



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION-FIRST MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 13th FEBRUARY, 2013

SESSION – 2012/2013



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First Meeting of the First Session of the Fourth Parliament
Of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Wednesday, 13th February, 2013.

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(THE FIRST ALLOTTED DAY)



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

FIRST SESSION-FIRST MEETING OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC

Wednesday, 13th February, 2013.

The House met at 10:00 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown.

I. PRAYERS

[The Clerk of Parliament, Hon. Ibrahim Sulaiman Sesay, Read the Prayers].

[The Speaker, Hon. Justice Abel Nathaniel Bankole Stronge, in the Chair].

The House was called to Order

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR FRIDAY, 8TH FEBRUARY, 2013

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceeding for Friday, 8th February, 2013. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Can somebody move that the record of Votes and Proceedings for Friday, 8th February, 2013 be adopted as presented?

HON. PRINCE LAPPYA BOIMA P. C. IV: I so move Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. MOMOH MOIWAI: I so second Mr Speaker

(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)

(Record of Votes and Proceedings for Friday, 8th February, 2013

was unanimously adopted as presented)

III BILL

THE APPROPRIATION ACT, 2013

Being an Act to authorise Expenditure from the Consolidated Fund for the Services of Sierra Leone for the year 2013.

SECOND READING

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

(FIRST ALLOTTED DAY)

MR MOMODU KARGBO (*Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development*): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Appropriation Act, 2013, being an Act to authorise expenditure from the Consolidated Fund for the services of Sierra Leone for the year 2013 be read the second time.

(Question Proposed)

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe that notification for this debate on the budget had been on the radio for more than a week and if you look around the Gallery, the turnout of MDA's and Vote Controllers is not satisfactory. I want to ask that a roll call be made so that we know who is present.

THE SPEAKER: Roll call of what?

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: Yes Mr Speaker. Roll call of the MDAs that are present here today.

THE SPEAKER: Do you have the list of MDA's that are present?

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: I believe the Clerk will have it.

THE SPEAKER: No, do you have?

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: No Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Clerk, do you have the list of MDA's present here today? Honourable Deputy Majority Whip, have you made a cursory inspection to see whether these people are in this Chamber?

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: Yes Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Do you still believe that they are not substantially represented?

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: Yes Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Well, what are the sanctions you are suggesting? Suggest something that should be done.

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: If the list of MDA's is not available, can they please introduce themselves so that we take note of them?

THE SPEAKER: Mr Clerk, the Deputy Majority Whip is asking that those who are present should introduce themselves. We only need to have a list of those present here today. We don't need to make a roll call here at all.

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: Okay Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: What is the purpose for all this?

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: I did request for that and the Clerk did say there is no record. For us to know those that are here today, we need to make a roll call Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Excuse me Honourable Member, we always learn from the past so that we prepare for the future. For those who were here in the last Parliament could recalled that certain steps were taken to ensure that civil servants were present and these steps I am sorry to say were undermined. That's why perhaps, I am not saying much on this issue. These are the people who are here, count them. Honourable Deputy Majority Whip, 19 are present. What is your sanction or what do you want to do?

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: I believe out of the 19 present, 18 of them came from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

THE SPEAKER: I am asking you again, what do you want to do?

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: For today's sittings Mr Speaker, we will continue the debate but tomorrow, we shall check again those that are.

THE SPEAKER: That answered my question.

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU (*Deputy Majority Leader of the House*): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe you are asking for the sanctions. I want to ask that we consult the leadership and we come up with the necessary sanctions by tomorrow.

