

AS HE BAGS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD...HON. MINKAILU MANSARAY STUNS INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE.

Date : August 24, 2017

Sierra Leone's Minister of Mines and Mineral Resources, Hon. Alhaji Minkailu Mansaray, was on July 22nd 2017 honoured with the prestigious 'Special Commendation Award for Excellent Leadership and Good Governance', by the Doing Business in Africa Investment Forum.

The award was presented to the Minister in front of a global audience at a conference organized by the above forum in Atlanta, United States on 21st and 22nd July 2017, and it was in recognition of his outstanding leadership skills and political maturity.

Speaking as an honoured Guest, Hon. Minkailu Mansaray held an international audience of political leaders, entrepreneurs and academics spellbound as he dilated on the topic 'Expanding internationally: Avoiding the pitfalls and leveraging Creativity and Innovation in the African Business Landscape'. He cited the Sierra Leone experience in the minerals sector as a case study, and noted that the topic is not only timely, but is of particular relevance to Africa, as the continent tries to position itself to attract much needed foreign direct investment. He pointed out that Sierra Leone, like many African countries is heavily reliant on the minerals sector as a major source of Government revenue and an engine for economic growth. The unprecedented fall in commodities prices over the past three years, and the resultant impact on an already troubled mining industry is therefore a matter of serious concern to African countries.

Minister Mansaray proffered that in the present circumstances, the availability of mineral wealth does not in itself guarantee good return on investment or national development. The challenge faced by Governments in Africa is how to create the right environment to convince investors to take that great leap to invest in a sector that is already under siege and in a continent much renowned for its unpredictability. An environment where international investors can be confident that they will have the support of Government to navigate the pitfalls and take advantage of opportunities for creativity and innovation.

Hon. Minkailu Mansaray then went on to eloquently highlight the major reforms undertaken in Sierra Leone to establish a comprehensive governance framework for the mining sector to ensure a win-win situation for the government, mining companies and local communities. These include well-defined laws and regulations, clear and competitive fiscal regimes, ease of doing business and infrastructural development.

"What we have done in Sierra Leone is to address the regulatory and political risks uncertainties long associated with African investments. We have cut bureaucracy and have improved governance to create an attractive investment environment. We have shifted our thinking towards looking at all policy initiatives with a dual lens: seeing it from both the perspective of the Government and the perspective of the investor. We have also taken steps to improve energy access and develop our infrastructure. We are building and expanding our bridges and road networks; and continue to improve on electricity, water supply and communication systems."

By so doing, Hon. Minkailu Mansaray pointed out; a country can create the right environment for expanding international businesses to avoid the risks long associated with African investment, and open doors for Creativity and Innovation in the African Business Landscape.

Minister Mansaray's speech was well received by the audience who lauded his deep understanding of

the African business and political landscape, as well as his exemplary leadership skills in driving change for development. As one commentator remarked, Africa needs more people like Hon. Alhaji Minkailu Mansaray in leadership positions if it is to take its rightful place in the community of nations.



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