in kind to the funds of a political party.

7(ii) Notwithstanding any penalty that may be imposed under any Law in respect of a contravention of Sub-section (i) of this Section any amount paid in contravention shall be forfeited to the State and the political party to which it was paid shall pay to the State.

8(i) No alien shall directly or indirectly make a contribution, donation or loan, whether in cash or in kind, to the funds held or to be held by or for the benefit of a political party and no political party or person shall demand or accept a contribution, donation or loan from an alien.

8(ii) No alien shall be appointed to any office or be a founding, ordinary or other member of a political party in Sierra Leone.

9(i) Without prejudice to any other penalty provided in this Law or any other enactment, any person who willingly and knowingly and with intent to conceal or misrepresent contributions given or received or expenditures made or incurred by a political party or candidate shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine of Le....\* or imprisonment of .....\* or to both such fine and imprisonment.

9(ii) Any person who willingly and knowingly files or prepares or assists in the preparation or filing or acquiesces in the preparation or filing of any report or statement required under this Section which is false, inaccurate, or incomplete in any material particular, or who wilfully and knowingly fails or refuses to file any such report or statement when required to do so, pursuant to the Provisions of these Sections, shall on summary conviction be liable to a fine of Le....\*. or to imprisonment of ........\* or to both such fine and imprisonment.

**NOTE**

\* It was agreed at the conference that INEC should hold discussions with interested parties, civic groups etc, after the conference to decide on these penalties. The discussions were held and recommendations were presented to the Attorney General's office, but they were not enacted into law. So these areas were not concluded.

 **IN SUPPORT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF PROPORTIONAL**

 **REPRESENTATION AS THE SYSTEM OF VOTING FOR**

 **THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS**

 ***Executive Summary***

INEC's efforts to conduct a free and fair election in Sierra Leone against the background of a rebel war has strengthened its determination to overhaul the country's electoral process. Crucial issues to a successful electoral process, as INEC views them, include the revision of the electoral laws, the establishment of a credible Voter/Civic Education programme, and the design and implementation of a durable registration system.

INEC believes that for an electoral system to genuinely contribute to the realisation of stability in a country's political system, it must be fully understood and allowed to function as a vehicle for the expression of the political will of the people; and must adequately reflect a fair representation of all segments of the society including minorities. Moreover, a correct understanding of the system by which representatives are elected would also enable voters to predict the effects of their votes with a degree of certainty.

The two basic types of electoral systems INEC is examining are the Plurality System as found in the Single-Member Constituency also known as First-Past-the-Post, and the principle of Proportional Representation.

The Plurality System has been used in Sierra Leone and elsewhere for a long time, and even though it may have worked well in some countries, it has inherent weaknesses, especially for an emerging democracy like Sierra Leone.

In this system, the country is divided into constituencies each of which returns one member to Parliament. The candidate **with the largest number of votes** in each constituency wins, even if he/she has polled only a minority of the total votes cast. All other political opinions in that constituency are, therefore, technically unrepresented.

INEC feels that a system of Proportional Representation (PR) would better serve the country at this time for a number of reasons:-

The rebel war has resulted in the displacement of large segments of the population. Many people have migrated to the larger towns for security reasons leaving the smaller villages either sparsely populated or deserted. Consequently, the old single member constituencies are no longer accessible for registration of voters and for the actual election.

If registration and voting are to be carried out on a fair basis, either the constituency boundaries will have to be re-drawn, or the displaced will have to be re-settled in their respective communities. Re-drawing of the constituency boundaries is time-consuming and expensive.

PR ensures that all shades of opinion, both majority and minority, influence political decisions in direct relation to electoral strength.

It encourages political parties to seek points of agreement and work together for the national good.

It reflects a fair relationship between votes cast and seats in Parliament. No party would retain a monopoly and few would be excluded from representation.

It attaches more importance to party policy than personalities.

The Commission, therefore, recommends the List System of Proportional Representation.

In the List System all the parties that take part in an election hand in to INEC a list of their candidates. The candidates on the list are ordered in terms of their importance to their party; that is, the most important representative is at the top of the list. If a party gets only one seat in Parliament, it is the candidate at the top of the list that will be in that seat.

All parties which receive at least 5% of the total votes cast will be entitled to seats in Parliament. The higher the percentage of total votes the party list receives, the more seats that party will have in Parliament. The fairness of the PR system is to ensure that even the parties which obtain only a small percentage of votes over the 5% threshold will be given seats. The aim is to ensure a fair representation of all the electors throughout the country.