(Question Proposed)

HON. BLISS OSHO-WILLIAMS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to lend my support to the Economic Statement and Financial Policies for the financial year 2013.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, permit me to say this "*Contents and Aspirations.*" This Statement has laid down the foundation for what I consider the President stated in his inaugural speech, one of prosperity. There are economic fundamentals which we have to approach, and that is growth and at the same time demand, supply and availability. But let me first caution on this. We get what you call inflation which in the Western World is said to be linked to what they called index rate. But there is something about inflation which I would say, please approach it cautiously. And the reason is this, when it is linked with index rate in Western World, it is very vital that certain products are taken into consideration for year in and year out. And on the basis of those figures, whether the prices go up or down, they said it is interest rate. But there is a specific and very special magazine in the United Kingdom. I based my example from the United Kingdom known as WICH. WICH goes beyond that. WICH will go from state to state to verify prices of every product and come up with the underlying trend, the inflationary underlying trend is not linked to the index rate. For instance, if you go to buy something from Krootown Road Market, the prices are different. If you go to Waterloo, the prices are different. If you go to Masiaka, the prices are also different. How would you indicate that inflationary figures are the same? I want to say that global trend is not just for big entrepreneurs, but for everybody. We are not an island. When it comes to economic stability, if you take the reverse in America, where the American was degraded from 3A's to what you will call a negative customs, and when you take the mortgage the LIMA, LIMA is the financial institution who went burst. And when it got burst, the money system in America will burst and affected the entire globe. Therefore,

what I want to say to all of you is this, what we have here is the foundation to implement. I insist the word implement, for us to share the wealth of the nation adequately.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Professor David from the University of Harvard was asked: *"What do you think will sustain the economic growth of the world?"* This is what he has to say: *"1800 there were 1 billion people in the world, 1850 there were 7 billion people in the world, but today, we have over 7½ billion people in the world."* They asked him again: *"How would the world measure up to feed these people over a period of years?"* He said: *"We have what we call proration. This morning we provided a lot of fresh foods, but we could not preserve them and at a certain period we got shortage throughout the country."* My main concern is, Dr Ferbian Spencer, a Lecturer in Political Science in Leicester University, I refer to what is described pertaining or relating to my Constituency, which is Bololo, Krootown Road, Susan's Bay and Kroo Bay are places you get the poorest people in Sierra Leone. What I will say, clearing slums does not help the economy. You have to develop where these people are located. We have to make sure that the development of the local economy is paramount.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, this importance came when apartheid was abolished. People went in their hundreds to visit Soweto and that enhanced the growth of the economy of South Africa. Therefore, I think similar things should be adopted in my Constituency. I would say to you that in the last 20 to 30 years, everything went global. It went global not because you go to affluent areas in the world, but because you see what you think you could not afford. I could not afford or you could not afford to live in places like Soweto and in England in years gone by and also in New York, but people go there to see what has transpired and that will enhance the economic development of those particular areas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I would end by saying this; the financial statement by Dr Karifala Marah is basically to enhance what I would call the prosperity of the nation. Financial institutions in this country had to be treated with honour. Of course,

we are not an island. Therefore, in its entirety, we must give praises to the President of this nation. He has laid the foundation for us to follow, so that at the end of the day, Sierra Leone becomes prosperous. I rest my case Mr Speaker. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Minority Leader, is there anybody on your side who wants to contribute?

HON. ANSU J. KAIKAI: Mr Speaker, I am slated, but I wanted some big guns... -
(*Interruption*).

THE SPEAKER: Excuse me, do you want to contribute?

HON. ANSU J. KAIKAI: Yes Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to give my humble contribution to the Government Budget and Statement of Economic and Financial Policies delivered by the Minister of Finance a week or two ago in the Chamber of this Parliament. The Bill is expected to give legislative effects to the financial policies of this Government. The Bill itself, in accordance with our legislative sessional agenda is bound to come at least once a year. But here and there amendments or warrants may come in to backup the exercise that we have started. As you can see Mr Speaker, this year's address is actually a unique one. It is unique in the sense that as you can see some economists, financial or fiscal experts from the other side have decided to keep silence their guns until our colleagues started the ball rolling. The new Members of Parliament in this House have come out with their presentations. To me, it's ok. To them, I am sure it's ok as well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if this Appropriations Bill becomes law, it will give the enabling environment to the Executive branch of Government to dip into the consolidated fund and spend monies that are meant for the expenditure in the interest of this country. Mr Speaker, the budget in itself is a good one, but let me hasten to say that like all budgets, there are estimates and dreams. This time, it is not your dream. It is the dream of all of us. This is because the trend that we are enjoying today or we are so proud of today started when we adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

