

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMEN TARY DEBATES

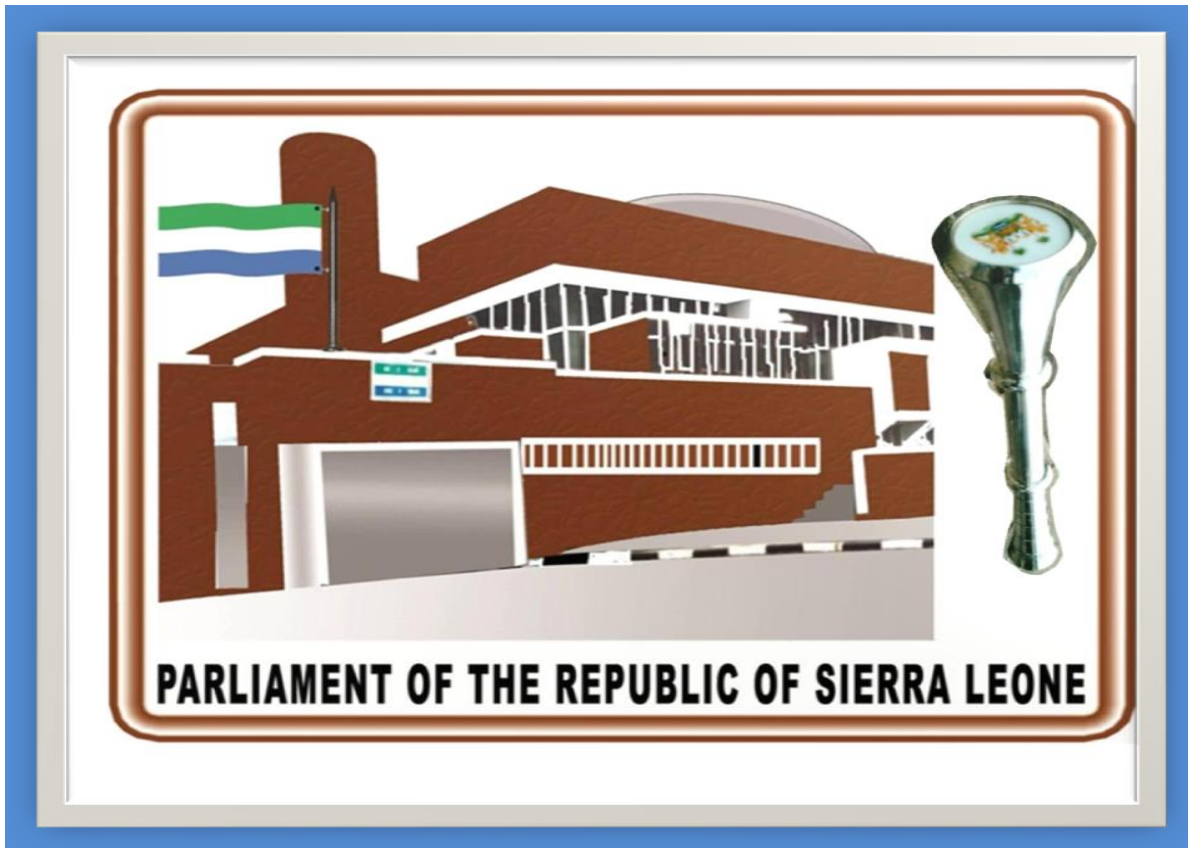
(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

THIRD SESSION - THIRD MEETING

THURSDAY, 19 FEBRUARY, 2015

SESSION – 2014/2015



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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Third Meeting of the Third Session of the Fourth Parliament
of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Thursday, 19th February, 2015.

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EXPLANATION ON THE PRESENT SITUATION ON THE REHABILITATION OF
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THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Thursday, 19th February, 2015.

The House met at 10:15 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The Speaker, Hon. Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya, in the Chair].

