

PRESS RELEASE

THE GOVERNOR OF THE BANK OF SIERRA LEONE SECURES REAFFIRMED COMMITMENT TO ECONOMIC GROWTH FROM COMMERCIAL BANKS

The Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone, Dr. Patrick S. Conteh, has secured the continued commitment of Managing Directors of Commercial Banks to help pursue critical economic priorities in the New Direction Agenda of Government and to support industry-wide efforts to enhance financial intermediation. They made this commitment in an intellectual engagement with the Governor on Tuesday 19th June, 2018 at the Bank of Sierra Leone Staff Recreation Complex.

The event was aimed at discussing some of the critical issues germane to the role of the banking sector in managing the economy. In his opening comments, Governor Conteh reiterated the caution to the industry expressed by the Minister of Finance in an earlier engagement: “the honeymoon on Government securities is about over. The days of bankers sitting at home and making money by investing in Government papers will end soon, now Bankers must begin the transition to intermediation to support economic growth”

He said this is the spirit of the new direction, one which he strongly share and noted that Government’s priority is to strengthen fiscal management, consolidate revenue and capacitate the central bank to deliver on its key mandate. These goals, he noted, will require the support and cooperation of the financial system to be achieved.

Governor Conteh called on Bankers to embrace the forwarding looking approach of risk-based supervision because it optimizes resources and is resilient to systemic risks. He also drew attention to some on-going industry wide programmes and activities that the Bank was collaboratively pursuing which aimed at developing the financial system and strengthening its capacity to intermediate, such as, the Treasury Single Account, the National Switch and the Sandbox/fintech initiatives. He noted that there were challenges in the industry that should be addressed collectively to ensure the industry’s potential to lead efforts at economic recovery and growth is realized as soon as possible.

In the deliberations that ensued concrete steps were agreed on aimed at addressing the highlighted challenges in the industry, including but not limited to, timely processing of transactions and strengthening compliance with central bank prudential guidelines.

Speaking on behalf of commercial Banks, the President of the Bankers Association, Dr. Damos O. D. Solaru thanked the Governor for the engagement and the Bank of Sierra Leone for all the data and facts presented. He noted that the event was enlightening and provided a means for sustained intellectual discussion. He called on the Governor to not only sustain the engagement but to increase its frequency. He assured the Bank that their commitment to growth is unflinching and they will continue to cooperate with Bank of Sierra Leone to help government deliver on its agenda for a sound and stable financial system