

# SIERRA LEONE - VIRTUAL PROGRAMME FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRS

## REPORT SUMMARY

5, 7, 9 OCTOBER 2020

### PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Further strengthening relations between the UK Parliament and the Parliament of Sierra Leone, CPA UK organised a three half-day programme for committee chairs and clerks on techniques for running effective committee inquiries.

Held in partnership with the British High Commission in Freetown, delegates from Sierra Leone met virtually with counterparts from the UK Parliament for a programme focussed on various aspects of ensuring effective oversight and scrutiny through parliamentary committees. Over the course of the programme, participants were able to compare and contrast committee procedure, discuss common challenges and solutions, as well as explore new ways of working required in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This programme formed part of CPA UK's long-term partnership with the Parliament of Sierra Leone through which CPA UK delivers various capacity building programmes to enhance the technical skills of members and parliamentary staff in carrying out their roles to support effective parliamentary oversight and scrutiny.

### IMPACT & OUTCOMES

**Impact.** The Parliament of Sierra Leone is more inclusive, transparent and accountable, particularly with regards to the efficiency and effectiveness of committees.

**Outcome.** The programme delivered the following outputs and outcomes:

- **Output 1.** A three half-day virtual programme successfully delivered to committee chairs and clerks from the Parliament of Sierra Leone.
- **Output 2.** Seven committee Chairs and three clerks have strengthened their skills and capacity within their respective roles in order to ensure effective parliamentary scrutiny through committee inquiries.
- **Outcome 1:** Increased mutual understanding between the UK Parliament and the Parliament of Sierra Leone on procedures of the committee systems and good practice within these.
- **Outcome 2:** Improved relations between the two Parliaments, through discussions and meetings between members and clerks.



*British Deputy High Commissioner Alistair White welcomes members and clerks from the Parliament of Sierra Leone.*

### SUPPORTED BY:



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION UK - CPA UK

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# SIERRA LEONE - VIRTUAL PROGRAMME FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRS

## FULL REPORT

5, 7, 9 OCTOBER 2020

### CPA UK & THE PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

CPA UK and the Parliament of Sierra Leone enjoy a strong working relationship. CPA UK has supported the Parliament of Sierra Leone since 2012 through a number of capacity building training programmes for both Members and staff in Freetown as well as in Westminster, covering issues like parliamentary practice and procedure, oversight scrutiny, legislative scrutiny, and committee management.

In the post-Ebola period in 2016, CPA UK provided technical assistance to Members and clerks of the Health and Sanitation Committee in Freetown as well as Westminster. In October 2017 and February 2018, CPA UK facilitated training programmes for committee clerks and parliamentary staff to strengthen their capacity to undertake their work and to prepare for the new parliament following the 2018 elections. After the elections CPA UK delivered a post-election seminar for new Members in September 2018 and hosted the Clerk for a Westminster study visit in December 2018. In September 2019 CPA UK delivered a three-day parliamentary strengthening workshop

These activities form part of a three-year strategic partnership (2018-2021) with the Parliament of Sierra Leone (PPP). The partnership aims to provide technical capacity building support to Members and staff of the Sierra Leone Parliament, taking into account the Sierra Leone Parliament Strategic Plan (2016-19) and previous engagement with CPA UK.



### PROJECT BACKGROUND

Further strengthening relations between the UK Parliament and the Parliament of Sierra Leone, CPA UK organised a three half-day programme for committee chairs and clerks on techniques for running effective committee inquiries.

Held in partnership with the British High Commission in Freetown, delegates from Sierra Leone met virtually with counterparts from the UK Parliament for a programme focussed on various aspects of ensuring effective oversight and scrutiny through parliamentary committees.

Over the course of the programme, participants were able to **compare and contrast committee procedure, discuss common challenges and solutions, as well as explore new ways of working required in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.**

This programme formed part of CPA UK's long-term partnership with the Parliament of Sierra Leone through which CPA UK delivers various capacity building programmes to enhance the technical skills of members and parliamentary staff in carrying out their roles to support effective parliamentary oversight and scrutiny.

### OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS

The programme began with an introductory session looking at the UK Parliament and the committee system, in which participants discussed the powers of the Commons and the Lords, the election process for committee chairs and the recent changes to procedure

with Baroness Barker and Ben Sneddon, Clerk to the Petitions Committee.

In looking at the role of peers in the UK Parliament, members and clerks from Sierra Leone shared key characteristics of their Parliament, including the reservation of 12 seats for the country's traditional leaders, each representing one of Sierra Leone's districts at the national level.