In its preparation for the forthcoming elections, the Interim National Electoral Commission is determined to build a model which will be a turning point in the history of elections in Sierra Leone and will establish a new scenario for future elections. There are several issues, technical and political, that the commission would have to tackle before such a machinery can be put in place. Among such issues and critical to the success of the electoral process are the revision of the electoral laws, the establishment of a credible voter/civic education programme, the design and implementation of a proficient and durable registration system. In addition, in an attempt to ensure free and fair elections, and against the background of a rebel war, the commission feels that one of the technical areas that would demand closer scrutiny would be that related to the electoral system of voting. This is probably one of the most sensitive areas in any electoral process.

In order to build a strong argument in favour of any electoral system, it is necessary to examine the concept and importance of an electoral system. As stated by the Secretary General of the Inter-parliamentary Union, Pierre Cornillon in his introduction to **Electoral Systems, A World-wide Study :**

"However fair and regular an election may be, its political outcome is evidently determined by the electoral system that is applied. While the choice of the system is often influenced by political considerations, it must nevertheless be based on sound knowledge of the numerous technical options available. The variety of these options bears witness both to the difficulty of ensuring that the diverse interests of the electorate are faithfully represented, while guaranteeing that public affairs are managed steadfastly...."

When we refer to an electoral system, we are referring to the "rules according to which voters express their political preference and according to which it is possible to convert these votes into parliamentary seats". In addition, an electoral system influences voting behaviour and election results and will also shape political representation and party system.

According to Peter Fishburn, it is axiomatic "that different electoral processes can affect not only the conduct and outcomes of elections but might also influence the basic political structure".

In view of the serious social and political consequences which can flow from the choice of an electoral system, what criteria should be employed in making such a choice? Professor Deiter Nohlen has identified the most important criteria for choosing an electoral system as:-

a) Representation

b) Concentration

c) Simplicity and

d) Legitimacy

**Representation**

The system chosen should adequately reflect the social interests and political opinions of the representative organs in the country. This means fair representation for all segments of the society including minorities. It also means a fair relationship between seats and votes. Problems are most likely to develop in situations where the gap between seats and votes is too wide.

**Concentration**

This concerns the aggregation of social interests and political opinions in such a way that the public could acquire the capacity for political action. Nohlen has observed that elections are not a mechanism for measuring the dominant opinions of the population. They should rather be understood "as an act in the formation of political will". Not until an electoral system is understood and allowed to function as a vehicle for the expression of the political will of all the people, can it genuinely contribute to the realization of stability in the political system.

**Simplicity**

It is important that the electorate be able to understand the system by which it elects its representatives. A correct understanding of the system would enable the voters to predict the effects of their votes with some degree of certainty. This is important because too many "surprise victories" tend to undermine confidence in the system.

**Legitimacy**

This criterion refers to the degree to which the electorate accepts the results of the elections. It is obvious that the electoral system cannot achieve legitimacy unless it is well understood. There is, therefore, a close relationship between legitimacy and simplicity. The legitimization of the electoral system is a critical and delicate issue because the acceptance of the results of elections is, perhaps, the most important rule of democracy.

Keeping the above criteria in mind, we now proceed to examine the two basic types of electoral systems; namely, majority representation as found in the single member constituency or "first-past-the-post" and the principle of proportional representation.

**Single member constituency**

Single member constituency or "first-past-the-post" which originated in the United Kingdom, is the oldest electoral system in the world. In this system, there is only one seat up for elections in the whole constituency. The candidate with the largest number of votes wins, even if he has polled only a minority of the total votes, all other voters in that constituency remain un-represented. Consequently, the party which gains the majority of votes nationwide will most likely be over-represented in parliament in terms of parliamentary seats and smaller parties will tend to be penalised.

While the single member constituency system may have worked well in some western countries, its application to many emerging democracies should be closely examined. This is especially so in regions characterised by multi-ethnic divisions. Some experts consider ethnicity, or rather the politicisation of ethnicity, as a circumstance which could impede the development of the democratic forms of government in countries marked by ethnic diversity. It is for this reason that the selection of the electoral system should be viewed against the background of a country's prevailing social conditions as well as its historical experience with majority representation.

Most serious observers give the "first-past-the-post" electoral system a failing grade in terms of its ability to fairly and accurately reflect the will of the electorate. Some of the major problems associated with this system are:-

1) The non-representation of ethnic minorities, especially those without regional strongholds.

2) The accentuation of regional hegemonies when ethnic groups are dominant in different regions.

3) The exaggeration of the majority in parliamentary terms compared to votes obtained. This could lead to the marginalization or elimination of opposition parties and the promotion of ethnic dominance at the national political level.

4) The development of dominant party systems by oversized majorities without a chance for change or even effective political opposition.

