

A shift in Sierra Leone's Foreign Policy Approach

Sierra Leone's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Professor David Francis on the 6th of May, engaged the media on the shift in Sierra Leone's



Foreign Policy approach. Foreign Policy guide the activities and relationships of one state in its interaction with other states in the international arena. Sierra Leone's Foreign Policy Objectives are enshrined in Chapter 10 of the 1991 Constitution. The shift in foreign policy approach will be guided by the Sierra Leone's Foreign Policy Objectives.

The emerging global challenges posed by the COVID 19 Pandemic and the attendant global economic depression and the socio-political and development crisis around in part, has prompted the shift in Sierra Leone's foreign policy approach from Economic Diplomacy to Development Diplomacy.

Professor Francis highlighted that Economic Diplomacy is the use of diplomatic skills with economic tools to advance a country's economic, political and strategic goals in the pursuance of national interests. By economic diplomacy, weaker states have no option but to adhere to the conditionality for the receipt of financial and development assistance, how much and under what conditions. Given the prescriptive nature of economic diplomacy, he justified the shift from economic to development diplomacy.

According to Professor Francis, Sierra Leone's Foreign Policy Agenda and engagement with the international community will be based on Development Diplomacy which focuses on prosperity, human dignity and sustainability and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). At the core of the new Development Diplomacy is the primary focus on Trade & Investment in all our bilateral and multilateral foreign relations and diplomatic exchanges. This will increase Foreign Direct Investments, improve exports and support the President's flagship Human Capital Development flagship programme, the Mid-term National Development Plan and the SLPP Manifesto commitments. These will ultimately contribute to transform the economy and achieve Middle-Income status.

Professor Francis emphasised that the new Development Diplomacy will also focus on collaborating with Ministries, Departments and Agencies in marketing Sierra Leone's potentials in Eco-tourism, Sports, Mining, Education, Agriculture, Trade and Investment. This will be a means to ensure that Sierra Leone's foreign policy shift impacts the lives of all in Sierra Leone.

In the pursuit of the new Development Diplomacy and Foreign Policy approach, the Foreign Minister assured that Sierra Leone will continue to promote and positively work with Sierra Leone's Traditional Diplomatic Friends and relations who have always stood by Sierra Leone.