Members from the UK and Sierra Leone discussed some **challenges around witnesses appearing before the committee** and the delays inquiries can sometimes face awaiting evidence. The discussion included a brief look at high profile inquiries in the UK in which parliamentary committees have faced challenges in hearing from invited witnesses, which have led to committees issuing formal summons.

Baroness Barker also raised the impact of Covid-19 on proceedings in the Lords Chamber, and changes made to Standing Orders to enable virtual participation in debates, committee proceedings and remote voting.

### VIRTUAL COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Under the hybrid Parliament introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, select committees in the UK have developed new ways of working to ensure they are able to continue holding government to account, particularly through virtual proceedings.

Although committees in Sierra Leone have continued to meet in person, delegates were



Committee chairs discuss challenges and opportunities of virtual committee proceedings with Sarah Champion MP, Chair of the International Development Committee at the UK Parliament

able to hear from Sarah Champion MP, Chair of the International Development Committee, UK Parliament, on how her committee has adapted to the circumstances. In discussing the benefits to online meetings, Ms Champion highlighted **opportunities to hear from witnesses based abroad and individuals who would not have been able to travel to Parliament** to give evidence in person.

### PROMOTING DIVERSITY

Following discussions on increasing inclusiveness of committee work through virtual evidence hearings, delegates further explored how best to ensure their inquiries were able to engage wider society.

The discussion explored **the value of diversity and inclusion**, firstly through representatives and parliamentary staff that reflect wider society, and secondly through witness diversity. Members from the Parliament of Sierra Leone shared some of the challenges faced around diversity, particularly that of **women's representation in parliament**, and the impact gender inequality has had on previous committee inquiries.

Chloe Freeman, Committee Specialist, Women and Equalities Committee, shared approaches to enhancing inclusion in committee work from

the UK Parliament, in particular the **use of social media for engaging young people and setting targets on witness diversity**, such as ensuring any witness panel includes at least one woman.

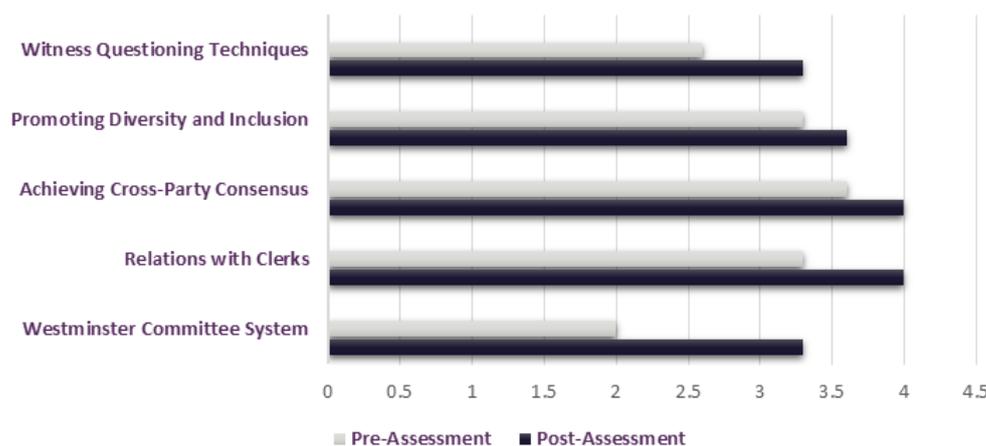
Whilst in conversation with Lord Foster of Bath, the importance of conducting committee visits was highlighted as another effective way of collecting quality evidence from those most effected by an issue being investigated, as well as increasing engagement and understanding of the work that parliamentary committees do. Delegates from Sierra Leone raised the challenge of low engagement with parliamentary work, particularly amongst vulnerable and excluded groups in society and agreed that the work of committees was one opportunity to have such voices heard in Parliament.

### STRENGTHENING MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

**Ensuring committee members are engaged throughout inquiry proceedings** was raised as one common challenge faced by legislatures, particularly considering the various roles and responsibilities held by members. In sharing his experience with participants, Lord Foster of Bath placed emphasis on the Chairs role in encouraging strong member participation, namely through **consultation on committee business including the selection of inquiry topics**.

The value in bringing in a subject matter expert at the start of an inquiry was also raised as one strategy to ensure committee members remain committed to an inquiry through an informed understanding of the issue. The clerk's role in ensuring members have **access to detailed briefings** was highlighted as key here.