The extreme distortion in political representation produced by the majority system is undoubtedly a major cause of political conflict in many African countries. The following is a sample of election outcomes in countries with segmented societies in which the majority system was employed:-

Lesotho - 1993 - One party won all the seats.

Zimbabwe - 1993 - One party won over two-thirds of the seats.

Zambia - 1993 - One party won over two-thirds of the seats.

Malawi - 1991 - Different parties won in their ethnic strongholds leaving the ethnic minorities in all regions unrepresented in parliament.

Anticipating this problem as early as 1965, W. Arthur Lewis wrote "the surest way to kill the idea of democracy in a plural society is to adopt the Anglo-American system of first-past-the-post. If minorities are to accept parliament, they must be "adequately represented in Parliament".

**Proportional Representation**

The principle of Proportional Representation (PR) found its first application in Belgium in 1889 and today is being practised in more than 57 countries including several African countries like Angola, Mozambique and the Republic of South Africa. It is interesting to note that these are countries that are emerging from conflict situations and have favoured PR as a means of uniting their countries. In proportional representation, the goal is to represent majorities and minorities. The seats in a constituency are divided on a pro-rata basis according to the number of votes cast. According to Arnold Lijphard, "the principal aim of proportional representation is exactly what the name implies: the allocation of seats in representative bodies according to the number of votes received by the political parties or individual candidates".

Quite naturally, the system of Proportional Representation is not without its detractors. Those who support the so-called Duverger's hypothesis, have long held that the system favours multipartism. They often point to the older European countries where the introduction of PR after World War I was followed by a surge of new political parties. This argument has, however, been effectively countered by the observation that the introduction of PR in those countries was accompanied by enfranchisements which allowed the entry into politics of hitherto excluded lower-class voters. These newly enfranchised groups generally sought new parties, "their own" parties. Giovanni Sartori has explained that "whenever the introduction of PR happens to be followed by a surge of new relevant parties, we are not pointing at the effects of PR, but to the side effects resulting from the removal of pre-existing obstacles". Sartori asserts that PR does not multiply the number of parties. He points out that by its very definition, Proportional Representation is supposed to mirror "in proportion", therefore, it cannot multiply.

Even if one admits Duverger's hypothesis that proportional representation tends to favour multipartism, the situation is not hopeless. To avoid the proliferation of small parties in proportional representation systems, a common requirement is that a party must receive a threshold or minimum share of the vote before it can participate in the distribution of seats in a given constituency. These thresholds range from 0.67 percent in the Netherlands to 8 percent in Liechtenstein, a range of between 3 and 5 percent appears to be the most popular choice.

There are two main types of proportional representation. The most common type and the one which we will concern ourselves with is the List system. Although there are some variations in this system, the basic principle is that the parties nominate lists of candidates in a multi-member constituency (multi-member constituency being a constituency where several representatives are elected). In full proportional representation, the country as a whole is one constituency. The electorate then votes for one party list or another.

The method of allocation of seats is made on the basis of a mathematical formula. There are several methods of arriving at an electoral quotient. However the most commonly used is the **Simple or Hare Quotient**. The Simple or Hare quotient is arrived at after the vote has been counted by dividing the number of votes cast by the number of seats to be filled. For example, in a constituency with 5 seats to be filled, and 200,000 votes cast, the simple electoral quotient would be 40,000. This figure would also serve as the electoral threshold; that is, the minimum number of votes that a list must reach in order to share in the distribution of seats. Now let us assume list A receives 86,000 votes, list B 56,000, list C 38,000 and list D 20,000. List A would be allotted 2 seats with 6,000 votes remaining, list B, 1 seat with 16,000 votes remaining and list C and D would have no seats allotted but will maintain remainders of 38,000 and 20,000 respectively. In our example, three seats have been filled; the remaining 2 would have to be allocated in a second distribution. This is where the **theory of remainders** would come in. Since the number of seats allotted is never in proportion to the number of votes cast for that list, the remainder votes are distributed by other formulas, the most common of which is known as the **Greatest Remainder**. In this case seats are allocated to the list that has the largest number of votes left over and so on. In our example list C and D would, therefore, receive one seat each of the remaining 2 seats.

In order to recommend a system of voting for Sierra Leone, one would have to examine the conditions prevalent in Sierra Leone. In terms of the existing conditions in Sierra Leone, constituency boundaries are no longer applicable. The differences in the number of voters in the old constituencies is either too large or too small. One of the reasons is the effect of the rebel war. Large segments of the population have migrated to larger towns, for security reasons, leaving the smaller villages either sparsely populated or totally deserted. If registration is to be carried out on a fair basis, either the constituency boundaries will have to be redrawn or the displaced persons will have to be resettled in their respective communities. Redrawing of the constituency boundaries is a highly technical, political and time-consuming venture; which leaves us with the other alternative - that of the resettlement of the displaced persons well before the date of elections. This in all reality might prove to be as difficult.

