

SPEECH
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DELIVERED AT THE PRESS BRIEFING
ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW
FAMILY OF RESIZED BANKNOTES

Mr. Speaker

Hon. Cabinet Ministers

Hon. Members of Parliament

**Your Worship the Mayor of the
Municipality of Freetown**

**Your Excellencies, Members of The
Diplomatic and Consular Corp**

**Members of the Board, Management
and Staff of the Bank of Sierra Leone**

Heads of Private Sector Organizations

**Managing Directors of Commercial
Banks and Other Financial Institutions**

Heads of Professional Organizations

Members of the Fourth Estate

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and
Gentlemen**

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you this morning to this press briefing and seminar on the introduction of the New Family of Resized Banknotes. Your presence here today is a manifestation of your interest in strengthening currency management in Sierra Leone.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the concept of a new resized note started in 2008, with extensive consultation with regional Central Banks and other supervisory bodies in the region, which provided rewarding insights into currency industry trends, costs and practices.

In 2009, after two years of delaying printing of the old notes, the Bank of Sierra Leone took the bold decision to discontinue the

printing of the existing one-size banknotes and progress to a family of resized banknotes with enhanced security features and improved durability. At the same time, the Bank also decided to embark on a policy framework that embodied a determined stance towards a clean notes policy.

The New Family of resized banknotes to be introduced would be in denominations of one thousand, two thousand, five thousand and ten thousand Leones and will be of reduced sizes compared to the older ones.

All denominations of these notes will maintain the same design themes with those currently in circulation. However, the security features in the new resized notes have been enhanced and special features incorporated to aid

sorting and identification by illiterate and the visually impaired (the blind). These features and many more, incorporated in the design of the resized notes, are the subject of the seminar that will immediately follow this press briefing.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as highlighted earlier, the poor handling of our national currency has been of great concern to the Bank, with its attendant high costs in printing replacements for soiled and mutilated notes. It is against this background that we intend to highlight the issue of proper notes handling when sensitizing the public on the new resized banknotes.

Although these new notes have been treated with post print varnish to enhance their

durability, proper handling will increase the expected life span of these notes resulting in significant cost savings. We therefore call on you all, to act as emissaries for this message on improved notes handling.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Bank is aware of the enormity of this exercise which will involve the simultaneous withdrawal of old notes and the injection of the new resized banknotes into the system.

In this regard, the Bank, in line with best practice, will allow the old notes to be legal tender concurrently with the new notes for a period of twelve months from the launch date. In compliance with section 26(3) of the Bank of Sierra Leone Act 2000, we will advise

the public on the status of outstanding notes and when they will cease to be legal tender. We want to assure the public that we will work closely with commercial banks and other stakeholders to ensure a seamless transition process.

Currently, the Bank has sensitized the Cabinet, Parliament, and the commercial banks on the introduction of the notes and this press briefing and seminar today is designed to kick start the campaign of sensitizing all other stakeholders and the public.

In line with these developments, and in accordance with Section 22, Subsection (1) of the Bank of Sierra Leone Act 2000, which states inter alia, that **"the Bank shall have**

the sole right of issuing notes and coins in Sierra Leone”, and having fulfilled the stipulations under Section 25(a) of the Bank of Sierra Leone Act which states **“the Minister of Finance shall, on the recommendation of the Bank, prescribe by Statutory Instrument the denomination, forms and design of the notes and coins to be issued by the Bank”,** let it be known therefore that commencing on or around the 4th June 2010, the Bank of Sierra Leone shall issue new resized banknotes dated 27th April, 2010, in the denominations already stated.

The notes will be launched by His Excellency the President, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, at a special ceremony and the transition process

will commence immediately after the launching. The resized notes will be made available in all commercial banks in the country from the date of launch and members of the public shall be paid only the new resized notes whenever they withdraw cash from their banks. Commercial banks will however continue to receive old and new resized notes from depositors which will be sorted separately.

All the old notes will then be returned to the Bank of Sierra Leone, sorted by denomination, counted, and the paying-in entity would receive the appropriate value. The notes will then be perforated and destroyed in the presence of the relevant authorities, under strict internal controls.

In the following weeks, we will continue to keep you engaged in Radio/TV talk shows, poster displays and interpersonal exchanges, to ensure that we share the information on the new resized notes during the transition process. We believe that it is through our collective efforts that this process will be successful.

To this end, I will like to thank the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Cabinet, Parliament, the Board and Staff of the Bank of Sierra Leone for their support and guidance in the introduction of the new note.

In concluding, let me formally announce the beginning of the Bank's sensitization process on the introduction of a New Family of Resized Banknotes which will gradually

replace the old ones some time in June this year and appeal to the public to improve on the handling of our national currency.

I thank you for your attention.