In addition to this, Lord Foster raised the importance of committee members understanding the impact of an inquiry at the local level and in particular, on the constituents they represent.



The above chart shows the average level of understanding for Members, collected through participants' personal assessments at the start and end of the programme.

## PARLIAMENTARY PROFILE: SIERRA LEONE



**Legislature:** unicameral

**Seats:** 146 MPs  
(132 elected via FPTP and 14 Paramount Chiefs representing the 14 districts)

**Term:** 5 years

**Last election:** March 2018

**Committees:** 41 (including 7 Standing Committees and 31 Departmental Oversight Committees)

**Speaker:** Rt. Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu  
(elected 25 April 2018)

**Deputy Speaker:** Rt. Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas

**Clerk:** Paran Umar Tarawally  
(appointed April 2018)

**Joined Commonwealth:** 1961  
(achieved independence from Britain on 27 April 1961; Republic declared 19 April 1971)

\*

### COUNTRY PROFILE:

**Head of State:** President Julius Maada Bio

**Ministers:** Appointed by President, approved by Parliament (cabinet is responsible to President)

**Capital:** Freetown

**Population:** 6.62m  
(July 2020 estimate)

**Languages:** English, Mende, Temne, Krio

**Median Age:** 19.1 years

**Literacy:** 43.2%

**GDP per capita:** US\$ 1,600  
(2017 estimate)

## ABOUT CPA UK

CPA UK is the largest and most active of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's branches. Located in and funded by the UK Parliament it supports and strengthens parliamentary democracy throughout the Commonwealth. CPA UK has a distinctive ability and capacity in this area given the origins of CPA since its formation in 1911, and the UK Parliament's propensity to evolve, develop, learn and inform. Peer to peer learning is central to CPA UK's methodology; it designs bespoke interactions between UK and Commonwealth parliamentarians and officials enabling and facilitating knowledge-sharing to achieve improved parliamentary oversight, scrutiny and representation.

**Vision.** Inclusive, representative and transparent Commonwealth Parliaments; fully effective in enforcing the accountability of the executive and representing the interests and concerns of the electorate.

**Purpose.** To learn from and strengthen Commonwealth parliaments to deliver effective oversight, scrutiny and representation.

### CPA UK's Strategic Objectives are:

#### Objective 1. To strengthen parliamentary democracy

Being responsive to the complex challenges of Parliaments and facilitating access to information and skills

We will:

- provide opportunities for UK parliamentarians to learn from Commonwealth peers
- convene Commonwealth parliamentarians to increase their capacity to hold governments to account and to effectively represent their electorates
- build knowledge within the Commonwealth parliamentary community on issues of common interest and concern

#### Objective 2. To link Westminster with the Commonwealth

Promoting collaboration, understanding and cooperation, emphasising its continuing relevance to future generations

We will:

- play a leading role in CPA
- establish and strengthen networks across parliaments, and beyond
- engage young people in our work and vision

#### Objective 3. To set and demonstrate high performance standards

Increasing the positive impact of all we do

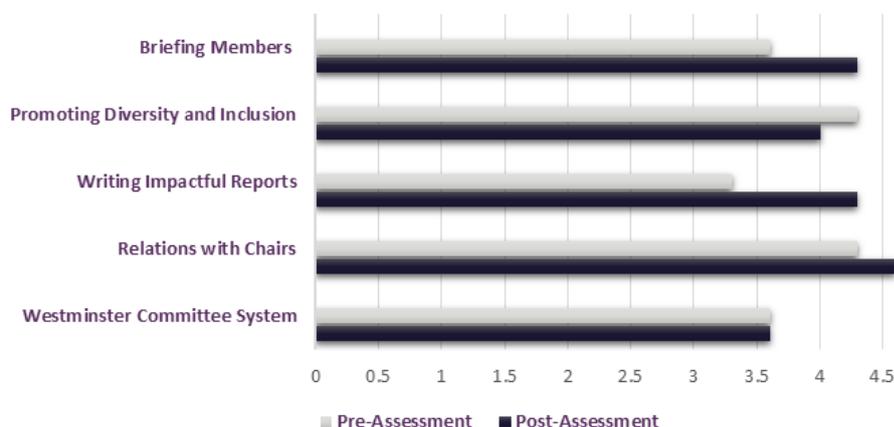
We will:

- achieve value for money in the organisation and delivery of our activities
- set and uphold high standards of behaviour
- use evidence-based learning to improve what we do and how we do it

Delegates from the Parliament of Sierra Leone also held discussions with the Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP on **how chairs can lead their committee through inquiries on politically divisive topics**, and the importance in ensuring all committee members' views are heard and considered when preparing an inquiry report.

good and one clerk as in-depth following an informative session with Alex Knight, Senior Economist, and Rebecca Usden, Committee Specialist in the House of Commons.