There is also the issue of the thousands of refugees currently living in other countries. In a recent mission to the refugee camps in Guinea, the team, which comprised of two Electoral Commissioners and their assistants, were confronted by large groups of people eager to find out what their role in the electoral process would be and what plans were being made for their registration and voter/civic education. The repatriation of refugees, therefore, presents another challenge in the registration process in terms of establishing a register that would adequately reflect the number of eligible voters.

The above considerations have been outlined in an effort to demonstrate that if the elections are to be organised fairly, on the basis of single member constituency, in accordance with the time table set by the NPRC in its Declaration to Return Sierra Leone to Civilian Rule and with the assumption that the security situation remains unstable, the outcome might very likely be an election that is not fair and that does not represent the true will of the people.

It is in this light that the principle of proportional representation lends itself to closer scrutiny. The application of the principle of proportional representation, even on a temporary basis for this specific election, has its advantages. In terms of legitimacy, PR means justice. Seats gained by different political forces are proportional to their electoral strength. Secondly, it would promote political integration and fair representation. No party or force would retain a monopoly and few would be excluded from representation. The president, however would be assured of a comfortable majority. Thirdly, the strength and importance of the political party is enhanced because the party list promotes ideas as opposed to personalities of individual candidates. As a further argument, PR will eliminate the problems that would arise from demographic statistics and the redrawing of constituency boundaries and the challenge of dealing with displaced people and refugees.

At length, it can facilitate the formation of a national unity government after the elections, if so desired. Needless to say, a national unity government is a different kettle of fish from the call for an Interim Civilian Government.

In the final analysis, the most ideal setting would be for the people of Sierra Leone to choose the system of voting through a national referendum. However, because of time constraints, the economic situation, and the socio-political environment in the country, the Commission would like to recommend to the people of Sierra Leone with the approval of political parties, the principle of Proportional Representation for the forthcoming elections. A system which is simple, that will assure political representation for all groups, that will foster national reconciliation, and that will allow the formation of a workable government.