That was years before 2007; and that is why the Minister of Finance in 2008 acknowledged that he inherited a healthy economy of this country. If that is the case, we can afford to work together continuously for the betterment of this country. If we do that collectively Mr Speaker, we would succeed in our endeavours to do that which is correct. Therefore, I thank that Minister of Finance and his predecessors in continuing on the trend that he inherited in 2007.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have ways of looking at the index. There are scheme of revenues in this country. We have revenue scheme indices. Mr Speaker the trend is a satisfactory one. I have certain observations that I must make known in this House and to this country. The observation is that of Government policies and their effects on the economic equality that we are now intending to achieve by way of the PRSP 2 or 3. This current one, PRSP 3, which is the "*Agenda for Prosperity*" is the PRSP 3 as far as I am concerned. The issue here is that the economy is fine. I read the Second Paragraph. It says: "*the Agenda for Prosperity will build on gains made under the Agenda for Change.*"

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Agenda for Change succeeded, even though it was incomplete. If we proceed to the 12th Paragraph, the second sentence reads: "*we have GDP growth which was 6% in 2011 is estimated to have accelerated to 21.3% in 2012.*" That is wonderful. More than 3 time the average of sub-Saharan Africa. Economic growth in 2012 is driven mainly by the expanding mining sector, but also supported by increased activities in agriculture, construction etc, excluding iron ore. Domestic output will increase by 6.3% in real income.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am glad that the Minister of Finance, during his presentation mentioned the exogenous factors that may slow down our current progressive trend. Among them he said is world prices. He was honest enough to have mentioned that. But looking at things, if we are to put aside those exogenous factors, then, our projection should be 6.3% in real terms. So, we expect things to remain positive. For the man at the bottom of the ladder in this country to enjoy the economy

that others who are better oppoertuned are enjoying today in our country is not easy for them at all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your permission, paragraph 13 reads: *"inflations fell to 11.3% in October 2011 from 16.7% in December 2011."* That is great. Inflation is bound to drop where people don't have the wherewithal to spend. That is simple economics as far as I am concerned. You cannot spend that which you don't have. As far as I am concerned, I agree that the rate of inflation has dropped, and I pray that it will continue to drop so that goods and services will be available for the people of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Paragraph 14 says: *"the total value of official export for the first half of this year more than doubled to 405 million dollars compared to 174 million for corresponding period in 2011."* Mr Speaker, are we surprised? The African Minerals, London Mining, and Sierra Rutile are all doing very well right now. As far as we are concerned, they are paying their dues. Like a retired colleague of ours once said that the iron ore has replaced diamond mercifully. Now, we are praying that we find more iron ore, more rutile, more bauxite, more diamond and plenty of gold. Of course in this country and offshore, we are trying to exploit black gold that would also add to our financial successes. That would be good for this country. It would increase the living standards of even Members of Parliament who are the providers, indirect providers of resources to plenty of people in this country. As far as I am concerned, it serves us well that we should continue the trend in which we are currently in. Our exports have increased and that is stated in Paragraph 16. Mr Speaker with your leave I read: "As a result of the significant increase in export and the moderate increase in import, the trade deficit narrowed to 352 million dollars for the first half of 2011, compared to 556 million dollars for the same period in 2011." Our external debt of course has increased.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we all know that those of us who have been following the trend know that it was far lower in 2007. But I expect it to increase