During the interactive feedback session at the end of the programme, participants



The above chart shows the average level of understanding for clerks, collected through participants' personal assessments at the start and end of the programme.

Techniques for producing impactful committee reports and how committees can influence government policy through inquiries and post-legislative scrutiny were other aspects of committee work explored during the programme.

### PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Delegates from the Parliament of Sierra Leone expressed their appreciation to CPA UK and the British High Commission in Freetown for the meetings held, and the continued efforts to keep our two Parliaments connected during the global pandemic.

As part of CPA UK's monitoring and evaluation process, participants were invited to assess their understanding and knowledge on areas covered by the programme. Overall, **all committee chairs and clerks found the programme to be fully relevant to their roles**, with sessions having either met or exceeded their expectations.

Of the indicators assessed for members, understanding of the Westminster committee system saw the largest increase in knowledge, followed by how to establish productive relations with the clerk, for which all chairs assessed their post-programme understanding as 'good'.

Participating clerks from the Parliament of Sierra Leone saw the greatest increase in knowledge on producing impactful reports, with two clerks rating their knowledge as

expressed interest in further exploring techniques for effectively questioning witnesses, as well as how clerks can provide effective pre-hearing briefings to chairs.

### NEXT STEPS

Following this programme with committee chairs and clerks, **CPA UK will continue to work closely with the Parliament of Sierra Leone as one of our key partners**. With travel restrictions and quarantine requirements in place under the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of virtual platforms will continue to be explored in keeping our two Parliaments connected and ensuring we maintain strong relations.

Highlighting the inclusive nature of the virtual format, committee chairs expressed interest in future engagements, in particular on areas including legislative scrutiny and financial scrutiny. CPA UK looks forward to continuing our virtual engagements with parliamentarians from Sierra Leone over the coming months. The next planned engagement will consist of **a virtual workshop on legislative scrutiny for Members and parliamentary staff in February 2021**.

This report will be made available on the CPA UK website and disseminated to participants. The following pages include the full programme and biographies of all participants and speakers.

# FULL PROGRAMME

## Day 1: The Westminster Committee System Monday 5 October 2020

British High Commissioner's Residence

TIME	SESSION
11:30	<i>Arrive at the British High Commissioners Residence, Runnymede, Main Hill Station Road</i>
11:50 - 12:10	<b>Welcome</b>  Delegates will be welcomed by the British High Commission and CPA UK.  <b>Speakers:</b> Alistair White, <i>British Deputy High Commissioner to Sierra Leone</i> Jon Davies, <i>Chief Executive, CPA UK</i>
12:10 - 13:00	<b>Session 1: Overview of the UK Parliament and Committee System</b>  This first session of the programme will begin with introductions from delegates from the Parliament of Sierra Leone and the CPA UK team, as well as an outline of the virtual programme for the week.  This session will provide a brief introduction to the Westminster system, with a particular focus on the different types of committees in the House of Commons and the House of Lords, as well as the changes to parliamentary procedure during the Covid-19 pandemic, including the introduction of a virtual parliament.  <b>Speakers:</b> The Baroness Barker, <i>Deputy Chairman of Committees, House of Lords, UK Parliament</i> Ben Sneddon, <i>Senior Clerk, Petitions Committee, House of Commons, UK Parliament</i>
13:00 - 13:10	<i>Break</i> <i>After the break, Committee Chairs and clerks will be split into two rooms for the following session.</i>
13:10 - 13:55	<b>Session 2a: Responsibilities of Committee Chairs</b>  This session will explore the roles and responsibilities of a committee Chair. Speakers and delegates will be able to compare and contrast their approaches to chairing committees and balancing key responsibilities, sharing best practice as well as exploring common challenges. Looking at their influential role and leadership in inquiries, the discussion will explore how Chairs can be most effective in their role and foster productive relationships with fellow members and support staff.  <b>Speakers:</b> Rt Hon Hilary Ben MP, <i>Chair, Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union, House of Commons, UK Parliament</i> Christian Matheson MP, <i>Shadow Minister for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport</i>
13:10 - 13:55	<b>Session 2b: The Role of Committee Clerks</b>  In this session for clerks, the discussion will focus on the role of a committee clerk and outline the responsibilities in supporting committees and their inquiries in the UK, identifying differences and similarities between the two Parliaments. The discussion will also explore approaches from the UK Parliament, such as the use of Standards of Service, in promoting effective working relationships between committee clerks and Chairs.  <b>Speaker:</b> Chris Shaw, <i>Deputy Principal Clerk and Clerk of the Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Commons</i>
13:55 - 14:10	<b>Session 3: Feedback, Recap and Closing</b>  In this session Chairs and clerks will reconvene to share their thoughts on building productive working relationships, in order to effectively conduct committee business. The day will end with a brief feedback session and a look ahead at the second day of the programme.  <b>Facilitator:</b> Rahel Kibru, <i>Programme Officer, CPA UK</i>
14:10	<i>End of day 1</i>