 **LIST OF DELEGATES**

**A. NATIONAL PROVISIONAL RULING COUNCIL (N.P.R.C)**

1. Mr. Samuel J.M. Maligi II

2. Mr. John Benjamin

3. Mr. Leslie A.S.D Scott

4. El Hadj Dr. M.O.L. Samura

5. Mr. Sulaiman Banja Tejan-Sie

**B. PARAMOUNT CHIEFS**

6. P.C. S.C.N. Kono-Bundoh II Kono

7. P.C. Alimamy Thallan Turay Tonkolili

8. P.C. J.K. Boima III Bo

9. P.C. Masa Yele Tham II Bombali

10. P.C. Charles Lamin-Ngobeh IV Kailahun

11. P.C. Vandy Albert Dassama Kenema

12. P.C. Almami Lahai V Koinadugu

13. P.C. Steven Wonnie\_Bio III Bonthe

14. P.C. Madam Honoria Bailor Caulker Moyamba

15. P.C. Bai Shebora Baylay Komkanda II Port Loko

16. P.C. S.A.S Gbonda Pujehun

17. P.C. Bai Farma Tass Bubu Angbak III Kambia

**C. COMMITTEES OF MANAGEMENT**

18. Mr. Sahr S. Yendeh Koidu

19. Ms. Inez Betty Toma-Elias Bo

20. Mr. H.M. Nelson-Okrafor Freetown

21. Mr. Yamba Forna Makeni

22. Mr. Brima V.S. Kebbie Kenema

**D. WESTERN AREA RURAL COUNCILS**

23. Mr. Al-Hassan Cole

**E. DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES**

24. Mr. Las Lamin Moyamba

25. Mr.Edward A. John-Moody Moyamba

26. Mr. Sam S. Abu Pujehun

27. Dr. A.D.L. Massaquoi Pujehun

28. Miss Theresa Sandi Kenema

29. Mr. Francis Sellu Kenema

30. Mr. P.T. Nyuma Kailahun

31. Mr. D.A. Ngombu Kailahun

32. Mr. D.J.B. Kobby Bo

33. Mr. Cecil Hanson Bo

34. Mr. Joseph P.B. Yawma Bonthe

35. Mr. Crosby J. Mambu Bonthe

36. Mr. Mohamed Foday Kamara Koinadugu

37. Madam Masiray Yembe Mansaray Koinadugu

38. Mr. Moses Hamid N. Komeh Tonkolili

39. Alhaji M.B. Wurie Tonkolili

40. Mr. S.E. Gbomor Kono

41. Mrs Sia Mary Musa Kono

42. Mr. A.O. Bangura Port Loko

43. Mrs. Memuna Tarawali Port Loko

44. Mr. Ibrahim S. Njai Kambia

45. Mrs. Mariatu Mahdi Kambia

46. Mr. Osman A. Salam Western Area

47. Mr. Nathaniel R. Gabbidon Western Area

48. Rev. S.D. Kanu Bombali

49. Mr. Mohamed S. Mansaray Bombali

**F. DISPLACED CAMPS**

50. Mr. Julius A. Kamara North

51. Mr. John S. Thorlley North

52. Mrs. Fanny Massaquoi South

53. Mr. Alliah Joseph Sundima South

54. Mrs. Minnette Benya West

55. Mr. Alex Mustapha Kallon West

56. Mr. John Morray Bawoh East

57. Mr. Sheku Sheriff East

**G. REFUGEE CAMPS**

58. Mr. Tamba David Makieu Guinea

59. Mr. Stanley Fomba Sartie Guinea

60. Mr. Momoh Kawa Liberia

61. Mr. Benedict Kemokai Liberia

**H. POLITICAL PARTY REPRESENTATIVES**

62. Mr. Desmond E.F. Luke NUM

63. Mr. Osman B. Conteh NUM

64. Mr. Franklyn E.D. Cline-Thomas PPP

65. Mr. Edward Bundu-Kamara PPP

66. Mr. Ibrahim Ben Kargbo PNC

67. Mr. Sanie Samuel Sesay PNC

68. Mr. Edward Mohamed Turay APC

69. Mr. Victor Bockarie Foh APC

70. Dr. S.S. Magona PDP

71. Mr. Osman A. Kamara PDP

72. Mr. Lawrence Loving Lamin NPP

73. Mr. Alimamy Yamba Komeh NPP

74. Rev. Paul L. Dumbar SLPP

75. Dr. Prince Harding SLPP

76. Dr. Y. M. Koroma UNPP

77. Mr. Kakpindi Jamiru UNPP

78. Mr. Suffian Kargbo NDA

79. Mr. F.B.L. Mansaray NDA

80. Mr. Erasmus B, Foray NRC

81. Mr. Martin T. Sesay NRC

82. Abu Aiah Koroma Esq DCP

83. Dr. A. Kembe Stevens DCP

84. Mr. Alfred O.D. George NUP

85. Mr. Sidi M. Tunis NUP

86. Mr. Ousmann Hassann NADP

87. Mr. Abdul Kamara NADP

88. Mr. George E. Palmer DLP

89. Mr.John E.A. Lansana DLP

90. Mr. Andrew V. Lungay SDP

91. Mr. Ken Akinshola Thomas SDP

92. Major (Rtd) S. Roberts NPC

93. Mr. J.S.M. Saffa NPC

94. Mrs. Geredine Williams CPP

95. Mr. A.R. Conteh CPP

**I. ORGANISATIONS**

96. Mr. Hassan Barrie Labour Congress

97. Mr. M'ban Kabu SLTU

98. Dr. M.K. Kormoh Academic Staff

99. Mr. Ansu B. Lansana NUSS

100. Rev. Amadu F. Kamara CCSL