because since 2007 to date, our appetite for development has increased. And we rely quite a lot on external financing for the projects that we are currently undertaking. I called on the Government to start signing more contracts and to finish the current undertakings that we have. This would enable us have the equilibrium. We are now moving to a new phase. The minister will agree with me that they are now going to have a list of all incomplete projects and the amounts involved. They are going to prioritise those expenditure patterns to make sure that in fact more contracts and more burdens are not put on the tax payers of this country. On the basis of that, I will ask the Minister to please put in place the PIP Programme and its counterparts so that we would have the necessary wherewithal to keep within our budget. This budget has stipulated that our foreign obligations would be alleviated.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is a fact that in foreign global economy, whether you are a consumer or a nation, you must be indebted. If you are not, then, you are not credit worthy and if you are not credit worthy, you find yourself on the wrong side of the bed. This budget is a good budget. The Appropriation Bill is a good Bill. But we must not let the people of this country down. There are lots of issues in this budget that I would want my colleagues on both sides of the House, especially on this side to delve into properly. I want the Minister to depart here with the necessary notes and bullet points that would help him in carrying out his functions. A lot are mentioned in this Appropriation Bill. When we shall have gone into the Committee Stage, I am sure we on this side will come with the necessary observations that may have the minds of the technocrats at the Ministry of Finance to think twice before the actual undertakings are carried out. We cannot afford to do that which is not correct and we are not prepared to have the economy of this country bottlenecked at all. Instead, we will compliment when it is correct to do so. And we will make sure that you do what you have stated in this Bill. On the basis of that, we must as a people do that which is correct. I cannot conclude without saying this that in my constituency, we have projects that have almost been abandoned. We have the water, road, and electricity Projects.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am calling on the Minister to take note of what I have said and to make sure that by the last quarter of this year, those projects are completed. They would be to our mutual credits because I was one of those who approved the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in this House. And this nation is obligated in making sure that electricity, water supply, health, proper sanitation, ten kilometers of roads in and around all provincial headquarter and district headquarter towns are tarred. They should be of equal standard with that of Wilkinson Road. But if you concentrate on only Hill Cot Road, Wilkinson Road and Spur road, spending 36 or 37 billion from the Lumley-roundabout to Hill Cot Road Junction, and leaving the people of Krubolla and Falaba out of the equation, leaving the people of Koindu, Pujehun, Gbondapi and other places out of the equation, then, the distribution of our wealth, the economic equality that this Bill and the Presidential Address emphasised on would not be realised.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the basis of that, I must say that the Bill is a good Bill. But I want the Minister to take care of the externalities that are involved so that the people of this country would also be able to sip from our new found riches. I thank you for listening.

HON. KARIFALA S. CONTEH: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will not just jump into the nitty-gritty of this Budget, but rather, I would just want to take a step back. Firstly, I would say thanks to the author, who happens to take numerous time to get this document completed. With the leave of Mr Speaker, it could be realised that the preparation of this Budget is not an isolated one. This is made known in the last page of this Budget. I think various experts were included in the preparation of this Budget, like the Chairman on Finance Committee, Cabinet colleagues, the Governor, Management and staff of Bank of Sierra Leone, Staff of the Law Officers Department and all those who have contributed in their own ways in getting this document as we are seeing it now. I say bravo to them all. For Mama Salone to go forward, we need everybody's contribution. In that regard, I consider this

document very credible and of course it was prepared by people of high accomplishment in society.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would not be praising but complementing. I want to look at the budget aspect with respect to information and communication. This is found on Page 21, Paragraph 114. Before I proceed Mr Speaker, I wish to understand that the budget we are debating is a mirror image of the Presidential Speech delivered in this Well. It means the successes of the Presidential Address would serve as my premise to confirm the successes of the budget. All that Sierra Leone needs is embedded on Page 21, Paragraph 114. For me personally, I would say big thanks to the officials who prepared this Budget simply because the ripple effect of development, the effect of taking Sierra Leone to the threshold of communications, taking Sierra Leone to the point where we need not go further, but rather getting ourselves thoroughly entrenched with respect to communications. In view of this, my recommendation would be for those concerns to ensure that it gets started.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will move on to water supply. I am from Wellington and my focus is on areas where we have problems, particularly water supply. Again, Page 21, Paragraph 117 has said it all. I would not be reading the whole paragraph, but the essence of turning to this paragraph is for us all to understand the strides taken by this Government to diversify water supply that will lead to many Sierra Leoneans accessing water. But yet, the people of Wellington need more. If we can look, you see there are ongoing projects in Mile 91, Yonibana, Yoni Sella, Lunsar, Pujehun, Kailahun, Port Loko, Magburaka and many other places. But there is none in Wellington. Of course, this is very good, but because the people of Wellington have sources wherein supply of water can be diverted to other areas, we need to give attention to that. And interestingly of all the projects within this document, my constituency, the Eastern part of Freetown is not mentioned here at all. But there are areas wherein they can be slotted too. If we go to Paragraph 16 of this Budget profile, the first column is the job description Honourable Members. Take the Ministry of Energy and Water

