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PRESS RELEASE

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COMMITTEE ON WORKS ENDS PROVINCIAL ROADS INSPECTION

The Parliamentary Committee on Works, Housing and Infrastructure, chaired by Hon. Kombor Kamara has returned from 10-Days roads inspection exercise in the Southern, Eastern and Northern Regions of the country. The Committee had earlier inspected the ongoing roads construction in the Western Area. The Committee has 16-Members including 9 representing APC, 6 representing SLPP and 1 Paramount Chief representative.

According to its Chairman, the reason for the roads inspection was constitutionally mandatory to inquire and investigate the activities of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) under its purview; and make recommendations to Parliament, based on its findings, which have the potential to result in legislations. He said further that the report would be tabled and debated in Parliament in the presence of the relevant MDAs. He emphatically told all the contractors to speedily conclude the roads that are currently being built as they are the cornerstones of the Agenda for Prosperity (AfP) which is championed by President Ernest Bai Koroma. He noted, whilst addressing SLRA officials, contractors and consultants that anyone found culpable for undermining the quick completion of the roads which are dear to achieving the AfP would be stoutly resisted.

In a meeting at GuicoPress office which was broadcast live in all the community radio stations in Kono, the Committee was dissatisfied with the work done by GuicoPress, a Guinean owned Company to the extent of ordering the arrest and detention of its General Manager under Contempt of Parliament. The indigenes of Kono intervened and pleaded on his behalf on the grounds that GuicoPress is the fourth contractor for the 20 kilometer township roads and recently they have stepped up efforts to accelerate their work; whilst assuring community support and monitoring. Being the representatives of the people, the Committee yielded and reversed the decision. The Committee is of the opinion that GuicoPress, the contractor for Kono-Kabala township roads, used the advantage of pre-finance to take the contract from Well Group with whom it had originally partnered. Having seen the capacity and performance of GuicoPress in Guinea, strongly advised them to replicate same in the country to speedily conclude the 25 kilometer Kono-Kabala township roads as soon as possible. The General Manager for GuicoPress told the Committee that they would do their best to end the Kabala township roads in June; and take all their equipment to Kono for the conclusion of the Kono township roads by December, this year.

The Committee challenged SLRA officials, consultants, and contractors that they are of the opinion which can be proven otherwise that they are in league to jerk up road contract amounts in the form of variations and redesigning of road projects that had

been originally awarded. In general, the Committee physically inspected and verified the measured work in the Interim Payment Certificates for which payments have been made recently by MoFED on the recommendations of SLRA, being the client. The Committee inspected the Moyamba township and Taiama-Njala roads; Pujehun and Matru roads; Kenema township roads; Kenema-Pendembu road; Kailahun township roads; Kono township; Sefadu-Yeyi and Yeyi-Matotoka roads; Makeni-Kamakwie road; Makeni-Kabala and Kabala township roads; Lunsar township roads; Port Loko township roads; Mange-Mambolo and Rokupr roads; Kambia township roads; Port Loko-Lungi road; and Lungi township roads.



Committee on Works meeting with China Railway Seventh Group: one of the contractors

Some of the issues discussed relate to the SLRA right of way, compensation payments to affected people, contract agreements, terms and conditions, interim payment certificates in respect of measured work, local content policy among others.

All other things remain constant; the Committee is of the opinion that most of the work done by road contractors is good with the exception of GuicoPress who had lagged behind comparatively. But with their new crusher which is being assembled at their quarry site in Koinadugu they will do well to catch up with others.

SLRA officials, consultants and contractors were put on oath whilst giving evidence before the Committee.