101. Alhaji I. Kalil Gillen Muslim Congress

102. Dr. Hassan Hariri Medical and Dental

103. Ms. Cecilia Samuels SILWODMO

104. Alhaji M.Musa King Chamber of Commerce

105. Mr. Olu Awoonor-Gordon SLAJ

106. Rev. Fr. Alphonso Carew Catholics

107. Bai Hinga Koraray Bangura Petty Traders

108. Mr. Alpha A. Kamara Motor Drivers

109. Mr. J.D. Bob-Momoh Farmers Association

110. Mr. Victor Reider NCCP

111. Dr. F. Boye-Kamara Women's Movement Peace

112. Mr. Frederick J.M. Kamara SLUDI

113. Mrs. Christiana Ina Vandi Teachers Colleges

114. Mrs. Miniratu Konneh FOMWASL

115. Dr. Nana Pratt NOW

116. Alhaji Emadu S.D. Rogers SLESA

117. Mr. Kanja I. Sesay SLANGO

118. Prof. I. Taqi USL

**J. THE ARMED FORCES**

119. Lt. Colonel K.E.S. Boyah

120. Major K.A.F. Kargbo

121. Major Max-Kanga

122. Major F.M. Duwai

123. Staff Sergeant Kaindama Kargbo

**K. NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY**

124. Dr. Kadi Sesay

125. Dr. Nurainie Abdulai

**L. NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

126. Mr. Sahr Matturi

127. Mr. Emile V. Carr

128. Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabba

129. Dr. S.T.O. Alghali

**M. DISTRICT WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS**

130. Mrs. Emilia Martha Kamara Bombali

131. Mrs. Zainab S. Adams Tonkolili

132. Mrs. Fatu Fabasa Koinadugu

133. Mrs. Jane Lahai Moyamba

134. Madam Thor Kallon Kono

135. Mrs. Elisabeth Lavalie Bo

136. Mrs Betty Will Pujehun

137. Mrs Mary Quarshie Kailahun

138. Mrs. Mary Turay Kenema

139. Miss Mengie King Bonthe

140. Mrs. Mariatu Fofana Kambia

141. Mrs. Patricia Forki Sonkoy Port Loko

142. Mrs. Catherine Kamara Western Area

**N. INTERIM NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

143. Dr. James Jonah

144. Alhaji Dr. A.T. Fadlu-Deen

145. Mr. I.M. Sesay

146. Mr. A.I. Cyllah

147. Prof. H.B.S. Kandeh

148. Mr. D.A.B. Minah

**O. SIERRA LEONE POLICE FORCE**

149. Commissioner A. Kandeh

**P. SIERRA LEONEANS ABROAD**

150. Dr. Jonathan Peters Peace Coalition USA

151. Dr. Richard M'Bayo Peace Coalition USA

152. Dr C Webber Oslo Peace Conference

153. United Kingdom

**Q. CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN**

154. Mrs. Shirley Y. Gbujama

 **LIST OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVERS**

1. Mr. Mohamed Kamara Petty Traders

2. Sheikh Mohamed Mulati-Sesay Petty Traders

3. Mr. Mohamed Tejan Jalloh Petty Traders

4. Mr. Abibu B. Deen Petty Traders

5. Mrs. N'yama Kai-Samba PPP

6. Dr. Abass Bundu PPP

7. Mr. Eke Halloway PPP

8. Mr. John Pessima PPP

9. Mrs Sallay Kamara PNC

10. Mr. Edward Gbla PNC

11. Mr. Patrick Swaray PNC

12. Mr. Shadrach E. Williams PNC

13. Mr. Ibrahim Mansaray NUM

14. Mr. Ishmael Ngakui NUM

15. Mr. Masood M. Sesay NUM

16. Mr. Albert E. Hammond NUM

17. Mr. Mohamed Gassama PDP

18. Mr. Bami Cheedy PDP

19. Mrs. Salimatu Khan NOW

20. Ms. Josephine Sandy Catholics

21. Capt. (Rtd) Abdul R. Kamara NPRC

22. Mr. R.W.O.B During City Council

23. Mr. Ivan Savage City Council

24. Mr. V.C. Johnson City Council

25. Mrs. Cecilia Greenwood NOW

26. Mrs. Amy Smythe NOW

27. Mrs. Hannah Harding NOW

28. Mr. M.A. Carrol Chamber of Commerce

29. Miss Ayodele Wac-Williams Chamber of Commerce

30. Mrs. Patricia V. Thomas Chamber of Commerce

31. Mrs. Daisy Bona City Council

32. Mrs. Zainab Bangura District Women's Organisations

33. Mrs. Clarence Davies SLANGO

34. Mrs. Sia Dunbar SLANGO

35. Mrs. Gwen Mason SLANGO

36. Mrs. G. Demarke SLANGO

37. Alhaji U.N.S. Jah Muslim Congress

38. Alhaji Mohamed Foday Kamara Muslim Congress