Resources for example. Mr Speaker, permit me to deviate a short while. These are the activities of His Excellency. These are the successes, and had it been that we had this document during the past debate, it would have been very much interesting.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I wish to ask that the Wellington community be included. Interestingly Mr Speaker, the people of Wellington have not been benefitting from wells as par what we deserve. We have not been reaching our threshold at all. We are expecting that priority and concentration must be given to that area and we appreciate the structural development in our constituency. But again, water as we always say is life. Mr Speaker S.O. 2, "wata na life. Wi want da life na Wellington."

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am moving on to the third aspect, the roads. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we move on to Page 6, Paragraph 32. Mr Speaker, I am not an economist, but I believe the authors of this document serve as a credible source because, reference are based on the expertise they have, we would be doing the arithmetic. In view of that, I want to register to this House that with respect to roads, the Eastern part of Freetown had been a little bit deficient. I would not be quoting the document in front of us at all. The aspect where the people of Wellington are so much concerned with is the document of the recurrent and development expenditure estimates. We would be dealing with the estimate so that our area will be slotted in. The reason for this Mr Speaker is the fact that the President and his Ministers are seeking the concerns of Sierra Leoneans. So, it is time we join the train and the people of Wellington must not be exceptional. And of course, we are yearning for our area to be slotted in. If we look at the recurrent and development expenditure estimates, Pages 615 and 616 on expenditure, the previous and the current activities are outlined there. My concern is found at the middle of the page. I am referring to this voluminous document given to us. Page 615 says rehabilitation of 25 kilometer roads of selected streets in Freetown and rehabilitation of selected streets of district councils. It is in view of this fact that streets within Freetown are to be rehabilitated. Unfortunately, the people of Wellington are not enjoying those provisions at all Mr Speaker. We need more

roads to be constructed and I am using this opportunity to make my own recommendation. Indeed, the developmental aspect is relatively not at par with the national development. So, I will be making a recommendation because there are still vacant slots for which the people of Wellington can benefit from. The Portee Old Road to Kuntob is very much important and it requires the attention of the people concern. Kuntob Hill, Beccles Street, Philip Street and Melon Street are areas if constructed, will open up economic activities and that gain in those areas is of utmost concern to the Government of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another aspect as I went through this document is the energy sector. And in view of this, we would be moving to Page 6, Paragraph 34. I believe that economists would agree with me that the more the activities, the more the economic determinants and the more the merrier. That is exactly what is happening Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker the energy sector is moving on now. The only advantage is that, the President has set a threshold that has elevated the threshold of energy. The budgeting aspect, if we look at it, concerns especially Western Area. If we go into details, the estimates made do not give much concentration to the Western Area, especially Wellington. The areas that are covered are highlighted on Pages 7 and 16 of the Budget profile. Page 16 on the Budget profile will tell you all the activities and Wellington is not included.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think of this aspect and I would give a pause and I would join up again as we continue. Thank you very much