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5(2)

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU (*Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business*): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to crave your indulgence to amend the Order Paper to include Item IV. In this case, the Order Paper should now read, 'Announcement of the Membership to the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) to replace Honourable Alimamy G. Kargbo. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I hope there is no objection to the proposed amendment made by the Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business. Honourable Members, I am greatly delighted this morning to tell you that we have been honoured by the visit of a distinguished personality in the person of Rt. Honourable Baroness Hayman. Rt. Honourable Baroness Hayman is Grand Commander of the Order of the British Empire that most of us know as knighthood. Mrs Haman is also a Cross Bencher in the House of Lords. A Cross Bench Member in the House of Lords is one that does not belong to any political party. In other words, she is an independent Member of Parliament. I have a short profile of Mrs Haman which I will like to read for the benefit of Members present. Baroness Hayman was a Member of Parliament, representing the Labour Party from 1974-1979. She was then raised to the peerage as Baroness Hayman in the London Barrow in 1996.

Honourable Members, since she entered the House of Lords, Madam Hayman had held a number of high profile positions, including the first Speaker of the House of Lords, a position she held from 2006 to 2011. In addition to this vital role, she is also a former Minister, having served as parliamentary undersecretary of State for the Department of Environment, Transport and the Region, Minister for Roads (1997-1998), the Department of Health (1998-99), and a Ministry of State at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1999 to 2001). She has also been a member of the House of Lords Select Committees (2005-2006), the Liaison Committee (2005-2006) and the Procedure Committee (2006 – 2011), whilst holding the position of Lord Speaker. She is currently a member of the Parliamentary and Political Honours Committee from 2012 to date.

Honourable Members, Madam Hayman holds a long standing interest in Global Health, and she is the Vice Chairperson of the All Party Parliamentary Group on malaria and neglected tropical diseases from 2012 to date. She is also a Member of the Global Health and a Member of the Child Health and Vaccine preventable diseases. She is a former President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, UK Branch and a current member of its Executive Committee.

Honourable Members, outside Parliament, Madam Hayman pursued a vibrant career in health care. She was a member of the Royal College of Gynecologist Ethics Committee (1982 – 1997). She was the Vice Chair of the Committee on Ethics of Clinical Investigation at the University College Hospital and Vice Chair of the Bloomsbury Health Authority from 1988-1990 and the Bloomsbury and Hislinton Health Authority (1991-1992). She was also a council Member at the University College of London (1992-1997) and Chair of the Wingington Hospital NHS Drugs from 1992 to 1997. Lady Hayman remains a member of the General Medical Council and she has being in this position from 2013 to date.

Honourable Members, this is a short profile of our visitor who is in our midst this morning, and she is here to witness the proceedings of the House for today. Thank you very much, and you are most welcome madam (*Applause across the Floor*).

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY, 2015

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 17th February, 2015. As usual, we go page by page. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? There being no amendment, can somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 17th February, 2015?

HON. ALHAJI S. DUMBUYA: Mr Speaker, I so move.

HON. KADIJA SILLAH: I so second, Mr Speaker.

(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)

[The record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 17th February, 2015, has been unanimously adopted as presented]

III. PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

THE MINISTER OF WORKS, HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
EXPLANATION ON THE PRESENT SITUATION ON THE REHABILITATION OF
PARLIAMENT BUILDING.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Clerk, do you want to say anything before the Minister makes his presentation?

HON. IBRAHIM S. SESAY (Clerk of Parliament): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would recalled that His Excellency the President visited Parliament in November, 2014 on the invitation of the Leadership of the Parliament, calling the attention of the President to the status of Parliament Building, including the toilet facility prior to the State Opening of Parliament in December, 2014. His Excellency the President approved a special Imprest to meet expenditure to carry out the rehabilitation process. The Minister of Finance and Economic Development was directed to provide the funds to the Ministry of Works, Housing and Infrastructure to undertake the rehabilitation of Parliament. The job was never completed, especially the toilet system, which still remain an eyesore for parliamentarians.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have a letter with me from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development on the rehabilitation of Parliament. With the leave of Mr Speaker, it reads: "I am directed to refer to your memorandum, dated 2nd February, 2015, on the above subject, requesting for information on the disbursement made so far for the above mention rehabilitation. I forward here with expenses analysis report for the payment made in favour of Seaside Construction and Trading Limited and KCs Trading and Construction, the latter being the company awarded the contract on the rehabilitation of the toilet facilities of the Parliament.