39. Haja Aisha Sasso Muslim Congress

40. Alpha Yacoub Mustapha Muslim Congress

41. Mr. Abubakarr Swarray Refugees Guinea

42. Mr. M.E.S. Lamin Farmers Association

43. Mr. A.R.C. Conteh Farmers Association

44. Chief Jusu S. Sankoh Farmers Association

45. Mrs. Zainab Fofana Farmers Association

46. Mr. Chris George NRP

47. Miss Daphne Taylor NRP

48. Mr. Babatunde Blyden NCD

49. Ms. Isha L. Dyfan Women's Movement for Peace

50 Ms. Lucinda Amara Women's Movement for Peace

51. Mrs. Isa Coker Women's Movement for Peace

52. Mrs. Masarah F. Tarawalli Women's Movement for Peace

53. Mrs. Harriet Turay NUP

54. Mrs. Aminata Mansaray NUP

55. Mr. Musa Turay NUP

56. Mr. Joe Samu NUP

57. Dr. A.Y.S.Kamara DCP

58. Mrs. N. Koroma DCP

59. Mohamed Yoki Kailahun District

60. Mr. Henry H. Baion Kailahun District

61. Dr. Paul Tengbe Kailahun District

62. Mrs. Lilian Sesay Kailahun District

63. Mr. Sam Neville NADP

64. Mr. A.B. PArpar NADP

65. Mr. Allieu Sillah NADP

66. Mr. Patrick Moriba NADP

67. Mr. Abdul R. Carew DLP

68. Mrs. Mary Tholley DLP

69. Mr. Sylvester Navo SDP

70. Mr. Pios Foray SDP

71. Mr. Tanie Taylor SDP

72. Mr. Thaim S. Kamara SDP

73. Mr. Francis Maxwell NPC

74. Mr. Victor Lamin NPC

75. Ms. Mabinty Falama NPC

76. Mr. Max A.L.Corneh NPC

77. Mr. Paul J. Amara CPP

78. Mr. Richard Kamara CPP

79. Mrs. Rhylatu Gerber CPP

80. Mrs. Fatu Gondor CPP

81. Ms. Marian Kamara Women's District Organisations

82. Ms. Yabom Kanu Women' District Organisations

83. Mr. Francis Ahmad Bawoh NDA

84. Mrs. Kadiatu Isatu Kamara NDA

85. Alhaji Amadu M.B. Jalloh NDA

 **LIST OF OBSERVERS**

 **INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

1. Mr. S.B. Alhassan Ghana High Commission

2. Rev. N.T. Dixon Liberian Embassy

3. Mr. John McClintoc European Union

4. Mr. Charles A. Ray U.S.A. Embassy

5. Mr. Joe Keshi Nigeria High Commission

6. Mr. Mohamed B. Jalloh UNICEF

7. Mr. Remi Doyen French Embassy

8. Mr. Sama Lenghor WHO

9. Kathryn Jones United Nations

10. Berhanu Dinka United Nations

11. Mrs. Valerie C. Patnelli Consulate of Japan

12. Mr. Ian McCluney British High Commission

13. Dr. Moses Anafu Commonwealth Secretariat

14. Mr. Kenneth Wollack National Democratic Institute

15. Mr. Stoney Cookes African American Institute

16. Mr. Amadu Shour Amnesty International

17. Mrs. Elizabeth Lwanga UNDP

 **LIST OF OBSERVERS**

 **NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

1. Mr. Saidu Bangura National Council of Youths

2.\* Movement for Campaign against War(MOCAW)

3. Mr. Paul Kamara National League for Human Rights and Democracy

4. Mrs. Marian Kamara Sierra Leone Grass Roots Women's Organisation

5. Sheik Alimamy S.H. Conteh Multi Religious Council for Justice and Peace

6. Mrs. Olatungie Campbell SLAAIS

7. Mrs. Deanna Thomas SLAAIS

8. Mrs. Marian Lisk SLAAIS

9. Mr. Edward Med Kamara Peace Child International

10. Mr. Ansumana Konneh Peace Child International

11. Mr. Konima Birch-Taylor Peace Child International

12. Mr. Sheku Syl Kamara Peace Child International

13. Mr. Abdul Gillen Young Disabled People's Organisation

14.\* National League for Youth Protection (NLYP)

15. Rev. David B. Coker Indigenous Churches

16. Rev. E.S. Mbawa Indigenous Churches

17. Rev. Adon Nicol Indigenous Churches

18\*. Forum for Democratic Initiatives (FORDI)

19\* United Rural Women (URWA)

20.\* Sierra Leone Institution of Engineers

21\* Steg-Base Club, POW

22.\* ActionAid

23. Mrs. Zainab Magnani MODDRA

\* The names of delegates who representated these organisations are not available.