HON. AMADU FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this Government Budget and State of Economic and Financial Policy for the financial year 2013.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I continue, I want my Honourable colleagues in this House to be honest when discussing this issue. This issue is very important before this House. I am saying this because it concerns the lives of our people. It

concerns money and money is the life blood of a nation. Nothing moves on without money and we are here this morning to start this debate on the issue of money which is the Budget. The budget is a forecast or a plan. The money is not there lying down. It is just a plan to be implemented by the MDAs. Mr Speaker, from the Budget, we can see that salaries and debts servicing take about 70% of this Budget. It is a huge amount we are talking about here. Salaries and debts take about 70% of our domestic revenue collected. The salaries are about 48% and the rest is the debts servicing. Why am I saying this? It is because when we were campaigning, there was a slogan going around '*global.*' Let us be honest to ourselves Mr Speaker. In the workshop organised by the Ministry of Finance, which was very good as parliamentarians, we were educated on the budget and it was clearly said that... - (*Interruption*).

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, a workshop on this Budget?

HON. AMADU FOFANAH: Yes Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Was breakfast served?

HON. AMADU FOFANAH: Yes Mr Speaker, lunch was served Sir.

THE SPEAKER: And dinner too (*Laughter*).

HON. AMADU FOFANAH: We need to compliment the effort of our partners. That is, the donors that usually give money to Sierra Leone. We need these donors all the time. What we have done in this Budget is just a proposed plan. It is an estimate, and we need them to come and compliment this Budget. On this note Mr Speaker, we as parliamentarians have roles to play in our Oversight Committees. We need to monitor these MDAs very closely. This is just a forecast and if there are lots of wastages, those wastages are coming from those that use these funds. We don't want the deficit to increase. The deficit has now reduced to 5%. I want to say thanks to National Revenue Authority (NRA) for their frantic efforts in trying to collect these revenues. I want to say thanks to the Acting Commissioner-General for stepping up to the task. But she needs

to do more. This is because if we go to Page 17, Paragraph 91, under the Domestic Revenue Collection, the issues there concern the NRA and we need all these funds to make this Budget a reality. We need more better controls to be put in place in the NRA Department so that we can get more funds. We would agree that there are leakages; and we need to control them so that this Budget will become a reality.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to use this opportunity to ask all the MDAs. What is the Internal Audit Department doing? They need to step up because they are the people in these MDAs to monitor and control the activities of these MDAs. They must work honestly with probity so that our revenue collection will step up to meet the challenges of this Budget. We are now going towards the Agenda for Prosperity from the Agenda for Change. This Budget is very good, and I want to thank all the partners who supported the Ministry of Finance to put this Budget together. It is a solid transformation of our economy. If we go through this budget on Page 8, we can see that there are increments for this year's Budget, especially for education, health, and infrastructure. And these are the solid foundation of any economy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we need to put this nation first by cutting down spending. As a nation, we must make tough choices on some other things. We cannot afford making those dreams come true. We need to react on them. We have always said that the economy is growing, but we are not seeing reflecting on the ordinary man on the street. It is not reflecting on the ordinary man on the street at all Mr Speakers. We need to say the truth here. It was only when the energy in this country stepped up around the streets that people were praising the Government. People were able to get their living by selling even cold water. But now, when electricity is facing serious challenges, we hear the cry again. We have to be honest with ourselves. The economy is growing, and indeed it is growing. Mr Speaker with all the accolades given to this Government by the International Organisations like the IMF and the World Bank, they continue to pour money in this country. This is due to the fact that they have confidence in this Government and in the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance is

the Ministry that should be handling the finances of this country properly. I want to admonish colleagues in the various MDAs that they need to monitor these funds properly. They need to use the funds properly.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Ministry of Finance for this wonderful work. Let the Ministry keep up the good work. I want to appeal to all the MDA's to keep up the good work. Please forget about things that will get this country down like corruption. We need to step up to this challenge. We want this country to move ahead. Nobody will stop it from moving ahead. I thank you Mr Speaker.