1. Project title: The Rehabilitation of the Toilets at Parliament Building;

2. Contractor: KCs Trading and Construction Company;
3. Amount: Le 280,019,250,000 (Two Hundred and Eighty Million and Nineteen thousand Two Hundred and Fifty Leones); and
4. an outstanding amount in respect of the rehabilitation of the toilet facilities Le 89Mln. The amount disbursed, as stated here, is Eighty-Nine Million, Three Hundred and Seventy Thousand Leones on Cheque No: 257004, dated 6th March, 2014. There is an outstanding amount to the tune of Le 134, 645, 400 (One hundred and thirty-four million, six hundred and forty-five thousand, four Hundred Leones). Mr Speaker, this was what the Ministry of Finance sent to Parliament in respect of the rehabilitation of the toilets.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, I hope you've heard what the Clerk has had to say with regards to the statement you are about to make. I must tell you that Members have been expressing concerns about the deplorable state of our toilet facilities in this Parliament. This is the reason why you have been invited this morning to give an explanation as to why the delay in refurbishing the toilets in Parliament. From what the Clerk of Parliament has said, one would have expected that this is something that would have been done long time ago. As we speak, the toilet facilities are still in the state in which they were, if not worse than that. I will now ask you to please give this House a comprehensive explanation.

MR BABAGALEH BARRIE (*Deputy Minister of Works, Housing and Infrastructure*): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the improvement of the sanitary facility was initiated when the President visited the House of Parliament. He was led by the then Speaker of the House. The tour concluded with His Excellency imploring the former Minister of Works, Housing and Infrastructure to undertake a comprehensive rehabilitation of the House of Representatives at a meeting held in Conference Room 1 with the Deputy Speaker, the Clerk of Parliament, Members of Parliament, the Deputy Minister of Finance and Economic Development, the then Minister of Works, Housing and Infrastructure and the professional staff of the Ministry of Works, Housing and Infrastructure. It was agreed that the improvement of the sanitary system be given

priority over all else. The Ministry was able to impress the National Public Procurement Authority (NPPA) for the use of restrictive bidding process because of the urgency and seriousness of the situation. Upon completion of the procurement process, KCs Trading and Construction Company Limited emerged as the most responsive bidder, and was subsequently awarded the contract. The contract was signed on the 17th February, 2014, for the sum of Le 280, 019, 250, 000. The contract stipulates an advance payment of 30% of the total contract sum to the contractor. It might interest this Honourable House to know that advance payment to the contractor was delayed for a considerable period of time. The Ministry, however, was able to cajole the Contractor to start work without the said advance payment. Work has been in progress in line with specification and bill of quantities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the demolition exercise is approximately 80% complete. The installation of water pipes is 100% complete. Installation of new water tanks and WC Tiles system is 100% complete. Floor tiling and the installation of new close couple type fitting 100% complete. New wash hands basin is 100% complete; and the partitioning of the various toilets is also 100% complete. However, other workers are still in progress.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy to note here that the project had experienced some difficulties in terms of the frequency of damages to the newly installed toilet gadgets. This has negatively impacted the effort of the contractor. However, consensus was reached with the Clerk of Parliament and his Deputy for the contractor to change the specification of the WC type system to a Close Couple Type, similar to those in the newly constructed Administrative Building. The Ministry also suggested to the Clerk of Parliament for the initiation of a control mechanism in the use of these cemetery fitting by having in attendance a person designated with the responsibility to ensure cleanliness and proper use of these facilities. Similarly, the existing 'worked-tops' that hold the wash hands basins were made of ply wood and they were found to be in a bad state. The plywood worked-tops were dismantled and

replaced with concrete tile worked-top to fit neatly around the newly installed wash hands basins.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the delay in the completion of the work was due to the delay of payment to the Contractor by the Ministry of Finance. We later forced the Contractor to use his own resources to do some of the work, but he cannot continue because of the bank loan that he took and the interest accrued. Furthermore, the Ministry's officials and Contractor visited the ongoing sanitation works on Wednesday, 11th February, 2015, to ascertain the implementation of the Project. We agreed that:

- the free path aluminum structures to be removed and replaced with concrete block partition walls it is now completed and the toilet doors are fixed; and
- toilet facility for visitors and auxiliary staff is provided, so as to preserve the other toilets for Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with regard to the payment to contractor, arrangement is in progress at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. Also, inspection of the Deputy Speaker's office for the creation of sanitary facility is in progress. Mr Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks for the timely intervention of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development in terms of the payment of the Contractor. I want to assure this House that arrangement for the payment of the said sum is in progress. I want to assure this Honourable House that the refurbishment process would be completed as soon as funds are made available by the Ministry of Finance. As a Ministry, we've done everything possible for the completion of this project. However, the Ministry of Finance should put modalities in place in terms of providing the funds needed to complete the project. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, you heard from the Deputy Minister and it is your turn to make your comments or ask questions.

HON. J. B. MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Deputy Minister of Works, Housing and Infrastructure for his presentation about the

status of the sanitary facilities of this House. I must state here that the amount of visitors visiting this Parliament is great. In this regard, we are expecting a conducive sanitary atmosphere. Mr Speaker, what is baffling is the fact that after the President of this nation has instructed the Ministry of Finance to effect payment for the rehabilitation of the sanitary facility in this House, the Ministry is still reluctant to release the said sum. This is a clear indication to show that Parliament is not treated seriously by the Executive Branch. We are talking about 30% of the money that is supposed to be paid and this is almost a year now. According to the Deputy Minister, most of component parts of the contract are reported to have been 100% complete.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I became Member of Parliament, I was a Contractor. Mr Speaker, if the Deputy Minister could visit those toilets, most of the things they have installed are out of use as we speak. If this is the situation, why was he referring to those component parts of the project as 100% complete? This is indeed interesting, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to crave the indulgence of this House, through the Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business to bring the Minister of Finance to this House. If we do this, we would be able to get the information from him. He should come and tell this House why the delay in the completion of this project. The Deputy Minister kept saying that the Ministry of Finance was prepared to pay the money after one year. How serious are people treating the President of this nation? How serious are people treating the most important arm of government that is approving your nominations? Mr Speaker, how serious are we treating ourselves? Therefore, I want to suggest here that the Minister of Finance and other relevant officials should go and inspect those toilets. I want the officials to go and see things for themselves, Mr Speaker. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Deputy Minister, I hope you have heard what the Honourable Member has said. I tend to agree, in most parts, with what the Honourable Member has said. Mr Deputy Minister, what I found totally incomprehensible in your statement, was

when you said that certain aspects of the work are 100% complete. The question is did you, at any time, visited Parliament to verify that information?

MR BABAGALEH BARRIE: Mr Speaker, I did not come to Parliament, but the technical team came to Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Deputy Minister, I am putting it to you that there is no demonstrable evidence of what you say is 100% complete. So, your officials could not have given you the true picture of the situation. Mr Deputy Minister, any time you award a contract to people, you have to go there and make sure. We want a situation wherein what has happened would not repeat itself. Any time Parliament summons you, make sure you come here with the facts and not what people have told you.

HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI (*Minority Leader of the House*): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the toilet situation in this House has always been a perennial problem. This House should not be bordered with such issues at all, Mr Speaker. I am saying this because there are more pressing national issues to address. As a Parliament, we should be more preoccupied with national issues. These are issues that are taken for granted in other jurisdictions. We have travelled to many Parliaments and we have seen the sanitary systems in those jurisdictions. We should not be calling the Minister here or spending much of our precious time discussing the toilet facilities of this Parliament. To me, this is unacceptable and I feel ashamed to stand in front of Baroness discussing this issue. The question I want to ask this Honourable House is that why are we repeatedly having a problem with our toilet facilities? I have a feeling that these toilets are not used by only the 124 parliamentarians, but even staff of Parliament and the hundreds of visitors coming here on a daily basis. We have approved Le 280mln for the rehabilitation and refurbishment of these toilets, but the question is that what materials are being used for this purpose? If people buy substandard materials, even if the work is completed, those materials would not last long. My question is who is going to assure us quality in terms of the material being bought? In other words, who is assuring that the best equipment are procured for this purpose? If those who are responsible for procurement have bought sub-standard

