

Minister of Justice, on the theme: “Legal Profession Renewal: Rebuilding Unity, Independence, Public Trust, in the Legal Profession to Optimize Access to Justice.”

The legal profession in Sierra Leone has known periods of great strength — periods in which a united, independent, and principled Bar spoke with one voice on matters of law, justice, and governance, and in doing so, served not only its members but the wider public that depends on the integrity of the legal system. We believe that such a period is possible again. But arriving there requires the kind of honest, collective reckoning that this Conference is designed to provide.

The challenges facing the profession today are real and they are serious. Fragmentation of professional representation, declining collegiality, questions about professional independence, and concerns about ethics and accountability are not matters that can be resolved by silence or deferred indefinitely. They affect legal education, the training of future lawyers, public confidence in legal institutions, and — most critically — the ability of ordinary Sierra Leoneans to access justice in a meaningful and timely way. When the profession is divided or its independence is in question, it is not only lawyers who suffer. It is the citizen who needs a lawyer, the litigant who deserves fair representation, and the public that relies on an effective and trustworthy justice sector.

This Office does not approach this Conference as an arbiter or as a party with a fixed agenda. We approach it as an institution that shares a deep and abiding interest in a strong, united, and independent legal profession — because we know from experience that the quality of justice in Sierra Leone depends, in large measure, on the quality and integrity of its legal practitioners.

I extend a warm invitation to all legal practitioners — regardless of professional affiliation or institutional position — to participate fully, frankly, and in the spirit of genuine renewal. The conversations that take place at this conference belong to the entire profession, and their outcomes will shape the legal sector for years to come.

The time for this conversation is now. My Office stands ready to support it, to listen, and to act on what emerges from it.”

Alpha Sesay Esq.

*Attorney General and Minister of Justice
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