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PRESS RELEASE
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PARLIAMENT RATIFIES LOAN FOR THE EXPANSION AND REHABILITATION OF FBC

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on the 15th March, 2016 ratified a forty-five million Saudi Riyals (equivalence \$12 Million) loan agreement for the rehabilitation and expansion of Fourah Bay College (FBC), University of Sierra Leone. The loan is an agreement between the Saudi Fund for Development and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

In presenting the loan for ratification, the Minister of State, Finance, Mr. Foday B.L Mansaray said among other things that the loan agreement is for the rehabilitation and expansion of FBC to attain quality and higher learning; including the rehabilitation and construction of new buildings; rehabilitation of roads; and provision of solar electrification. He furthered that the project will be implemented immediately after ratification and an advisory note is issued by the Attorney General and Minister of Justice (Legal Opinion). He also said that the loan would contribute to the enhancement of higher education as contained in the Agenda for Prosperity. He also underscored that the loan will be repaid in 30-years with 10-years grace period.

Taking a critical view, Hon. Frank Kposowa described the loan as a welcome initiative that should be treated as an “emergency”, but said there is nothing to write home about FBC’s current state, equating it to a secondary school, which he called the “citadel of decadence”.

On the other hand, Hon. Dr. Roland Kargbo thanked President Ernest Bai Koroma for the loan, aimed at restoring the dignity of FBC, and also expressed dissatisfaction over its current state.

Hon. Alhaji Alhaji Seray Dumbuya said that as a part-time lecturer at FBC, the loan’s approval process is a beautiful and wonderful day of fulfilling a deferred dream of past, present and future students of FBC. He also thanked President Koroma for supporting FBC which was once dubbed the “Athens of West Africa”.

Calling for the speedy ratification of the loan, Hon. P.C Alie Kavura Kongomoh urged MPs to “contribute cash” individually to support the project. However, he said when he compares FBC to other Universities in the sub-region in terms of infrastructure, he is left with the impression that history might have lied about FBC being the one time “Athens of West Africa”.

Hon. Ibrahim Ben Kargbo praised President Koroma for the loan, aimed at developing, improving and expanding the current infrastructure of FBC. He opined that this will make it to regain its past glory, and called for capacity building for FBC and other institutions, and averred that FBC had produced the Finance Minister of Namibia and a Governor in Nigeria.

Hon. Komba E. Kodoeyoma hoped work will commence in earnest immediately after ratification whilst recalling the glorious days at FBC. He also said that FBC used to provide light to Sierra Leone, noting that President Koroma and the Speaker attended Fourah Bay College.

MP for FBC’s Constituency, Hon. Ibrahim Parteh Bah noted that the rehabilitation and expansion of FBC is an innovative and laudable initiative of President Koroma, for an institution that Senators and Congressmen from Nigeria also attended.

Hon. Ajibola Manly-Spain also called for the speedy ratification of the loan whilst recalling how he gained access to FBC. However, he spoke about spying, weak students, and those going to college without affording the required fees. He also called on students, lecturers, parents, and administrators, including WAEC and MEST to change negative attitudes that are currently plaguing the education sector.

Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai, Minority Leader of Parliament also recalled the glorious days at FBC, citing inspiring Lecturers like C.P Foray, Harry Sawyer etc. She also said “Sierra Leone is FBC and FBC is Sierra Leone”, and spoke about the need for rehabilitation to be complemented with effective and routine maintenance. She also called for sustainable water supply to FBC, recalling the arduous experience of fetching water from home to FBC for her daughter.

Acting Majority Leader of the House, Hon. Leonard Fofanah who entered FBC in 1966, recalled a student from Nigeria who had difficulty in servicing his fees, but had to take pictures of FBC and sell them in Sierra Leone and

Nigeria to salvage his fees. He also opined that the “run-down” state of FBC started with the “NPRC” who had neglected that prideful institution. He later described the loan as an attempt to take FBC back to where it was, providing education in the sub-region and producing personnel for other territories in the world.