materials, we would not expect any durability of those materials. The outcome of buying cheap materials is poor services.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a Parliament, we have the Clerk of Parliament, who is the Vote Controller of the House. I am sure there is somebody who is in charge of maintenance in this House. The Officer-in-charge of maintenance should be the principal adviser as to the type of materials that should be bought for this purpose. We should not allow other entity to do procurement for us. We should have somebody in this House who should be checking every bit of material being bought for this House. If, for instance, substandard materials are being bought, the Officer-in-charge would easily reject those materials and call for something that is of quality. We have brand names that we should check properly, so as to ascertain the durability of those materials. We have to monitor the materials these Contractors are procuring. The issue of procurement should not be left in the hands of the Contractors. If this issue is not addressed properly, then we are beating a dead horse. I want the Minister to assure this House about this issue, so that it is laid to rest completely. We don't want to call the Minister here on menial things like this. There are more important things to address, as a Parliament. I feel disturbed and ashamed to discuss something which is private matter. Mr Speaker, this is my submission. I thank you very much.

HON. KOMBOR KAMARA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as Chairman of the Committee on Works, Housing and Infrastructure, I have listened to all the speakers, and I want to submit here that this issue is going to be discussed at Committee level. Thank you very much.

HON. UMAR PARAN TARAWALLY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my concern here is not about the completion of the work, but specification. In my opinion, whatever rehabilitation you have proposed to undertake, must conform to modern realities. I want to know whether the designs you have been given reflect modern reality, vis-a-vis structural responses, etc. I am saying this because specification and design are very important, Mr Speaker.

HON. SUAHILO M. KOROMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the biggest problems we are facing in this country is project financing. In most cases, Mr Speaker, MDAs make their bill of quantities that are approved by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. However, financing these projects after the contract must have been awarded to the Contractors is the biggest problem we have in this country. This is the reason why many government projects get stalled. Therefore, I want to request the presence of the Minister of Finance to come and see for himself, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President of this nation approved a special amount for this work to be done. It baffles me, as to the reason why the approved sum has not been paid to complete this project, Mr Speaker. Are we saying that there is no money to complete this project? Also, I want to add here that the Speaker of Parliament should request the Clerk of Parliament to employ an Estate Officer. The current problem we are facing is because we do not have an Estate Officer to monitor project of this nature, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to call on the Clerk and the Leadership of this House to ensure that an Estate Officer is employed for this House. If we do this, Mr Speaker, issues like quality and specification will be addressed. Contractors that are working for Parliament do not have a qualified Engineer or an Estate Officer to provide the necessary supervision needed. Thus, I am of the opinion that this is a major issue we need to address now. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your point is noted. We have limitation in that regard, because in other jurisdictions, the Sergeant-at-Arms also serves as Estate Officer, but in the strictness of the word, we don't have Sergeant-at-Arms. The person we have is a Mace bearer.

Honourable Members, for your information, few meetings have been scheduled for our visitor. She would have to meet with the Leadership of the House, the Female Caucus, the Health Committee, and the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Directors, Committee Clerks, PACO and UNDP Chief Technical Adviser.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENT

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy to announce that Hon. Claude D.M. Kamanda is now the new Member of Parliament to the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), to replace Honourable Alimamy G. Kargbo, who is no longer available to continue his membership in that Parliament. Thank you very much *(Applause)*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Leader of the Pan-African Parliament delegation is Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai, the Minority Leader of the House. I want to inform this House that this announcement should have been made before now.

(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)

[The nomination of Honourable Claude D. M. Kamanda as member to the Pan-African Parliament has been approved]

ADJOURNMENT

(The House rose at 11.15 a.m., and was adjourned to Thursday, 26th February, 2015, at 10.00 a.m.)