# Day 2: Cross-Party Consensus and Diversity

## Wednesday 7 October 2020

British High Commissioner's Residence

TIME	SESSION
11:45	<i>Arrive at the British High Commissioners Residence, Runnymede, Main Hill Station Road</i> <i>Committee Chairs and clerks will be split into two rooms for the following session.</i>
12:00 - 12:50	<b>Session 4a: Committee Consensus and Cross-Party work</b>  The second day of the programme will commence with a session exploring how committee Chairs can build consensus and cohesion amongst members and promote cross-party working to support the effective running of a committee inquiry. Delegates will also discuss how to ensure evidence before the committee is carefully considered, without party politics impeding strong evidence-based recommendations.  <b>Speaker:</b> Sarah Champion MP, <i>Chair, International Development Committee, House of Commons, UK Parliament</i>
12:00 - 12:50	<b>Session 4b: Producing Impactful Reports</b>  In this session, clerks will explore what makes an inquiry report impactful, and compare the role of the clerk in the Parliaments of the UK and Sierra Leone in preparing these. The discussion will emphasise the importance of making realistic, specific, and time-bound recommendations to government, as well as the role of national media in publicising inquiry findings to the wider public.  <b>Speakers:</b> Rebecca Usden, <i>Senior Committee Specialist, House of Commons, UK Parliament</i> Alex Knight, <i>Senior Economist, Scrutiny Unit, House of Commons, UK Parliament</i>
12:50 - 13:00	<i>Break</i> <i>After the break, Chairs and clerks will reconvene in the same room for the following session.</i>
13:00 - 13:50	<b>Session 5: Diversity and Inclusion in Committees</b>  Ensuring committees engage a range of organisations and witnesses that are representative of wider society is vital when making policy recommendations to government. In pushing for such diversity, committees can obtain quality evidence and produce stronger reports that give a voice to marginalised groups. This session will explore the benefits of ensuring witness diversity as well as the importance of representative parliaments and in turn committees, and how this can increase the effectiveness and impact of committee work.  <b>Speaker:</b> Chloe Freeman, <i>Committee Specialist, Women and Equalities Committee, House of Commons, UK Parliament</i>
13:50 - 14:00	<b>Session 6: Feedback, Recap and Closing</b>  The day will end with feedback from delegates on the content of the day, a brief recap of sessions and a look ahead at the final day of the programme.  <b>Facilitator:</b> Rahel Kibru, <i>Programme Officer, CPA UK</i>
14:00	<i>End of Day 2</i>

# Day 3: Effective Committee Hearings

## Friday 9 October 2020

British High Commissioner's Residence

TIME	SESSION
11:45	<i>Arrive at the British High Commissioners Residence, Runnymede, Main Hill Station Road</i>
12:00 - 12:50	<b>Session 7: Effectively Questioning Witnesses</b>  This session will look at how committee Chairs can effectively communicate when leading members during evidence hearings. Speakers will touch on key aspects including teamwork and collaboration between members as well as the effective questioning techniques that can be employed with different types of witnesses to ensure committees are able to extract valuable and vital evidence for their inquiry.  <b>Speaker:</b> Rt Hon. the Lord Foster of Bath, <i>House of Lords, UK Parliament</i>
12:50 - 13:00	<i>Break</i>
13:00 - 14:00	<b>Session 8: Virtual Committee Exercise</b>  Committee Chairs will participate in a simulated evidence hearing in which the theoretical aspects of communicating effectively discussed in the previous session will be put into practice by questioning CPA UK staff members as witnesses.  Facilitated by a committee clerk, delegates will have the opportunity to provide feedback to colleagues on the questioning techniques used. This hearing will also give delegates the chance to further explore the opportunities and challenges around virtual committee proceedings. A full briefing on the committee exercise, including background information and suggested questions, is available on p. 6.  <b>Facilitator:</b> Stephen McGinness, <i>Clerk, Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, House of Commons, UK Parliament</i>
14:00 - 14:20	<b>Session 6: Feedback, Recap and Closing</b>  In the final session of the programme, delegates have an opportunity to share feedback on the virtual programme to inform future activities and support CPA UK's monitoring and evaluation of activities.  <b>Facilitator:</b> Rahel Kibru, <i>Programme Officer, CPA UK</i>
14:20	<i>End of Day 3 End of programme</i>

## SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

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### **The Baroness Barker**

*Deputy Chairman of Committees, House of Lords*

The Baroness Barker is the LGBT Spokesperson and Spokesperson for the Voluntary Sector for the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords. She was created a Life Peer in 1999. After joining the Liberal Party in 1979 she chaired the Union of Liberal Students from 1982 to 1983. During the same year, she took membership of the Liberal Party National Executive. She became a member of the Federal Policy Committee in 1997, and was chair of the Liberal Democrat Federal Conference Committee. Outside of Parliament she runs a small consultancy which provides strategic business development support to charities, social enterprises and statutory authorities.



### **Ben Sneddon**

*Senior Clerk, Petitions Committee, House of Commons*

Ben has been Clerk of the House of Commons Petitions Committee since May 2019. He was previously Second Clerk to the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee and Clerk of the Regulatory Reform Committee. Prior to joining the House service, Ben was a career civil servant, advising Ministers and in the Department of Health, and the Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland Offices, on Parliamentary business, legislation and procedure. Between 2010 and 2013, Ben was a Private Secretary to the Leader of the House of Commons where he was responsible for Government proposals for Parliamentary reform including, in 2011, responsibility for the establishment and operation of the Government's e-petition site.



### **Rt Hon. Hilary Benn MP**

*Chair, Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union, House of Commons*

Hilary is the Labour Member of Parliament for Leeds Central. Previously, he served as International Development Secretary, as a Minister in the Home Office, as Secretary of State at the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, as the Shadow Leader of the House of Commons, the Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Shadow Foreign Secretary. He was elected Chair of the Exiting the European Union Select Committee in October 2016.



### **Christian Matheson MP**

*Shadow Minister for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport*

Christian has been the Labour Member of Parliament for City of Chester since 2015. He currently holds the position of Shadow Minister for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and is a member of the Speakers Committee on the Electoral Commission. He was a member of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee from 2017 to 2018.



## SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

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### Chris Shaw

*Clerk, Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Commons*

Chris Shaw has been a Clerk in the House of Commons for 29 years. He has worked on a number of select committees, including Home Affairs, Defence, Science and Technology, and is currently Clerk of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Between 2000-9 he worked in both the Table and the Public Bill Offices. Chris has been heavily involved with international parliamentary assemblies in his capacity as UK Delegation Secretary to the Council of Europe, Western European Union, OSCE and NATO parliamentary assemblies and, from 2005-10, as Presidential Adviser to the NATO PA. From 2009-12 he served as Head of the Scrutiny Unit in the House of Commons. From 2012 to September 2015 he went on secondment to the Cabinet Office as the Parliamentary Adviser, working closely with the Leader of the House, the Whips and No. 10 on a range of parliamentary issues. In addition to these roles Chris has been involved in the development of senior management development programmes within the House. He is currently the lead official in the House for the Climate Change Citizens' Assembly.



### Sarah Champion MP

*Chair, International Development Committee, House of Commons*

Sarah is the Labour Member of Parliament for Rotherham, having first been elected in 2012. Previously she has served as Shadow Home Office Minister and Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities. She was elected Chair of the International Development Committee in January 2020 and is also a member of the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy. Before joining Parliament she was an advisor for the Arts Council of England, a Trustee and Chair of many arts and community organisations, and Chief Executive of a children's hospice.