HON. DR MICHAEL SHO-SAWYER: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to make my contribution to the Government Budget and Statement of Economic and Financial Policy for the financial year 2013. The Theme is *"Accelerating Structural Transformation, Inclusive Green Growth of Prosperity."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, thank you very much for giving me the liberty to make my maiden speech in this important debate. I am the Honourable Dr Michel Sho-Sawyer of Constituency 108. I am also particularly conscious of the honour afforded me in serving a constituency that has been represented by people like J. E. Laverse and the Honourable Manie Betts-Priddy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I can certainly say that at a time of great economic hardship and uncertainty for many hard working citizens and families across the world, the actions of this Government, the Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, whether in giving tax incentives to investors investing in job growth and agriculture, appear increasingly connected with the challenges of this country. The Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma had to rewrite the history by lifting us from the economic difficulties under the former Government to prevent the collapse of this country. I would return to those issues in due course. But I am craving the indulgence of this House to use this opportunity to follow one of the conventions of this House by thanking the Honourable Minister of Finance and His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we go to the Government budget or Statement on Page 7, Paragraph 26 and 27, I would focus on these two paragraphs during my contribution. Paragraph 26 focuses on the youths and sports sectors. The total expenditure is estimated about 7.4 billion, compared to the 3.9 billion in the original budget. Mr Speaker, as a youth, I would like to congratulate the Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma in taking this into consideration and for providing such increment for the youths and sports sectors in this country. In the health sector the total expenditure is expected at Le50.9 billion compared to Le32.7 billion. As a medical professional, I want to also thank the Ministry and the Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma for that huge increment provided to the health sector. I believe as Members of Parliament if we are not healthy, we would not have been here to serve our constituents. Therefore, I congratulate the Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma for taking these two sectors as important areas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, progress in our society has not come without tensions or struggles to overcome a painful past. But I believe we are a country of willingness to face our imperfection and continue to keep preaching our ideas. That is the spirit we saw as a nation in Dr Ernest Bai Koroma as this nation inspired the world with a historic gesture by voting transparently for Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. Mr Speaker, it was said by two wise men who were waiting at the gate of heaven for judgement. One day, these two men were standing at the gate of heaven. God turn to the first man and asked him, son, what can I do for you? And he said, my name is Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. I would like to redeem my people and bring prosperity to them. God said to him, go my son and do as you wish. The second man was called and God asked him, what can I do for you son? He said, I only follow to criticise. God said to him, go ahead and continue to be a follower, so you will criticise.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today, we have a President who is a pioneer, an inventor, a visionary, a redeemer, a developer and a God sent. If it wasn't a blessed man like Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, I wondered where our economy would have been

today. Therefore, when you look at this document and you see the increments made, you take courage. Let me take you to Page 8 of the Budget profile. As I stated earlier Mr Speaker, I would focus on two sectors. I am going to look at the Ministry of Youth, Employment and Sports. In 2011, 2012 and 2013 financial years, there have been massive increments that the Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma has made. I want to thank His Excellency again for that. On the area of the health sector, the Government focuses mainly on the Primary Health Care Services. The increment in that sector has almost doubled the previous years. This means that the Government cares about the people of this country. And therefore, when you have a healthy nation and a youth that is taken care of, I believe the economy will continue to grow.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take this opportunity to remind this House that when Dr Ernest Bai Koroma took over in 2007, there was a huge deficit in the country. It was not only deficit during his first term of office, we were hit by the Global Economic Crisis. Mr Speaker S.O. 2, "*den kin se if America snizis, na wi go kech d kol.*" And the Western World was hit by Global Crisis and during Dr Ernest Bai Koroma's first year in office, we were hit with the Global Crisis, which he maneuvered to save us from the hardship that was felt across the world.

HON. ANSU J. KAIKAI: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise on S. O 32(11). Mr Speaker it reads: "*The conduct of the President and Judges or the performance of judicial functions by other persons and the personal conduct of Members of Parliament shall not be referred to except upon a substantive Motion moved for that purpose.*"

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, with respect to you, how does that bear on what this?

HON. ANSU J. KAIKAI: Frequent and persistent reference in invoking the name of the President in itself is out of order.

THE SPEAKER: Is that what the Standing Orders say?

