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**PRESS RELEASE  
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## **PARLIAMENT APPROVES \$53 MILLION LOAN AGREEMENTS FOR ROADS IN BO AND FREETOWN**

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 09<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 ratified three loan agreements for the construction of the Bo-Bandajuma Highway and Phase II of the Hillside Bypass Road in Freetown.

The following agreements have been approved by Parliament:

- I. “Loan Agreement Between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the African Development Bank Fund (on Behalf of the Transition Support Facility) Mano River Union Rehabilitation of Bo-Bandajuma Road Project, dated 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2016
- II. Loan Agreement Between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the African Development Fund (Mano River Union Rehabilitation of Bo-Bandajuma Road Project), dated 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2016
- III. Loan Agreement the Hillside Bypass Road Project “Phase II” Between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, dated 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2016”

Presenting the agreements prior to ratification, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Momodu Kargbo said among other things that these loans are integral component of Pillar II in the Agenda for Prosperity, will stimulate growth and facilitate trade to realize economic empowerment, to ease traffic congestion in Freetown and enhance international linkage to Liberia and other countries in the MRU and West Africa, the Bo-Bandajuma Road, is a 46 Kilometer road which cost \$33 Million, including \$3 Million contribution by the GoSL, 30 years loan period with 10 years grace period. He also said that the Hillside Bypass Road is a five-mile four-lane road that cost \$20 Million, whilst speaking on the project specifications including earthworks, asphalt, and payment of compensation to the project affected persons.

In responding to concerns raised by MPs, he said that he had signed a cheque of over Le 7 Billion for payment to affected property owners, 95% of whom he said had been taken care

of according to the conditions precedent in the project documents, and called for an over-pass or fly-over to connect Model Junction to Berry Street, whilst describing the marketing activities taking place there as an eye-sore.

Contributing to the debate, Hon. Jusufu B. Mansaray expressed sincere gratitude to President Koroma for the passage of the Bo-Bandajuma Road through Koribondo, part of his constituency that is about to “feel prosperity”, whilst noting the construction of feeder roads to enhance trade and other socio-economic activities in the country.

Hon. Chernor Bah, Deputy Speaker of Parliament said that “the road projects should put funds in the pockets of Sierra Leoneans”, whilst speaking on the disconnection between Model Junction and Berry Street that had turned into a market place. He also spoke about the need for infrastructural development and recalled that it was one of the austerity measures used in Europe and elsewhere to cushion the effects of global economic meltdown.

Hon. Dickson Rogers, whilst agreeing with the Minister on the cost, “he opposed the \$20 Million loan for the Hillside Bypass Road, describing it as very expensive, and spoke about the need for MPs to recommend their constituents for job during the course of the construction phase. He furthered that the fund be otherwise used for the construction of feeder roads in the four regions of the country”.

Hon. Ajibola Manly-Spain whilst enumerating the benefits of the Hillside Bypass Road project “he praised late President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah for initiating that project which was signed in 2006, noting the difficulty of the terrain, and also expressed disappointment at the disconnect between Model Junction and Berry Street in his constituency that has turned into a market place and therefore affecting the schools in that area, whilst seeking assistance from Parliament, pending his ongoing investigation.

Hon. Umu Dankay Bangura in her submission “praised President Koroma for being developmentally oriented, whilst noting the importance of roads construction, and called for the approval of Phase II of the Hillside Bypass Road, without which she concluded that Phase I would be meaningless”. “She also said that APC is second to none regarding infrastructural development”.

Hon. Senesie Fawundu supported the approval of the loans under review and “raised concerns relating to compensation payment to affected property owners, of which him, his parents, and others will be relocated, through the destruction of their houses, including plantations”. He also said that two of his chiefdoms (Barrie and Peje) are going to be affected.

Minority Leader of Parliament, Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai highlighted the benefits of the agreements, and raised concerns on the conditions precedent, conclusion of residual issues relating to resettlement and compensation to affected persons, whilst describing “road as development and development is road”. She also called on the Committee on Works, its agencies and the police to sanitize the road condition at the Hillside Bypass Road.

Acting Majority Leader of Parliament, Hon. Leonard Fofanah spoke on the socio-economic importance of the road agreements nationally and internationally, whilst noting the funds that will be accrued from these roads will be used for the development of Sierra Leoneans. He further spoke on the possibility of having a fly-over between Model Junction to link Berry Street.