### Alex Knight

*Senior Economist, Scrutiny Unit, House of Commons*

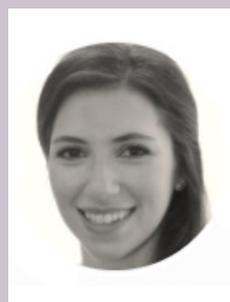
Alex is a Senior Economist in the House of Commons Scrutiny Unit, providing specialist economic and financial support to Select Committees across the House of Commons with a focus on international economics and international trade. Previous parliamentary experience includes work as a Committee Specialist for the House of Commons Treasury Committee. Prior to his work in the Scrutiny Unit, Alex was a Manager in BDO's International Institutions team where he managed value for money consultancy assignments for international donors. Alex also spent seven years working for the UK National Audit Office. Alex holds an MPhil in Development Economics from the University of Cambridge and a BA in Economics & Economic History from the University of York. He is also a Chartered Accountant and Associate of the Institute for Chartered Accountants in England & Wales.



### Rebecca Usden

*Committee Specialist, International Development Committee, House of Commons*

Rebecca Usden joined the House of Commons in April 2016 as a policy specialist with the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee. She has been working for the International Development Committee (IDC) since 2018, managing Committee inquiries into preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector and on UK aid for combatting climate change. Rebecca also sits on the committee for the workplace equality network 'ParliGender'. In 2017/8 she led the House of Commons' parliamentary strengthening project in the National Parliament of Myanmar. Prior to joining the House of Commons, Rebecca worked in the NGO sector. She holds a Masters in International Conflict Studies from Kings College London and a degree in Political Science from the University of Cambridge.



## SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

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### **Chloe Freeman**

*Committee Specialist, Women and Equalities Committee, House of Commons*

Chloe has worked in Parliament in a variety of roles for almost 7 years. Whilst working for the Select Committees, she has provided administrative and operational support to the Scottish and Welsh Affairs Committees, scrutinising the Withdrawal Agreement as a Committee Specialist for the Exiting the EU Committee and most recently the Women and Equalities Committee. As a Committee Specialist for Women and Equalities her focus is on the protected characteristics of Race and Religion or Belief. Prior to starting at Parliament, Chloe completed an undergraduate degree in Religion, Philosophy and Ethics and a postgraduate degree in Global Ethics and Human Rights from Kings College London.



### **The Rt Hon. the Lord Foster of Bath**

*Member, Gambling Industry Committee, House of Lords*

Lord Foster of Bath was the Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament for Bath from 1992 until his retirement in 2015. During his time in the House of Commons he served on numerous committees including the Select Committee on Education. As well as serving as his party's spokesperson on a range of issues he was a government Minister and government deputy chief whip. He joined the House of Lords in November 2015. He recently chaired the Select Committee on the Rural Economy and is currently a member of the Select Committee investigating the social and economic impacts of gambling as well as the EU International Agreements Sub-Committee.



### **Stephen McGinness**

*Clerk, Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, House of Commons*

Stephen is currently the clerk to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Committee, having previously served as the Senior Clerk of the Journal Office and Clerk to the Public Accounts Committee in the House of Commons. Stephen became the Head of the Information Office in the House of Commons in 2004. In 2011 he left that position to become Clerk of the Science and Technology Select Committee. In 2015 he had a six-month period as Second Clerk to the Liaison Committee. He holds a BSc in Biochemistry from the University of Strathclyde and a PhD in Microbiology from Bangor University.



## DELEGATE BIOGRAPHIES

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### **Hon. Alusine Kainde Alu Conteh MP**

*Chair, Sports Oversight Committee, Parliament of Sierra Leone*

Hon. Conteh is a member of the All People's Congress party and was first elected as an MP in 2018. He is currently Chair of the Sports Oversight Committee, and a member of the Local Government and Rural Development Committee and the Ethics Committee. Prior to becoming an MP, Hon. Conteh was a Councillor in the Freetown City Council for nine years, where he was appointed Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee and supported the Council in the execution of its responsibilities around revenue collection. Hon. Conteh is the holder of a CAT (Certified Accounting Technician), a BA in Ministry (Theology), and is pursuing a Master's degree in Education. He is a Deacon and also the Chairman of the Deacon and Elders Council in his church.



### **Hon. Neneh Lebbie MP**

*Chair, Committee of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Parliament of Sierra Leone*

Hon. Lebbie became a Member of the Parliament of Sierra Leone in 2007. She is currently Chair of the Committee of Fisheries and Marine Resources. In 2004, Hon. Lebbie won a seat in the Local Government Elections, joining the Bo City Council as the first female Councillor in the chiefdom after winning the highest number of votes in the country. As Councillor she was Chairperson of the Education Committee and also a member of the Agriculture and Works Committees. Hon. Lebbie worked as a teacher for fourteen years and holds a Teachers Certificate and a Higher Teachers Certificate in Home Economics and Community Development Studies.