HON. ANSU KAIKAI: Mr Speaker, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma is the President of this country and the Standing Orders say the President.

THE SPEAKER: It's okay Honourable Member.

HON. MICHEL SHO-SAWYER: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to continue with my contribution, I would be using the word 'Government of Sierra Leone' instead of saying Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. But I think he is the Government of Sierra Leone and he is leading the Government of Sierra Leone. In the first and second years of the tenure of office of this Government, under the leadership of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, we are faced with fuel crisis, which was a global crisis. Dr Ernest Bai Koroma and his Government saw us through that crisis. There was Global Crisis during the first year and fuel crisis during the second year. I recalled during those years when everyone was saying 'Global.' But the Government was able to manage that crisis effectively. In his third year, Sierra Leone was hit again by food crisis and economic crunch, which almost saw the collapse of the Euro Zone. It saw the walls of the good credit rating of the United States of America. We saw the downfall and civil war of destruction of many other countries. We saw the issues in Spain, Greece, France and United State of America. But the APC Government, led by Dr Ernest Bai Koroma carried us on his back and kept us at peace. He led us towards the armpit of prosperity. And I am emphasising towards the change His Excellency was talking about.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was a time when you traveled outside of Sierra Leone, people were afraid to say that they come from Sierra Leone. This was because the moment you mention that you came from Sierra Leone, S.O 2 Mr Speaker, "*na da kot fut en kut an kontri u Komot?*" Our image was so appalling. Flight insurance to Sierra Leone crumbled and flight tickets were very expensive. Our image as a country was tarnished. Investors only came to this country at night. Not until the Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma started transforming Sierra Leone and changing

our international image. And today, because of the Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, we are proud to say we are Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, because of this Government's stewardship, today, we can proudly say gone are the days when we are known as the darkest city in the world. We can say gone are the days when investors only visit Sierra Leone for diamonds. We can say gone are the days when 6 out of 10 mothers would die giving birth. We can say gone are the days when people laughed at us as the least developed country in the world. It used to take us two to three days to get to Guinea, or over seven to eight hours to the sweet city of Bo. Today, we can boast of real investment in Sierra Leone under the capable leadership of His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. We have plenty of investments in this country like the African Minerals, London Mining, ADAX and many more that are providing thousands of jobs. Because of these investments today, we have Sierra Leoneans as entrepreneurs in the ICT areas, in construction business, in health sector, in transport sector and many other sectors. Let me thank the Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me also mention my gratitude when we are talking about increasing the Budget for every other sector of the MDAs in Sierra Leone. Let me not fail here to mention my gratitude in entering Parliament, under good conditions of service which were driven by His Excellency Dr Ernest Bai Koroma for which we are all beneficiaries. My colleagues on the other side would attest to that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have a Government and a President who served as the brain of this country. He is brain behind the infrastructural development of this country. He is the brain behind the electrification of this country and the brain behind the food security in the country. He is the brain behind increased employments in the country. He is the man behind the massive inflow of investors and improvement in our health, education, fishing, and youths sectors and rebranding the image of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Ministry of Finance and all those who contributed to this Budget. It is coming from me a common sensed man, a grass root man, not an economist. But after going through this Budget, I came to understand that the leadership in this country love the people of this country and want to improve this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Sierra Leone and His Excellency on behalf my people from Constituency 108. We appreciate the Wilkinson Road that leads through my constituency. We appreciate the community centre that was built in Congo Town. We appreciate the other roads that were constructed around the constituency at King Tom and King Tom Barracks. We also appreciate the health care facilities that were provided in the Police Barracks. I want to say the youths of Banana Water, Pentagon, Under Pole, Cabinet Dynamic, Long Bench and all the people of Constituency 108 thank this Government and His Excellency, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. I thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I believe that there were workshops and meetings on this Budget. I saw it manifested in the performance this morning.

ADJOURNMENTS

(The House rose at 2.30 p.m. and was adjourned until Thursday, 14th February, 2013, at 10.00 a.m.).