**LIST OF ACCREDITED FOREIGN PRESS**

1. Reuters

2. Focus (BBC)

3. Network (BBC)

4. V.O.A

5. Associated Press

6. West Africa

7. International Press Associate (London)

8. Radio France International

**LIST OF ACCREDITED LOCAL PRESS**

1. SLENA

2. New Citizen

3. New Shaft

4. Unity Now

5. Standard Times

6. Expo Times

7. Afro Times

8. Weekly Echo

9. Concord Times

10. Liberty Voice

11. Daily Mail

12. G.I.S

13. Vision

14. For Di People

15. New Light

16. Weekend Spark

17. Eastern Post

18. 1,2,3

19. State House

20. P.R.O.'s Office

21. Diplomat Magazine

22. S.L.B.S. Radio and TV

23. Radio KISS

24. Radio Mankeneh

**CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT**

1. Mrs. Glynis Blyden

2. Mr. S.A. Mattia

3. Mr. Sahr Matturri

4. Mr. Joseph Vamboi

5. Mr. Kemoh Mansaray

6. Mr. I.S. Bangura

7. Mr. David Momoh

8. Mr. C.V. Macauley

9. Mr. I.B.S. Kalleh

10. Mr. M.S. Sesay

11. Mr. M.N. Conteh

12. Mr. J. Samuka

13. Mr. T.N. Bangura

14. Mr. Osman Kamara

15. Mrs. A.B. M. Sellu

16. Mr. Harold Koroma

17. Mrs. Zainab Bassie

18. Mrs. Victoria Koker

19. Mr. Abdul P. Kamara

20. Mrs. Maude Hughes

21. Ms. Rosetta Macauley

22. Mrs. Daisy Johnson

23. Ms. Alberta Bindi

24. Mr. F. Keita

25. Mr. Ansu Sillah

26. Mrs. G. Felvus

27. Dr. Joe A.D. Allie

28. Mr. I.A. Allison Konteh

29. Mr. Graham

30. Mr. P. Sheriff

31. Mrs. Fatu Z. Kargbo

32. Mrs. Henrietta Coker

33. Mrs Daphne George

34. Mrs Elizabeth Allie

35. Mrs Henrietta Conteh

36. Ms. Edith Manley

37. Ms. Theresa Demby

38. Ms. Mary Will

39. Mrs. Sabaina Bockarie

40. Ms. Lucinda Scott

41. Mr. Olu Alghali

42. Mr. R.I. Pobee

**CONFERENCE WORKING GROUP**

1. Prof. H.B.S. Kandeh, INEC

2. Dr. A.T. Fadlu-Deen, INEC

3. Mrs. G. Blyden, INEC

2. Mr. F. Keita, INEC

3. Mr. S.A. Mattia, INEC

5. Mr. P. Sheriff, INEC

6. Mr. R.I. Pobee, UNDP

7. Mr. O. Alghali, UNDP

 **PROGRAMME**

**MONDAY 14TH AUGUST**

17:00 - 20:00 REGISTRATION

**TUESDAY 15TH AUGUST**

08:00 - 09:30 REGISTRATION

**10:00 - 11:00 OPENING CEREMONY**

a) Prayers

b) Welcome Address

Prof. H.B.S.Kandeh, Commissioner INEC,

Conference Co-ordinator

c) Chairman's Remarks

Mrs. S.Y.Gbujama, Secretary and Registrar

University of Sierra Leone

d) INEC Statement

Dr. J.O.C.Jonah, Chairman

Interim National Electoral Commission

e) NCD Statement

Dr. K. Sesay, Chairman

National Commission for Democracy

f) UNDP Statement

Mrs. E .Lwanga, Resident Representative

United Nations Development Programme

g) Formal Opening

Capt. V.E.M. Strasser, Chairman

National Provisional Ruling Council

**11:00 - 12:00 RECEPTION**

**12:00 - 14:00 PLENARY**

Policy statements (5 Minutes each)

**14:00 - 15:00 LUNCH**

**16:00 - 19:00 PLENARY**

Policy Statements (5 Minutes each)

**WEDNESDAY 16TH AUGUST**

**09:00 - 11:00 PLENARY (Presentations by INEC)**

INEC's approach to civic/voter education.

Mr. I .M. Sesay, Commissioner

Eastern Province

Registration of voters.

Prof. H.B.S.Kandeh, Commissioner

Southern Province

**11:30 - 13:00 PLENARY (Presentations by INEC)**

Preparation of the Electoral Laws.

Mr. A.I. Cyllah, Commissioner

Northern Province

Efforts to enhance INEC's independence and integrity.

Alhaji Dr. A.T. Fadlu-Deen, Commissioner

Western Area

Involvement of the international community in the electoral process.

 Dr. J.O.C. Jonah, Chairman

**13:00 - 14:30 LUNCH**

**15:00 - 19:00 WORKING GROUPS**

A. The security situation and the electoral time table

B. Code of conduct for Presidential and Parliamentary campaigns.

C. Campaign financial regulations for political parties.

D. Proportional Representation or First Past the Post system of voting.

**THURSDAY 17TH AUGUST**

**09:00 - 11:00 WORKING GROUPS CONTINUE**

**11:30 - 13:00 PLENARY**

Reports from working groups

Group B & Group C

**13:30 - 14:30 LUNCH**

**15:00 - 17:00 PLENARY**

Reports from working groups

Group D

Group A

**18:00 - 19:00 FORMAL CLOSING**

A. Chairman's Remarks

Mrs. S.Y. Gbujama, Secretary and Registrar

University of Sierra Leone

B. Vote of Thanks

Mr. D.A.B.Minah, Executive Secretary

Interim National Electoral Commission

**20:00 - 22:00 CLOSING DINNER**