### **Hon. Edward George MP**

*Chair, Committee on Works and Public Assets, Parliament of Sierra Leone*

Hon. George became a Member of Parliament in 2018, representing the Dasse in the Moyamba District Southern region of the country. He is currently Chair of the Committee on Works and Public Assets. He holds a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Applied Accounting from the Institute of Public Administration and Management, University of Sierra Leone (IPAM).



### **Hon. Dickson Momoh Rogers MP**

*Chair, Committee on Transport and Aviation, Parliament of Sierra Leone*

Hon. Rogers was elected as a Member of Parliament in 2012. He is currently Chair of the Committee on Transport and Aviation. Following his re-election 2018, he was appointed Chief Whip of the Parliament of Sierra Leone. Hon. Rogers holds a Bachelors' degree in Tourism and Travel Communication from the University Arts London, College of Communication in the UK, and prior to becoming an MP he lectured at the School for Tourism for two years. Hon. Rogers is a member of a number of parliamentary committees, including the Committee on Mines and Mineral Resources, the Committee on Health and Sanitation, the Committee on Primary and Secondary Education, and the Committee on Appointment and the Public Service and Security.



## DELEGATE BIOGRAPHIES

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### **Hon. Catherine Zainab Tawarally MP**

*Chair, Committee on Gender and Children's Affairs, Parliament of Sierra Leone*

Hon. Tawarally is an All Peoples Congress Party MP representing Makei City in Northern Sierra Leone. She is the Chair of the Committee on Gender and Children's Affairs. She holds a certificate in ICT, a Diploma in Mass Communication, and a Bachelor's degree in Education, majoring in Linguistics and minoring in Literature. Hon. Tawarally's hobbies include football and music.



### **Hon. Hindolo M. Gevao MP**

*Chair, Legislative Committee, Parliament of Sierra Leone*

Hon. Gevao is a Member of Parliament representing a constituency in the Eastern region of Sierra Leone. He is the Chair of the Legislative Committee. Hon. Gevao has been a legal practitioner for 17 years and serves as a barrister and solicitor of the High Court of Sierra Leone. Previously he has served as the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission, as well as the Vice President of the Sierra Leone Bar Association and as a member of the General Legal Council of Sierra Leone. He holds an LLB degree from the University of Sierra Leone, a post-graduate Diploma in International Trade Law from the University of Wales, and a Master's degree in Business Administration with a major in Finance.



### **Hon. Abdulai Daniel Sesay MP**

*Chair, Human Rights Committee, Parliament of Sierra Leone*

Hon. Sesay is a Member of Parliament serving his second term, representing the constituency of Gbonkolenken. He currently serves as Chair of the Human Rights Committee and previously served as Chair of the Health Committee. Hon. Sesay studied medicine at the Adventist University of Malawi and has a Diploma in Clinical Medicine. He is the co-founder of Magbenteh Community Hospital and is the CEO of City Garden Clinic, a 64-bed capacity hospital.



### **Mahmoud Barrie**

*Clerk, Committee on Finance and Economic Development, Parliament of Sierra Leone*

Mahmoud is the Clerk to the Parliamentary Committee on Finance and Economic Development, House of Parliament. He holds a Bachelor of Social Science in Accounting and Finance from the Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone and a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) in Finance. Prior to joining Parliament in 2015, Mahmoud worked as an accountant at a construction company. He enjoys sports, reading and listening to music.



## DELEGATE BIOGRAPHIES

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### **Mary Admire Massaquoi**

*Clerk, Education Committee, Parliament of Sierra Leone*

Mary is a committee clerk in the Parliament of Sierra Leone and has been attached to the Education Committee since May 2019. She holds a degree in Business Administration. Prior to joining Parliament, Mary worked in the Cooperate Banking Department at the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank. She has also volunteered for the campaign against early marriage and advocates against early marriage in Sierra Leone by raising awareness for young girls and educating families against the practice.



### **Mannah Berewa**

*Clerk, Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Parliament of Sierra Leone*

Mannah is the clerk to Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and has over five years' experience in parliamentary practice and procedure and managing committee inquiries. Prior to this Mannah was attached to the Committee on Appointment and the Public Service, in which he would advise the Chair and members on the suitability of Presidential nominees in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. In 2019 Mannah represented the Parliament of Sierra Leone at the United Nations General Assembly. He holds a Master's degree in Development Management from the Institute of Public Administration and Management.



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